

# Greatstone Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 118864         |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Kent           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 379696         |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 17–18 May 2012 |
| <b>Lead inspector</b>          | Wendy Simmons  |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Foundation                                     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 2–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 392  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                             |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Brian Sullivan                                 |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Nicola Wood                                    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 4–5 March 2009                                 |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Baldwin Road<br>New Romney<br>Kent<br>TN28 8SY |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01797 363916                                   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01797 363916                                   |
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|---------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          | 2–11           |
| <b>Inspection date(s)</b> | 17–18 May 2012 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>  | 379696         |



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## Introduction

|                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Inspection team |                      |
| Wendy Simmons   | Additional inspector |
| Clive Reynolds  | Additional inspector |
| Anthony Mundy   | Additional inspector |

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 21 lessons or part lessons. Fourteen teachers were observed and discussions were held with teachers and teaching assistants. The inspectors held four meetings with pupils and heard some read in addition to looking at samples of their work. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior leadership team and two representatives from the governing body. The inspection took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, especially linked to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The inspector evaluated the responses to the questionnaires from pupils, staff and 151 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are twelve classes, in addition to provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has a two-class Nursery and two Reception classes. The headteacher took up her post following the last inspection. A new deputy headteacher joined the school a year ago. Following the last inspection, there have been changes to the senior management team.

Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than average due to the number of pupils who are supported at the school action level and the school action plus stages. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

## Inspection judgements

|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Achievement of pupils</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Quality of teaching</b>            | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Leadership and management</b>      | <b>2</b> |

## Key findings

- This is a good school that pupils, parents and carers are rightly proud of. Pupils achieve well, which reflects the good leadership and teaching. Staff are dedicated, have high expectations and know the pupils well as individuals. The school is not outstanding because teaching is not yet outstanding and because provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not underpinning the very highest level of achievement.
- Teaching is good. Staff help pupils to learn new things quickly. They largely make activities interesting, although occasionally lessons are not as inspiring as they could be. Superb relationships exist between staff and pupils. Taking all of these features together, pupils enjoy school, demonstrate good behaviour and feel safe.
- Leaders are securely focused on targeting support to help boys and pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs to do as well as they can. There remains a few pockets where this is not yet ensuring rapid progress. Leaders have correctly identified that boys in the Early Years Foundation Stage still need further opportunities to extend their speaking, reading and writing skills, especially in the Nursery. A notable strength is the concerted effort to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics between Years 1 and 6 since the last inspection and recent improvements in the Reception provision.
- Leaders use performance management effectively to check the quality of teaching and then provide focused support to bring about improvement. As a result, the school has recovered well from a dip in progress that occurred after the last inspection. This means that the school has maintained its effectiveness as a good school. Taking a three-year trend, attainment is average, but notably pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining at higher levels in both English and mathematics.

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

- By July 2013, raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to outstanding by:
  - making sure that more lessons are outstanding and thoroughly inspiring
  - ensuring the best possible consistency in the quality of guidance and support provided for pupils

- ensuring that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make consistently outstanding progress in all year groups.
- Improving the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - promoting children’s speaking skills more effectively in the Nursery
  - helping children, especially boys, to make the best possible progress in their reading, writing and calculating skills
  - using data about children’s progress as efficiently as possible to target resources.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

From often lower-than-expected starting points, children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and benefit from opportunities to learn important social skills well. The basic skills of reading, writing and calculating are developing well for girls, but some opportunities are missed to quickly extend skills for boys, although they do make steady overall progress. In other parts of the school, the gap between girls’ and boys’ progress has closed securely in the last year. Parents and carers agree that their children do well. The school is accelerating the progress of some individual pupils outstandingly well due to additional targeted support. The most-able pupils achieve well. Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs also make good overall progress.

Pupils learn to read quickly and accurately so that levels of attainment are average by the end of Year 2. The current Year 6 pupils are securely on track to reach higher-than-expected levels of attainment in their reading, with close to 50% demonstrating higher Level 5 skills. The increased emphasis on phonics (learning the connections between letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and guided reading is helping pupils to progress quickly. However, some lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs do not always find it easy to talk about their books. Whereas, more-able pupils show insight when explaining about texts and authors.

Following a focus on writing, pupils are making good overall progress. This was very evident in Reception, where children wrote simple sentences about a safari. Then, in Years 2 and 3, pupils’ descriptive vocabulary accelerates quickly, as evident in their explanations about the character of *The Big Friendly Giant*. By Years 5 and 6, pupils write increasingly complex sentences, as observed when they wrote about ‘The Responsibility of Rulers’. Pupils’ achievement in mathematics has improved because of the emphasis on using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division quickly to complete investigative problem-solving activities.

### Quality of teaching

Teaching is good which endorses parents’ and carers’ views about teaching. Overall, teachers have high expectations. They make accurate assessments about pupils’ needs, which ensure that lessons are usually suitably challenging for all abilities. Most teachers ask probing questions, which help pupils to explain and improve their

understanding well. However, opportunities for children to use their speaking skills are underdeveloped in the Nursery. This is because some staff are more skilled than others at using on-going dialogue to help extend children's play and learning.

High-quality displays demonstrate meaningful opportunities for pupils to use mathematics and English in many subjects. They also reflect how teaching securely promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Following training to improve writing, teachers ensure that pupils often write at length about interesting things. The effective teaching of phonics shows pupils' increasing ability to blend letters together to read new words and to segment them to spell accurately. Teachers make sure that pupils use jottings and discussion time to explain the steps taken to solve mathematical problems. This was evident when pupils worked on adding doubles in Year 2, solving two-step word problems in Year 4 and working on calculations in Years 5 and 6.

