

The Gateway Community Primary School

Milestone Road, Dartford, Kent, DA2 6DW

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The rate at which pupils make progress in their learning has improved well since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics, and particularly strong progress in reading. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reach Level 4, or above, is higher than the national average.
- The quality of teaching has improved so that it is typically good and some teaching is outstanding. Learning in English is frequently engaging and exciting because teaching in these lessons is imaginative and lively. The teaching of reading is especially well structured across the school. Good support is provided to ensure disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, or children who are eligible for the pupil premium, progress at a similar rate to their classmates.
- Pupils engage well with learning, are polite and have good manners. They understand and respond well to the school's systems that reward positive behaviour. Consequently, exclusion is extremely rare. Attendance continues to improve year on year.
- Pupils feel safe because staff are always available to provide supervision and support.
- School leaders and the governing body have a very good understanding of how well pupils are achieving. This is used effectively to ensure that training and support for all staff are strongly focused on improving pupils' attainment and progress.
- The planned curriculum ensures that pupils have meaningful opportunities to use and apply their basic literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as rapid as in English.
- Subject leaders are not quite as effective as senior leaders at monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and teaching in eight lessons and visited a further 11 lessons as part of learning walks. Half of the lesson observations were conducted jointly with school leaders. Inspectors conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work from the last school year.
- They held meetings with school leaders and staff, representatives from the governing body and local authority, and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of 21 responses on the Parent View website, as well as the analysis of a recent survey of parents conducted by the governing body. Informal discussions were also held with parents at the beginning of school on the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Jon Carter, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Sheila Browning

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Gateway is a primary school of average size.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is slightly larger than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is smaller than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The school meets the Government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in mathematics across the school, so that pupils' learning develops as quickly as it does in English, by ensuring that numeracy and mathematics lessons consistently:
 - have engaging and exciting introductory activities to improve pupils' motivation
 - provide well-planned activities that give pupils opportunities to learn, use and apply the basic skills that underpin more advanced learning
 - take into account teachers' assessment of weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding, such as number bonds and mental arithmetic.
- Refine the role of middle managers to ensure that their monitoring of learning and teaching forms an integral part of the school's self-evaluation and improvement processes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in a range of subjects. As a result of a recent whole-school focus, pupils in all year groups make accelerated progress in reading. Pupils finish Key Stage 1 with levels of attainment that are above the national average. By the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2, they are well ahead of the level expected for their age.
- Pupils join the school with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with age-related expectations, although their writing skills are less well developed. While pupils make more than expected progress in writing, their lower starting points mean that attainment in writing is not as high as that in reading. Nevertheless, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in writing is above average.
- Pupils' progress in numeracy and mathematics is not as rapid as that in English. Pupils make better than expected progress in some classes, but this is not consistent across all year groups. As a result, whilst attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2, a gap remains between achievement in mathematics and English. The school has successfully reversed a declining trend in attainment in mathematics to ensure that it remains above average at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Although there is occasionally some variation between classes, boys and girls usually make equally good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, often make accelerated progress so that their levels of attainment in core subjects are similar to their classmates. This demonstrates that the school is particularly effective in ensuring that these pupils are as well prepared for their future education as their peers.
- Achievement for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and has improved over time, and most make good progress in the main areas of learning. Particular emphasis on the structured teaching of the sounds letters make, known as phonics, has successfully supported the school's drive to improve reading.

The quality of teaching **is good**

- A culture of high expectations is well established across the school. Teachers communicate these expectations well by setting work that matches the needs of most pupils effectively. Consequently, lessons routinely deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. In whole class discussions, teachers skilfully use opportunities presented by pupils' curiosity to allow exploration of, and discussion about, their ideas. This extends their learning well. Occasionally, higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they might because they are not consistently given opportunities for independent learning.
- Whole-school strategies to promote improvement in reading are used consistently well by both teachers and teaching assistants. For example, all staff have been trained in the essential elements of a reading improvement programme for weaker readers and the weakest are given specialist support which is effective in increasing their progress.
- The teaching of English and literacy is often punctuated by activities that excite pupils and engage them well, especially at the beginning of lessons. For example, the Year 6 class was enthralled by an imaginative combination of video descriptions from children of a similar age, and the provision of a darkened area in the classroom to stimulate them while producing descriptive phrases about feelings within a structured story. This also enabled the teacher to encourage the class to recall and use their basic skills well.
- While mathematics is taught effectively, it does not consistently benefit from the same exciting and engaging starter activities that are used by teachers in English lessons. As a result, pupils are less enthused about their learning in mathematics. They have fewer opportunities to practise the basic skills of the subject which underpin more advanced

learning. This is because teachers do not consistently take full account of their assessment of weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding, such as number bonds and mental arithmetic, when planning their learning activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy attending school. Pupils' attendance is above average and continues to improve because of the clear expectations set by school leaders and pupils' increased motivation achieved by better teaching.
- There is a friendly and positive learning environment in all classrooms. Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants and interact politely with visitors and each other.
- Bullying and prejudice are extremely rare and dealt with robustly if they occur. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and take some responsibility for helping to keep the school environment safe and welcoming. For instance, older pupils set a positive example by leading activities for their younger peers at play time and acting as 'hall heroes'.
- Pupils fully understand and participate enthusiastically in the school's systems for rewarding positive behaviour. They value the golden rules and traffic light system which encourage them to be responsible for their contribution and conduct in lessons. As a result, behaviour in classrooms and around the school is typically good and often better.
- Pupils report, and the school's records confirm, that occasionally minor playground disagreements lead to instances of undesirable behaviour. These are dealt with in accordance with the school's published behaviour policy. Good management of pupils who sometimes exhibit poor behaviour has ensured that it is unusual for the school to need to use exclusion. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire were positive that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.

The leadership and management are good

- Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, the cohesive staff team has collaborated effectively to secure rapid improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the teaching of English. The continued trend of improvement in pupils' attainment and progress demonstrates that school leaders successfully use their accurate self-evaluation to identify weaknesses and take action to overcome them swiftly. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare are thorough and meet current requirements.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team monitor pupils' progress rigorously through data analysis, regular lesson observations and scrutinies of teachers' planning and pupils' work. These approaches are used well to identify priorities for support and training for staff. The positive, but focused, way in which support is provided secures improvement rapidly. However, some middle leaders responsible for key subjects are not yet fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation processes as a number are new to their posts.
- The progress of different groups of pupils, whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement, is monitored well, ensuring there is no discrimination and that all pupils have equality of opportunity.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well through the broad and balanced curriculum. Activities such as publishing the Gateway Gazette as an enterprise activity illustrate the diversity of pupils' recent learning about multicultural arts, European languages and green travel, for example.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school. The school makes well targeted use of the specialist resources available to support staff development.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body, together with senior leaders, ensures that financial resources are used efficiently and monitors the impact that they have on improving pupils' progress. Pupil premium funding, for example, was directed at the school's reading improvement scheme and has had a positive effect on pupils' attainment in that area.
 - The governing body is effective in monitoring the performance of the headteacher against challenging targets that are based on priorities for improving pupils' attainment and progress.
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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 pupil's 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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	132107
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	406469

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kenneth Clarke
Headteacher	Heather Overton
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 November 2010
Telephone number	01322 220090
Fax number	01322 289958
Email address	office@gateway-pri.kent.sch.uk

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