

The Gateway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132107
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	360367
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Leveson
Headteacher	Heather Overton
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons as well as small teaching groups out-of-class. Inspectors observed seven teachers. They met parents and carers, informally, on the first day of the inspection and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised samples of pupils' work, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and safeguarding documents. In addition, inspectors took account of questionnaire responses from 54 parents and carers, 24 staff and 107 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The strategies in place to raise attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2 and why pupils do not attain as well as they do in Key Stage 1.
- Whether the challenge set for pupils by teachers including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those of higher ability is consistent.
- How well the curriculum is adapted to meet pupils' needs and promote improved progress in Key Stage 2.
- The accuracy of monitoring and self-evaluation by all leaders and managers, including the governing body, and whether this is contributing to sufficient improvement in achievement. The accuracy of monitoring and self-evaluation by all leaders and managers, including the governing body, and whether this is contributing to sufficient improvement in achievement.

Information about the school

Most pupils who attend The Gateway are of White British heritage. A few pupils speak English as an additional language and the number is increasing each year. A smaller than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally but no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school holds a number of awards, including Activemark and Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The Gateway provides a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils enjoy coming to school as shown by their good attendance because they find their lessons interesting and share good relationships with each other and with staff. They behave well in lessons and playtimes are happy and harmonious. As a result of pockets of inadequate teaching the attainment for pupils in Key Stage 2 had declined in recent years. The headteacher has taken effective action to improve the progress made by pupils in this key stage with carefully selected new strategies in literacy and numeracy that are closely monitored to ensure they are effective. As a result, over the last two years there are clear signs that the decline has stopped and the progress pupils make has improved, especially in Years 5 and 6, and is now satisfactory so that pupils currently attain average standards at the end of Year 6. The large majority of parents are pleased with the school and one, typical of many, said, 'The Gateway have helped my child improve in many areas and I am extremely happy with everything they have and are continuing to do.' Safeguarding arrangements are secure so pupils feel safe in school and they have a clear understanding of what is involved in leading a healthy life.

Children settle quickly and well into Reception and enjoy their learning. Through Years 1 to 6 a good curriculum ensures that learning remains interesting and fun. In particular pupils have good opportunities to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in a range of subjects. The quality of teaching has improved and is satisfactory overall. Monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders and managers has contributed to this improvement but monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous and regular. In particular subject leaders are not involved in monitoring their subject areas or lesson planning to help improve teaching and learning and share this monitoring role with senior leaders and managers. The progress that pupils make is tracked carefully across the school but progress information is not used consistently in classes by teachers to plan tasks that fully challenge all pupils, especially the more able, to help them make better progress. Pastoral care is good and the care provided by the school is extended by prudent use of a range of outside agencies. Satisfactory support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so they make sound, and sometimes good, progress from their individual starting points.

The headteacher provides good leadership and together with the deputy headteacher has identified clear priorities to drive the school forward and raise achievement in Key Stage 2. The role of new subject leaders is developing. They share the ambitious enthusiasm of senior leaders and managers are keen to develop their responsibilities further. The governing body knows the school well and understands the strengths and areas for development. However, it does not play an active part in evaluating and monitoring improvements in the school. It is taking steps to improve governors' skills but does not fully challenge senior leaders and managers especially to ensure that the achievement of