Some lessons, although often good, are not inspiring enough to be outstanding. This is because teachers play too safe and over control learning. As a result, pupils are not given enough opportunities to be highly creative learners who use their thinking skills to their potential. For example, Year 1 worked hard when writing their ideas about dragons. This lesson made effective use of a DVD clip to help them to come up with some basic ideas securely well. But, because they did not do any dressing up or role play drama, opportunities were missed for the pupils to be really imaginative in their individual use of descriptive vocabulary. Equally, in a good Year 5 art lesson, pupils worked hard when designing Diamond Jubilee mugs. But, they did not have the opportunity to use a really wide range of artistic techniques or resources to allow their imaginations to be exceptionally inspired.

Where teaching is occasionally outstanding, pupils are totally inspired independent learners, who show immense curiosity and joy in learning. This was evident when Years 5 and 6 explored lubricants, such as oil, butter and tomato ketchup, when finding out about friction on a bicycle wheel. This lesson made superb links literacy, numeracy and science. In another outstanding lesson, pupils were totally absorbed when working on a wide range of interesting fraction challenges in mathematics.

The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is usually good because these pupils are supported in a careful way so that they have the confidence and opportunity to work independently. Very occasionally this is not the case and leads to uneven progress within lessons. Nonetheless, there are examples of exemplary practice, such as in the Year 3 catch-up reading and phonics support.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour and safety are good. Discussions with pupils confirmed that they feel safe at school; a view that is confirmed by parents and carers and the inspection team. Pupils conduct themselves in an orderly way; they are polite and helpful to others. Pupils follow teachers' guidance and school rules well so that playtimes are happy occasions and incidences of inappropriate or distracting behaviour are rare, as are exclusions. Rates of attendance are above average, showing improvement this year. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are well supported so that lessons are not interrupted by incidences of disruptive behaviour. Pupils, parents and carers confirm

that behaviour is typically good over time.

Incidences of bullying are rare. Parents and carers had some concerns about bullying, but inspectors found that suitable care is taken to deal with any incidents that occur. Most pupils know that bullying is something that is persistent rather than a one-off experience of inappropriate behaviour, although a few pupils with special educational needs are not quite as clear about this. Overall, pupils know about different forms of bullying such as cyber bullying, persistent name calling and repeated emotional, verbal and physical abuse. Pupils show respect and understanding about differences in race and culture. They have an age-appropriate awareness about the differences in sexual orientation and the need to be respectful. Leaders are correctly still working to inform parents and carers more about how the school promotes anti-bullying and deals with incidences of bullying if they should occur. Further workshops, for staff, parents and pupils, are planned for the forthcoming year in the drive to make behaviour outstanding in the future.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and other senior leaders, including the governing body, work effectively to review the work of the school well overall, which leads to effective improvement plans. Safeguarding meets the expected requirements.

Incidences of discrimination are not tolerated. In the last year, there has been an effective emphasis on helping pupils to have equal opportunities. Leaders have an immense amount of data about the progress and attainment of different groups. They are beginning to make much better use of this to target support. However, there remains more to be done when using data to analyse provision and outcomes to ensure that boys do as well as possible in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The capacity to improve is securely evident in the improvements already seen in teaching, pupils' progress and in the accuracy of teachers' assessments. All of these areas were identified through effective monitoring of teaching and have been improved through effective continued professional development of staff.

Leaders have worked effectively to improve marking, with some examples that are amongst the best the inspectors have seen. But, the quality of this guidance and support is not consistent enough across the school as a whole to enable teaching and pupils' achievement to be outstanding.

The good curriculum makes strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, whilst also ensuring that important basic skills are taught well. Teachers successfully plan interesting links between subjects, showing very good use of information and communication technology.

## 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      | 46  | 46   | 8            | 0          |
| Primary schools      | 8   | 47   | 40           | 5          |
| Secondary schools    | 14  | 38   | 40           | 8          |
| Special schools      | 28  | 48   | 20           | 4          |
| Pupil referral units | 15  | 50   | 29           | 5          |
| All schools          | 11  | 46   | 38           | 6          |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.   |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.  |
| Attendance                 | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.   |
| Behaviour                  | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.   |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:     | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.  |
| 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. |
| Safety                     | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.             |

**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.**



21 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Greatstone Primary School, New Romney TN28 85Y**

I am writing to thank you for helping the inspectors to find out all about your school, especially for taking so much time to talk with us and for completing the questionnaire. You go to a good school. As you explained, you enjoy school and we agree that you behave well and are almost always polite and helpful. We loved the displays of your work. We are pleased to agree with you that you make good progress in your reading, writing and mathematics. Some of your work that is linked with other subjects is also impressive, and the links between subjects make learning meaningful to you. You are well prepared for secondary school.

You have noticed that your headteacher and other staff are always trying to improve things for you. We all agree that the following important things need to be done to help to make your school outstanding.

- Although teaching is good, we would like it to be outstanding. Sometimes this does happen, but it would be great if there were more lessons like this. Teachers will be making more lessons really exciting, and they will work to make the support they give you equally fantastic, especially the marking of your work. Teachers will be making sure that everyone makes the very best possible progress. So, please help them by continuing to work hard.
- Also, we would like children to do more talking and learning in the Nursery, and for boys to do as well as possible in both the Reception and Nursery when learning as they play and investigate new things.

We do hope that you all enjoy the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, as you have already started to do some very exciting work on this.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons  
Lead inspector

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