Denton Community Primary School

Acacia Road, Newhaven, BN9 0QJ

Inspection dates	24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	**Requires improvement**	**3**
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement is uneven across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good. In Key Stage 1 it does not ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- In Reception, children are insufficiently challenged in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not teach phonics (the links between letters and sounds) well enough.
- The pace of improvement has not been fast enough since the previous inspection.
- The new acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have not yet had time to have an impact on teaching or pupils' progress.
- Governors have not yet linked teachers' pay to the quality of their teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching in Key Stage 2 is now good and this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The acting headteacher and senior leaders understand the improvements needed and have started to take firm and effective action.
- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe, behave well and show respect to each other and to adults.
- Good links with the local speech and language facility support pupils with speaking difficulties well and this helps their confidence and their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, of which eight were jointly observed with the headteacher, and heard a sample of pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 6.
- Inspectors had discussions with pupils, looked at a range of their work and examined the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders and teachers. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 24 responses to the on-line, Parent View, survey and responses to the questionnaires returned by 27 staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and records of school leaders' observations of teaching.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Roger Parry	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Denton Primary School is a little smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding provided for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families) is above average. Currently, there are no pupils in the school who are looked after by the local authority or children from service familes.
- A few pupils receive extra support provided by Peacehaven Speech and Language Facility.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The current headteacher took up her post in a temporary capacity in September 2012. She will become the permanent headteacher in September 2013. There have been other new appointments to the senior leadership team, including a deputy headteacher who started in January 2013. Most class teachers in Key Stage 2 joined the school in the 2012/13 academic year, whilst all other teachers have changed year groups.
- The Child Care Nursery on the school's premises is managed by the governing body but was not inspected at this time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring Key Stage 1 teachers plan and teach phonics and mathematics at the right level of difficulty
  - improving class management and the teaching of classroom routines in Key Stage 1 and matching mathematical worksheets to pupils' reading levels
  - increasing the number of challenging opportunities for reading, writing and mathematics in Reception when children are learning independently
  - ensuring teaching assistants consistently provide good support to lower-attaining pupils.
- Raise pupils' overall levels of attainment and accelerate their progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - raising the levels of attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium
  - improving pupils' spelling, handwriting and mental calculation
  - improving lower-attaining pupils' phonics skills, ensuring that the pupils have clear targets and are heard reading very regularly.
- Improve the leadership of teaching by:
  - increasing the effectiveness of the leadership of Reception and Key Stage 1
  - revising ability-grouping arrangements in phonics, appointing a phonics coordinator and strengthening whole-school tracking and assessment
  - ensuring the school improvement plan shows how the impact of leadership initiatives will be measured
  - providing training for governors in linking teachers' pay to performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Having entered Reception with the expected levels of knowledge and skills, pupils make uneven progress across the school.
- In Reception, the progress of children slows when they play and learn independently because there are not enough challenging reading, writing and mathematics activities.
- In both Years 1 and 2, phonics and mathematical activities do not sufficiently build pupils' skills. Pupils' progress slows when pupils repeat too much earlier learning or become confused when they are not clear what to do next. At times, in mathematics, pupils are held back because worksheets are too hard for them to read.
- Pupils' attainment in national assessments and tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 has been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Fewer pupils than should attained average and higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2012.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations, hearing pupils read and the school's own data show that most pupils are now making good progress in Key Stage 2. However, their levels of attainment are not rising quickly enough due to a legacy of underachievement.
- By Year 6, most pupils now read competently but, along with pupils in other year groups, lower-attaining pupils are held back because they do not use phonics to help them tackle new words. Reading records and discussions with pupils show that some lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 do not read often enough in school or at home which also slows their progress.
- Most pupils in Year 6 write confidently for different purposes, but some pupils' weak spelling limits their attainment. In both key stages, pupils' handwriting is sometimes untidy and not joined. In mathematics, pupils' mental calculation is sometimes slow or inaccurate.
- The pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make similar progress to their peers. Funding has been used effectively to support identified pupils in their personal development and to provide extra adult help in small groups. However, the progress of these pupils is uneven throughout the school due to inconsistencies in teaching. By the end of Year 6, they are currently about six months behind other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same uneven progress as their peers. Small-group teaching speeds up the progress of these pupils, including those receiving the specialist speech and language help given by the Peacehaven Speech and Language Facility.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching in Key Stage 1 is not consistently matched to pupils' needs. Teachers do not progressively build pupils' skills and knowledge in lessons and, too often, the work they set is too hard or too easy. Teachers' classroom routines, such as changeovers from group work to whole-class time, are sometimes slow and time wasting.
- In Reception, there is insufficient planning for stimulating learning in literacy and numeracy when children are working or playing independently. Children's engagement in activities is not always monitored carefully enough.
- The school has rightly identified that the teaching of reading and writing requires improvement. In Key Stage 1, class teaching of phonics to the whole ability range does not enable teachers to match work readily to pupils' needs.
- Pupils' reading records do not show pupils' targets. This prevents adults, including parents, from helping pupils to apply phonics consistently when tackling new words and improving their spelling. Teachers' marking is improving in Key Stage 2 but of variable quality in Key Stage 1.
- The impact of teaching assistants is also variable. On occasions, they do not give good-quality support to lower-attaining pupils.

