

# East Borough Primary School

Vinters Road, Maidstone, ME14 5DX

**Inspection dates** 18–19 April 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' progress has not been good enough historically. It has been particularly weak in writing because pupils do not use a wide range of vocabulary in their writing and this affects how well they can improve their work.
- Progress is now accelerating in English and mathematics but is not yet good.
- As a result of difficult staffing issues, the quality of teaching over time has been inconsistent and has not led to good achievement.
- Teachers do not consistently offer activities that help pupils to work independently.
- Teachers do not always give pupils work that is hard enough. This means that progress for more able pupils sometimes slows.

### The school has the following strengths

- The strong leadership team is supported well by the restructured governing body. Together, they have overcome staffing difficulties and improved the quality of teaching, especially during the last year.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. They are well behaved, polite and respectful. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting activities before and after school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 23 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteacher. They heard pupils read and observed teaching of reading. They also observed pupils during lunchtimes and break times.
- The inspectors looked at various aspects of the school's work, including documentation about safeguarding, pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. They also looked at pupils' books, planning and evaluation records, minutes of the meetings of the governing body and external reports.
- Inspectors took account of the 53 responses on the Parent View website.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and one other representative of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, various members of staff including senior and middle leaders and a small group of pupils.

## Inspection team

Helen Howard, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Hayes

Additional Inspector

Kevin Hodge

Additional Inspector

Helena McVeigh

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- Approximately one sixth of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, which gives additional funding to those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and the children of service families. This is a lower proportion than that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils have a White British heritage. Approximately one fifth of the pupils have a minority ethnic heritage and most of these have any other White backgrounds.
- In 2012, the school met the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body manages additional after-school provision, including clubs and holiday activities.
- Since the last inspection, there have been difficult staffing issues that have now been resolved.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is all consistently good and more is outstanding by:
  - planning activities that help pupils work independently in lessons
  - continuing to share the best practice that exists in the school and in the local collaboration of schools
  - giving pupils time to respond to the comments for improvement that teachers make in books.
- Raise achievement by:
  - providing work for more able pupils that is at the right level of difficulty
  - making stronger links between reading activities and pupils' writing
  - widening the range of vocabulary that pupils use in their writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Although attainment at the end of Year 6 is average, pupils do not make good progress from their starting points. This is because the progress that pupils make in writing from the end of Year 2 has been historically well below national averages. Many pupils do not use a wide range of vocabulary in their writing and this limits their ability to improve their work.
- As a result of better teaching, pupils currently in the school are making faster progress this year than in the past and they are now catching up on previous underperformance. Despite this, not enough pupils yet make good progress from Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2.
- Children start school in the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below what is expected for their age. They make good progress and by the time they reach Year 1, they are in line with expectations. Improvements in teaching mean that in Key Stage 1 more pupils are making rapid progress. Attainment in mathematics is now above average.
- The school has introduced a programme to improve progress in reading and this is having a strong impact on attainment. It includes matching letters and combinations of letters to the sounds they make (phonics). Pupils clearly enjoy these sessions. For example, in one Year 2 lesson pupils were reading about dinosaurs. They were able to read aloud confidently to a partner and enjoyed acting out some of the adverbs, such as 'lumbering'. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 in 2012 was well above the national average and at the end of Year 6, was average.
- In last year's end-of-Year 6 tests, the gaps in attainment in English and mathematics between those pupils who benefited from pupil premium funding and other pupils in the school narrowed compared with previous years. Their attainment is now similar to other pupils in English and approximately six months below in mathematics. These gaps are much smaller than found nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected progress from starting points that are often below national averages. A few make good progress because they are very well supported by teaching assistants. Pupils who have minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to other pupils in the school.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Senior leaders and managers rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and as a result, the quality of teaching is improving and much is now more effective. However, it is not yet leading to pupils' good progress from their starting points in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils are not always given the opportunity to learn independently so that they are not as actively involved in their own learning as they could be. Some pupils, especially those who are more able, are not always given work that is difficult enough and they do not make progress as quickly as they could.
- Teachers mark books regularly and use assessment well to give comments to pupils about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. This has improved since the last inspection. They do not always give time for pupils to respond to these comments.
- In Reception, children make good progress because teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan lessons that are fun and that motivate children. For example, in a lesson about 'Little Red Riding Hood', children thoroughly enjoyed guessing what was in the basket for 'Granny' and considering whether she would like the present.
- The school has focused strongly on teaching reading and as a result, pupils now make faster progress. Teachers do not always make strong enough links between pupils' reading and their writing.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and plan lessons that make learning relevant. In a Year 6 class, for example, pupils wrote a speech for the Prime Minister in response to news about the Boston

Marathon, to give an opinion about whether the London Marathon should go ahead. This helped pupils to see a purpose for their writing.

