

# The Windmills Junior School

Dale Avenue, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 8LS

**Inspection dates**

6–7 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make fast enough progress in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not apply their good reading skills regularly enough when writing.
- The assessment of, provision for and tracking of the performance of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is currently not helping them to make strong progress from their starting points.
- Similarly, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils varies too much from class to class. They are too dependent on the quality of each individual pupil's experience.
- Pupils do not take enough care with their work. Teachers do not routinely challenge weak or untidy presentation.
- Teachers do not pause lessons regularly enough to ensure that pupils know what to do.
- Teaching is not consistently strong enough across the school to sustain the rapid improvements needed in pupils' rates of progress.
- Teachers are not yet making good enough use of the school's detailed information about pupils' prior attainment to plan learning that meets their needs.
- The impact of senior leaders' well-aimed strategies to increase pupils' rates of progress are not yet showing in the school's published results.
- Some administrative tasks are not completed fully or with sufficient rigour.
- Governors' checks on aspects of the school's work are not thorough enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders are determined and unrelenting in their ambition that all pupils do as well as they can.
- Most pupils read well and attain better-than-average scores in national tests at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils are unfailingly polite and well behaved, and their conduct is good in and around the school.
- Pupils are confident, self-assured and articulate. They support each other well in class and at play.
- Leaders ensure that there is effective and enriching support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has an increasingly strong, broad and balanced curriculum supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise outcomes in writing across the school, especially for pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities by:
  - increasing teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - ensuring that staff base their planning carefully on pupils' starting points.
- Raise standards of teaching by:
  - ensuring that pupils understand the work that they have been set and are able to complete it successfully
  - insisting that staff robustly challenge weak standards of handwriting and presentation.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership by:
  - continuing to strengthen and develop middle leaders to ensure that they hold their teams fully to account for outcomes in their phase or subject
  - continuing to strengthen the management arrangements for the provision, assessment and progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - consolidating governance arrangements so that the team around the school is able to more effectively support and challenge senior leaders.

It is recommended that an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium be undertaken.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The headteacher has a realistic and accurate view of the school's strengths and those areas which still require improvement. With her deputy headteacher, she has been on an extensive journey of updating all of the school's processes and procedures.
- Many of the intended improvements can now be seen in the school's work, such as the way in which pupils conduct themselves and grow in self-esteem and confidence. However, there has been slower progress in extending the quality of teaching overall, and the impact it has on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders are hampered by information about pupils' prior attainment that is erratic and not consistently aligned to age-related expectations. They rightly spend time, therefore, in the autumn term of each year, testing out the starting points of each pupil.
- Leaders use this information to set targets for each of the classes and have invested heavily in training staff in how to quicken rates of progress. Some teachers make full use of this information and training to target their teaching effectively. Others have been slower to realise the need to arrange teaching to better meet pupils' needs.
- The school's inclusion manager works carefully with the deputy headteacher to examine the prior attainment of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As the number of pupils joining the school having such needs increases, leaders have found it necessary to extend the time that the inclusion manager spends on this work. He is now operating more fully, in accordance with the expectations of the role of a special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Leaders are currently reviewing the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, to ensure that they thrive at the Windmills.
- Middle-level leaders have also been on a journey of improvement. Those leading the core subjects are increasingly confident in using information to identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind or in need of even more focused support. Phase leaders work closely with their teams to plan learning coherently. Much of their impact, so far, is seen in the development of topic work across the curriculum.
- Teachers' responses to leaders' development activities are patchy and inconsistent. In each year group, there are teachers who respond quickly and shift their practice to meet contemporary requirements. However, there remains some practice which has not kept pace with leaders' expectations or ambitions.
- The school's curriculum is developing all the time. It provides pupils with opportunities to learn in a variety of subjects while studying a particular theme, such as 'The Titanic'. It also provides a range of contexts so that pupils can practise writing in different styles and for different audiences. Work in geography, for example, enables pupils to practise using all the correct parts of speech and accurate English grammar.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are able to learn in creative subjects such as art and music. Leaders use teachers' particular specialisms, where possible, so that pupils have access to expertise in these subjects. There are examples of pupils' artistic creations in different parts of the school. Pupils' enthusiasm for music is seen clearly in the numbers who participate skilfully and enthusiastically in the choir. Pupils perform to

external audiences. Pupils enjoy learning in science and have access to learning through experimentation. Boys, particularly, enjoy the practical aspects of scientific learning.