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pupils is improved. Self-evaluation is reflective and accurate and issues from the previous report remain active work in progress. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in Key Stage 2 by using assessment information more accurately in lessons to plan work that is challenging for all pupils, especially the more able.
- Improve the quality of teaching by July 2011 so that a higher proportion is good or better by frequent and more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the responsibilities of new subject leaders to include monitoring teaching and learning, and lesson planning in their subject areas
 - increasing the involvement of the governing body in school self-evaluation and monitoring school development to promote improved achievement. increasing the involvement of the governing body in school self-evaluation and monitoring school development to promote improved achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Children join Reception with skills and abilities similar to those seen nationally. They make good progress and this continues through Years 1 and 2. Successful inroads are now being made into addressing the recent inadequate progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6, and attainment is now average at the end of Year 6. Inadequate teaching in Key Stage 2 has now been eliminated. As a result of effective monitoring, improved teaching and a range of learning strategies in literacy and numeracy the pace of pupils' progress is increasing and is now satisfactory. The school's own tracking, pupils' work and inspection evidence indicate that progress is good in Years 5 and 6. Pupils settle to their tasks quickly, work well both in groups and individually and show enjoyment in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are mostly taught within class groups so share activities and discussions with other pupils. Support for these pupils and those identified as falling behind in their work is flexible and effective and their progress is satisfactory and sometimes good.

The emphasis on the selection of themes and topics to inspire writing, especially for boys, is helping to improve the quality of writing. The progressive development of vocabulary and improvement of spelling by building the understanding of sounds to form words has also helped improve the quality of writing. In numeracy there is a focus on problem solving and this is reinforced well in displays around the school. In a Year 5 numeracy lesson a visit to Greenwich led to well-planned and challenging work for all ability groups on time and the use of the 12 and 24 hour clock. Pupils try to do their best because learning is fun. One pupil said, 'We love our school because you learn about lots of different things.'

Pupils show a well-developed sense of responsibility in their attitude to work and to the duties they undertake as school councillors, play leaders and helpers at the breakfast club and in Reception. The recent work on respect has helped underpin their good social and moral development. The Activemark and Healthy Schools awards illustrate their awareness

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of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Cultural development, however, is relatively weak and pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about other cultures and ways of life. Pupils' personal development overall is satisfactory. They are soundly involved in their local community. The average standards pupils attain and their satisfactory personal development ensure they are soundly prepared for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall with examples of good teaching that are not yet shared effectively. Inconsistent use is made by teachers of the information they have of pupils' progress to plan lessons to ensure that the tasks set for groups of pupils challenge them fully. This is especially true for more-able pupils who often have similar work to other groups and no extension activity to engage them if they finish their tasks quickly. This limits their progress because they are not fully stretched. Marking is satisfactory and identifies how and where pupils' work can be improved. Marking is better in literacy than numeracy. Teachers use ICT well in lessons and plan good opportunities for pupils to use the class ICT facilities to make their learning more fun. Clear targets are set for pupils in literacy and numeracy, they are reviewed regularly and discussed with pupils who say they find them helpful. Teaching assistants are appropriately deployed in classrooms and provide satisfactory and sometimes good support. The monitoring of the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving under the direction of the

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inclusion manager and is now used with increased precision to identify where short intensive support out of class is needed. This intensive support is good.

The curriculum is good and well adapted to provide enrichment through creative activities, especially music. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments including the violin in their time in school. Linking curriculum subjects integrates the new initiatives in numeracy and develops pupils' skills further while making learning exciting. A design and technology task for older pupils led to a problem-solving exercise based on calculating the quantities of ingredients for the commercial production of a loaf and what the cost per loaf should be. Strategies in literacy and numeracy are proving increasingly effective because they are integrated into classes and monitored carefully by senior staff. Learning is extended well beyond the classroom by a range of carefully chosen visits to support class work and a good range of clubs that are well attended. The work of the photography club, for example, is displayed well around the school and pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their clubs and the chance to mix with other year groups in this way. The care, guidance and support that pupils receive are good and embrace, where needed, the whole family. The breakfast club is well attended and valued by pupils and their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior staff have worked with determination to address the problem of underachievement in Key Stage 2. Leadership and management have been incisive and the clear focus on improving teaching and learning and attainment for older pupils is showing growing signs of success. The skills of new subject leaders are developing to match those of experienced subject leaders. However, they are not involved in monitoring lesson plans, and the quality of teaching and learning, to share this responsibility with senior staff and help promote further improvement in pupils' achievement. The needs and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully assessed and regularly monitored by the inclusion manager and as a result their progress is satisfactory and sometimes good across the school. However, pupils of higher ability are not always stretched in lessons and at present the school is not providing equality of opportunity for this group.