- Teachers plan well for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They provide 'success criteria', which outline precisely what pupils should achieve in a lesson, and these help them to learn in smaller steps.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they are enthusiastic about their learning. They say that they feel very safe in school and parents and carers agree. Pupils behave well in school and in lessons.
- Staff have very good relationships with pupils and act as good role models for the high standards of behaviour that they expect. Consequently, pupils are attentive and respectful with adults.
- Adults take every opportunity to celebrate good behaviour with pupils. The colour-coded 'slips' help to prompt pupils and there is a range of rewards that pupils enjoy receiving. These include 'top banana' awards in the Foundation Stage, 'cinema' tickets for home reading and sitting at the 'captain's table' for good behaviour in the dining room. Effective strategies to maintain good attendance mean that attendance overall is above average.
- There are very good arrangements in place to help pupils settle when they join the school and when they move classes. These include compact discs with nursery rhymes to learn for children in the Foundation Stage and booklets that give them information about their new teachers. All pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are able to take part in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils report very few incidents of bullying and say that if they do occur, they are dealt with well. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. Some pupils are playground buddies who help others and older pupils enjoy their various roles and responsibilities.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and who have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties make good progress over time because they are well supported in individual and small group sessions. Some parents and carers now work with the school so that they can use the same strategies at home to support their child.
- Pupils are not always given the opportunity to work independently in lessons and this means that they are not as actively involved in their own learning as they could be. In a few lessons, when teaching is not as strong, pupils are not always as positive about learning.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher has been in post for two years. Since the last inspection and supported well by the effective governing body and other leaders and managers, her strong leadership has overcome difficult staffing issues to reverse a trend of underperformance and make improvements. These include attainment, progress and teachers' use of assessment. Pupils' previous good behaviour and above average attendance have been maintained. This demonstrates the capacity for further improvement.
- The broad curriculum, including the wide range of activities out of school, promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Information about pupils' performance is now rigorously monitored and teachers use the information well to plan lessons and provide extra support for pupils who need it. The 'thermometer' for pupils' progress, which compares progress across year groups, is used well to make judgements about how well pupils in each year group are doing. The school's self-evaluation uses this information and together with the development plan ensures that actions taken accelerate progress.

- Leaders and managers monitor teaching carefully and tackle underperformance very effectively. Promotion is used well to reward good teaching or management. A comprehensive programme for professional development enables teachers to develop their teaching skills.
- The local authority has provided funding to support effective partnerships with other schools and this has been effective in supporting improvements in assessment, teaching and leadership. Teachers have particularly benefited from sharing good practice in outstanding schools although not all of the recently recruited teachers have had this opportunity.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well and acts strongly to tackle discrimination. Additional pupil premium funding is used innovatively to overcome disadvantages for eligible pupils, including funding an individual mathematics programme, a writing club before school, and individual and small-group support. Consequently, the gaps in attainment between those who are eligible and other pupils are closing rapidly.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The recently restructured governing body has contributed well to the strategic direction of the school. Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing, including the performance data and how the school compares with others nationally. They have regular training to improve how they monitor the work of the school. They know about the quality of teaching and tackle underperformance effectively. They use performance management of teachers robustly to make sure that teachers are rewarded appropriately and have supported the recruitment of high quality staff, including leadership posts. They manage the budget well and check that all resources, including pupil premium funding, make a difference to pupils' outcomes.

## 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	<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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118298
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	405758

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	426
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Palmby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Herbert
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29–30 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01622 754633
<b>Fax number</b>	01622 672017
<b>Email address</b>	info@east-borough.kent.sch.uk



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