- The school makes effective use of the primary physical education and sports premium. A specialist provider works alongside teachers to help build their subject knowledge and practical skills in physical education. Pupils have access to a wide range of sports and physical activities. Notably, and in support of the school's strong work on building pupils' appropriate contemporary attitudes, pupils learn to play the Paralympic sport, boccia. Pupils learn the benefits of teamwork, taking turns and playing sportingly.
- Overall, the school's contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is one of its strengths. Leaders ensure that the school is inclusive. They also ensure that pupils leave with a good sense of right and wrong and a good understanding of how to treat others with respect.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing body has been through a period of turbulence. It has been led by two experienced co-chairs since September 2017. Both have long-standing connections to the school.
- Governors:
  - know the community well and the issues it faces, such as the expansion of housing and the surge in birth rates causing pressure on school places
  - know, with less certainty, how well the school's academic performance relates to that of other similar schools
  - check the school's safeguarding arrangements, but these checks are not rigorous or thorough enough
  - check the school's website, but have recorded it as compliant with the Secretary of State's requirements when there is missing information, such as the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils
  - receive reports from leaders and review them in a sensible committee structure
  - have a working understanding of the overall school budget, but without detailed knowledge of the impact of spending decisions on pupils' progress or attainment.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils are safe in the school. However, some of the administrative processes relating to safeguarding are not sharp enough. Governors have sometimes failed to notice errors or omissions in their checks.
- The site is well maintained and secure. Leaders have recently strengthened access arrangements and site security by adding improved gates and fencing. Visitors are checked carefully on entry.

- Pupils benefit from good facilities and plenty of space. Leaders make sure that good use is made of all the learning spaces, such as the library and learning resource centre. This frees space in classrooms so that pupils can move around easily and in safety.
- Staff supervision at play and lunchtimes contributes to safeguarding. Adults provide a range of activities and ball games so that play is focused and organised. As a result, there are few incidents. Pupils are tended to well, if they are ill or involved in an accident.
- Leaders care for all their pupils. They are fully committed to ensuring that pupils are safe. They ensure, for example, that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and when they are on school trips and visits.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- Teaching is well organised but it is not yet having sufficient impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Teachers spend time preparing lessons according to the school's evolving curriculum. Consequently, they use a good range of resources and materials. However, teachers share their planning across the whole year group so that all pupils receive the same work whatever their starting points.
- Inspectors were told by some pupils that they find the work too easy. Inspectors also spoke to pupils in some lessons who did not understand what they were supposed to be doing. These pupils were not always motivated to ask for help, and their teacher was sometimes not aware that they were struggling.
- In a few lessons, the planning was overly complicated so that pupils were confused about what was expected of them. Again, there were few checks to make sure that everyone knew what they were doing.
- Generally, teachers have good subject knowledge and address misconceptions as they arise. This is particularly the case in English, where, for example, teachers routinely encourage the correct use of grammar and pupils can talk accurately about the parts of speech. Pupils respond well but, for many, this is repetition of lessons learned in key stage 1.
- In mathematics, teachers are increasingly getting on top of the demands of the 2014 national curriculum and the extra reasoning that is expected of pupils. Some, however, are not consistently challenging pupils to work at the highest level or correcting any misconceptions that arise in basic shape, space and measure work.
- Leaders have recently increased the availability of mathematical tools to support reasoning and basic number skills. Teachers are still discerning when the right time to use them is and when not.
- Teachers use information about pupils' prior attainment to plan learning with varying levels of success. Some ensure that work meets individual pupils' needs and help them make progress. Others plan work for teaching assistants to support groups of pupils. Many staff question pupils about what they are learning. However, this does not always stretch the most able or make them think deeply enough. Sometimes, questioning is

not sufficiently timely to ensure that pupils derive as much as they should from lessons.

- Similarly, teachers assess pupils' work in line with the school's policy and against its increasingly detailed and robust framework. While teachers provide both written and oral feedback to pupils on their work, they challenge weak presentation and poor handwriting less frequently. As a result, some pupils' work deteriorates over time.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are self-assured, confident and articulate. The school's 'Over to you' assemblies provide an impressive opportunity for pupils to practise standing up and talking in front of a large crowd. They do so with admirable courage.
- The school bases its work on an appropriate set of values. Leaders ensure that these values are reinforced frequently. Pupils can readily cite ways in which their actions reflect one or other of these values.
- The school's programme of personal, social, health and economic education contributes well to pupils' development. Pupils learn how to stay safe online, how to respect each other's beliefs and opinions and how to make the right choices.
- Leaders and teachers demonstrate through their actions respect for other people. Pupils learn from this and repeat this in their interactions with each other. Leaders also ensure that there is a culture of praise and reward across the school. Pupils like this and are proud of their achievements. Those in positions of responsibility talk fluently about their roles, how they were selected or elected and why wearing their badges also makes them proud.
- The whole community is caring and considerate, and there are some notable examples of high levels of compassion, especially at, for example, times of bereavement.
- However, too many pupils take little pride in their work. In some cases, the standard of presentation in their books is weak. Teachers rarely challenge this.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because too few pupils demonstrate the kind of consistently strong learning behaviours that contribute to rapid and accelerating progress. Pupils wait too long for instructions rather than actively seeking to get on with learning quickly.
- When teachers are not vigilant, a minority of pupils tend to wander round the classroom, fidget or waste time. This slows their progress.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. Lessons are rarely disrupted. Pupils also play well together outside and exhibit good table manners and behaviour in the dining hall.