Community cohesion is satisfactory. There has been a careful analysis of the school in a local context but insufficient work has been done to ensure pupils develop a clear understanding of the multicultural dimension of the United Kingdom or the variety of ways of life around the world. The safeguarding of pupils' welfare is satisfactory and policies

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and procedures are securely integrated into the school. The governing body shares the enthusiasm to move the school forward and improve achievement for pupils in Key Stage 2. It is taking steps to improve governors' skills but does not take an active part in monitoring new developments or planning its strategic direction of the school through self-evaluation. Links with parents are satisfactory but reporting on pupils' progress is limited. One parent wrote, 'I sometimes feel I do not know enough about what my child is doing.' Another said specifically, 'I would like more frequent updates on my child's progress.'

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and happily in Reception because they are well cared for and resources are used well to provide stimulating learning activities in the inside and outdoor classrooms. Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are better than children of a similar age but weaker in some areas of communication and number, emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress, especially in language and number skills, in their time in Reception. Children's development is promoted well. They are encouraged to develop independence, to share and be kind and helpful to each other. After a physical development activity in the school hall, for example, all children were able to put on shoes and socks quickly and were ready in good time for assembly. Good planning ensures that all six areas of learning are covered and there is a good balance of learning activities led by adults and imaginative games initiated by children.

Learning in small groups is well managed and there is a good focus on developing speaking and listening skills and also using numbers to count. Staff intervene quietly and appropriately in children's own games helping them to develop their ideas and, through explaining what they are doing, helping them to understand. The staff work in a close and

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efficient team because they are well led and systems and procedures are well established and effective. Links with parents are good and built on progressively from initial home visits. Regular updates for parents and carers on their child's development are based on accurate and regular assessments by all staff. The learning record for each child is comprehensive and enhanced well by photographs, examples of work, and a cover designed by the child especially for 'their book'.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About a quarter of the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. A large majority of these parents and carers, and those who spoke to inspectors, were pleased with the school. They value the fact that their children are safe and enjoy school and they have confidence in teachers. Parents and carers expressed most concern about the behaviour of pupils and the progress they make, especially older pupils. The inspection found that behaviour was good in lessons, around the school and at playtimes. Progress for older pupils is satisfactory and inspection evidence indicates that it is improving, especially in Years 5 and 6.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Gateway Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	65	16	30	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	30	56	24	44	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	37	31	57	2	4	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	35	26	48	3	6	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	21	39	29	54	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	35	28	52	2	4	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	33	31	57	4	7	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	22	30	56	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	39	30	56	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	31	29	54	6	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	20	36	67	4	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	26	48	23	43	3	6	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	56	21	39	2	4	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Gateway Community Primary School, Dartford DA2 6DW

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We saw that you behave well and show a lot of interest in your lessons. We were impressed with the lovely displays around the school that show your work and the exciting things you learn. You feel safe in school and have recently been learning about e-safety. You also know a lot about how to keep healthy. Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body are working hard to help you do the best you can. We think that The Gateway is a satisfactory school. This means it does some things well, but also needs to make some things better.

- We have asked your teachers to make sure they use what they know about how well you are learning to plan lessons that always give you work that is a good match to your ability. This will help you to always achieve your best.
- We have asked that a close check be kept on your lessons to make sure that they are as good as they can be and you are learning more and more.
- To make sure the checks on your lessons are more frequent we have suggested that the teachers who are responsible for different subjects help the headteacher and other senior staff with visiting lessons. They will check that the work planned for you by your teachers is interesting and helping you to make progress.
- Finally we have asked that the governing body makes sure that it knows as much as possible about your school. We also want it to keep a close check on all the new things that are happening to make sure that they are helping you to make better and better progress.

You can help by working hard and always doing your best. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

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