- The teachers responsible for Key Stage 1 classes taught older pupils in previous years and, until the headteacher's arrival, had received little training for teaching the younger age range. These teachers are now being given the professional help they need, but their teaching still requires improvement.
- In Reception, children are provided with an interesting range of activities and staff develop their language and independence well.
- Teaching in Key Stage 2 has improved and is now good. Teachers have high expectations, set a brisk pace, use imaginative resources and provide activities which provide challenge for all pupils. They are quick to adjust their teaching if pupils find work too hard or too easy. These features were characterised in a Year 4 literacy lesson when pupils used a wide range of conjunctions to create more complex sentences.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils are polite and sociable. However, some weaker teaching in Key Stage 1 leaves younger pupils less enthusiastic about their learning and prone to distraction.
- This year, the school has worked hard and successfully to implement robust procedures for promoting good behaviour. There have been no exclusions, which is a marked improvement on previous years.
- There have also been improvements in pupils' behaviour in the playground. The new playground equipment and activities engage pupils, enabling them to be active and to cooperate well with each other.
- Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are helped well to adjust to school. This means that lessons proceed with little interruption.
- Pupils feel safe and secure at school. They learn about forms of bullying and what to do to stay safe, including how to stay safe on the internet. They said that there is very little bullying and that any incidents that occur are dealt with quickly and effectively. The very large majority of parents, carers and staff agrees with this view.
- Attendance is in line with national averages and improving. The school has applied stringent attendance procedures this year and is working closely with the few families who do not send their children to school as regularly as they should.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not led to good teaching and progress over time. The leadership of Reception and Key Stage 1 is not yet having enough impact on standards.
- The acting headteacher has identified the right priorities and set off on the right track to bring about improvement. She has been effective in creating change for the better in the school's environment and in improving staff morale.
- Since her arrival, the strong focus on professional development and more structured monitoring systems have led to much good teaching in Key Stage 2 in a relatively short time. This shows the school has the capacity to improve.
- Recent appointments, including that of a deputy headteacher, have strengthened the senior team. Middle leaders' roles are being reviewed in order to ensure these leaders have a recognisable impact on teaching and pupils' progress.
- The senior team has identified the need to strengthen the leadership of phonics teaching. School priorities for phonics include setting by ability, extending phonics teaching to Key Stage 2, developing a stronger phonics tracking system and appointing a specific phonics coordinator.
- The recently appointed mathematics leader has started to develop a structured scheme of work for mathematics in order to help teachers set work which is appropriately matched to pupils'

abilities.

- The school improvement plan is a useful tool which sets out clear actions for improving pupils' achievement through better teaching. However, it does not show how the success of actions such as building leadership capacity in the school will be measured.
- Staff performance targets are set and regularly reviewed so that staff understand how well they are performing and what their professional needs are. This is beginning to bring about improvements in the rate of pupils' progress.
- The school values the support it has been given by the local authority for improving teaching. It also finds that the local authority's training of governors has had a very positive impact on their leadership and helped governors to understand data and pupils' achievement.
- The school ethos is inclusive in seeking to promote equality, and discrimination is not tolerated. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school and their mature attitudes.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are actively involved in the school and are committed to making it a good school. Until the acting headteacher arrived they did not have access to the most incisive and accurate information with which to hold the headteacher to account. They are now gaining the confidence they need to challenge, as well as support, the headteacher. They have a good understanding of the school's finances and can account for the progress pupils are making. They understand how pupil premium money is being spent and know that pupils' achievement is not good enough and requires stronger monitoring. They are clear about how the performance of teaching is being managed and where strengths and weaknesses lie. They understand the need to link the quality of teaching to pay and the targets being set by senior leaders to improve teaching. However, they recognise that they need more training to understand fully their role in ensuring teachers' pay is linked to performance. They set suitably demanding targets for the headteacher. Safeguarding requirements are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	114433
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	405511

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Ost
Headteacher	Caitlin Yapp
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2011
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