- Pupils' attendance is good. Levels of persistent absence are well below national averages and have fallen sharply recently. Leaders hardly ever have to exclude pupils. They do particularly well with pupils who have challenging behaviour, managing it successfully.
- Pupils and parents and carers are confident that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Inspectors found very little evidence that there is bullying. The tiny proportion of behaviour based on discriminatory beliefs or practices is dealt with sensitively, firmly and fairly.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Published information about pupils' outcomes indicates that they make slow progress in writing and mathematics from key stage 1 to key stage 2. The school has met the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school in three out of the last four years for this reason.
- Pupils enter the school having attained, on average, high levels in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1.
- Pupils attain standards in reading and mathematics which are broadly in line with national averages for those subjects. Furthermore, the percentages of pupils in Year 6 who met the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined in 2016 and 2017 were above the national averages.
- During the inspection, leaders provided compelling evidence that pupils' attainment on entry is much more variable than shown in the published results. There is a poor match, in some cases, between a pupil's key stage 1 attainment and the level at which they are expected to be working in the national curriculum year group. Some have gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding as shown in systematic, accurate and moderated assessment of their work.
- Inspectors found, however, that other pupils currently on roll have attained levels of knowledge and understanding that exceed age-related expectations. Too few of these pupils, at the end of Year 6, are seen to have attained higher levels in standardised tests in reading and mathematics or worked at greater depth in writing.
- Leaders have developed an intricate system of assessing what pupils know, understand and can do. This means that they can account confidently for each pupil's actual starting point in Year 3. Leaders are clear that the baseline for the current Year 3 is accurate and reliable. Middle-level leaders are increasingly using this information to check the progress and attainment of pupils. Teachers are becoming more familiar with the system and how it relates to their class. The benefits of the system are not yet coming through in the published information for the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make slower progress than their peers. A few of these pupils were not identified as having specific learning difficulties or barriers to learning before they joined the school. These pupils are now catching up slowly, due to increasingly better-focused support.
- A minority of disadvantaged pupils do as well as their classmates. Others do less well. Currently, in published information about the school, their progress and attainment do

not compare well with those of other pupils nationally. For example, none of the disadvantaged pupils in Year 6, in 2017, attained high scores in reading or mathematics or worked at greater depth in writing.

- Standards in writing are the most variable across the school. A minority of the pupils work with skill and fluency and at levels above those expected for their age. Too many pupils, however, work below the level of their published attainment in reading. This varies from class to class.
- Due to the average levels of attainment in reading and mathematics, most pupils who are neither disadvantaged nor have SEN and/or disabilities are ready for secondary school at the end of Year 6.



## School details

Unique reference number	125939
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10037831

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs	Sandra Boyd and Susan Hatton
Headteacher	Leila Murray
Telephone number	01273 842421
Website	<a href="http://www.windmills.w-sussex.sch.uk">www.windmills.w-sussex.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@windmills.w-sussex.sch.uk">head@windmills.w-sussex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	5–6 December 2012

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about its use of the pupil premium.
- The Windmills Junior School is a larger-than-average junior school.
- There are slightly more girls than boys in the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British households.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their SEN and/or disabilities is above average.

- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health or care plan is broadly average.
- The school serves a community with low levels of deprivation.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 21 parts-lessons. Some of this learning was observed jointly with senior leaders. Additionally, inspectors undertook short visits to lessons as part of learning walks. Learning was observed in English, mathematics, science, geography, physical education and informally in music.
- Inspectors spoke with many pupils and met formally with a group of nine Year 4 pupils and a group of nine Year 6 pupils. Members of the team listened to eight Year 3 pupils reading. With senior leaders, the team looked at a sample of pupils' work. None of the pupils completed Ofsted's confidential online survey.
- Inspectors met several parents informally at the school gate. In addition, the headteacher arranged for one of the team to meet with six parents formally, some of whom are members of the Friends of Windmills School (FoWS). Inspectors took into account 105 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and 60 free-text comments.
- The lead inspector met with the subject leaders of the core subjects. A team inspector met with the inclusion manager, and one of the team met with teachers at different stages of their careers. The inspectors considered 29 responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey.
- Leaders met with the team regularly throughout the inspection and provided a wide range of documents for review. These included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, work of the governors and local authority officers, and documents to support the school's improvement plan.

## Inspection team

Simon Hughes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Scutter	Ofsted Inspector

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