

# Darenth Community Primary School

Green Street Green Road, Dartford, Kent, DA2 8DH

**Inspection dates** 15–16 May 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		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement over time is not yet good despite some recent rapid improvements in both English and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. This is because teachers do not always adjust tasks to ensure pupils who are doing well are sufficiently challenged, especially in writing.
- Planning does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in solving problems.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have effective opportunities to develop their literacy skills in the outdoor setting.
- Pupils' behaviour is not good enough because pupils do not always concentrate fully on what they should be learning and rely too much on their teachers to help them progress.
- Pupils do not always have sufficient time to act on teachers' written comments and improve their work.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have yet to assess consistently the impact of additional approaches used to support pupils provided through the pupil premium funding.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are now taking actions to improve the approaches used by teachers which are leading to better progress for pupils.
- Governors have ensured their checks and the restructuring of the school leadership are now leading to improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Pupils feel safe. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Pupils are polite and courteous and show consideration for others.
- The dedication of staff provides secure and enjoyable experiences for all pupils whatever their background or need.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, four of these jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work in their books.
- The inspector met with pupils and talked to them about their work. Meetings were held with middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Documentation covering safeguarding, the management of performance of staff, records of behaviour and safety, attendance, checks of pupils' attainment and progress were reviewed.
- The inspector took account that there were seven responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Eleven questionnaires from staff were also considered.

## Inspection team

Howard Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is one Reception class.
- The large majority of pupils come from a White British background. An above average proportion of pupils come from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support from the pupil premium funding, which is the extra government support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better and raise pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by:
  - regularly adjusting tasks for pupils who are doing well so that they are challenged to achieve the highest level in writing
  - providing opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills to solve problems
  - ensuring children in Reception have effective opportunities to develop their early literacy skills, especially within the outdoor setting
  - developing pupils' attitude to learning so that it is consistently positive, by providing opportunities for pupils to reflect independently on their work and explain their thinking
  - giving pupils sufficient time to respond to teachers' written comments.
- Increase the impact of leaders, managers and governors by:
  - ensuring senior leaders monitor more closely the progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium
  - strengthening the role of the governing body in checking that the additional pupil premium funding used to support pupils who need extra help is improving the progress of these pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Standards achieved by pupils over time have been too variable. The progress made by all groups of pupils has been uneven. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been below the national average and although progress is improving, given their starting points, progress has not been consistently good across the school.
- In tests in 2012, Year 6 pupils supported through the pupil premium did not do well. In English they were behind their peers by nine months and by four months in mathematics. Although some still underachieve, their progress is now improving and, as with other pupils, gaps are closing because of the additional support from adults in classes which is now in place.
- Pupils' performance in the 2012 Year 1 phonics check (linking letters and sounds) was below average. However, school information and evidence from the inspection show that progress in reading is improving, with some pupils making progress at a faster rate than similar pupils of the same age nationally.
- Children enter Reception with below expected levels of skills and understanding. An increasing proportion leave Reception at levels expected for their age and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. However, children do not always make faster progress because they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their early literacy skills, especially within the outdoor setting.
- Pupils within the Traveller community make good progress in Key Stage 1. Progress is more variable in Key Stage 2, although pupils in Year 6 achieve as well as their peers and are confident in talking about their learning and participate fully within the school.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved. Progress is now good as a result of additional approaches, for example through reading recovery sessions, and pupils grow in confidence to become successful in their learning. Parents and carers are increasingly engaged in supporting their child's learning.
- Gaps in pupils' understanding and skills are now closing quickly. This is because the actions taken by leaders and governors have led to improvements in the quality of teaching.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching does not always promote good achievement. Consequently, pupils' progress as the pupils move through the school has not been consistently good.
- Pupils are not always effectively challenged to develop the application of their numeracy skills. For example, planning does not provide sufficiently frequent opportunities for pupils to solve problems within real life contexts. Consequently, opportunities to deepen their understanding are missed.
- Teachers do not always assess pupils' progress routinely during lessons. Tasks are not adjusted to extend the learning of pupils who are doing well to provide additional challenge so that they may be even more successful and achieve the highest levels, especially in their writing.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient encouragement for pupils to think for themselves. Because of this, pupils can struggle to sustain their concentration when working on their own and have difficulty in talking about their learning to check how secure their understanding is.
- Marking has improved since the previous inspection. Written feedback to pupils provides constructive guidance on next steps for improving their work, especially in English. However, teachers written comments are not always used effectively because pupils are not given time to use these and revisit their work and identify how to make improvements.
- Children in Reception have good opportunities to develop their listening skills. For example, in a story session, skilled questioning ensured children listened carefully and used a range of vocabulary to talk about the characters. However, the outside setting is not as effectively

developed to provide opportunities to extend their early literacy skills further.

- Where the quality of learning is most effective the engagement of pupils is sustained. For example, this was seen in a Year 1 English lesson in which a range of activities and questioning techniques was used to challenge pupils to ensure the pace of learning was strong. Learning experiences for pupils are also deepened where teachers model what good work looks like against clear success criteria, for example as seen a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson.
- Other adults provide an important role in developing the confidence of pupils. This is especially so for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs where teachers' planning provides guidance to ensure these pupils have equal access and participate fully with their peers during lessons.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Pupils are often too dependent on their teachers to help them learn. While disruption in lessons is unusual, pupils do not always take sufficient responsibility for their learning. Where planning effectively develops pupils' skills and strategies to learn independently, progress is good. Where teaching is less effective the focus of pupils is weaker and their attitudes to learning are less positive.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school continues to develop effective approaches to support pupils who do not attend regularly and fully promotes the importance of attendance.
- The headteacher has created a positive atmosphere across the school. The relationship between pupils and staff is strong. Pupils say their teachers are always willing to listen to them if they have any concerns. Pupils play well together during break times. Older pupils take on responsibilities, for example acting as mentors, and spend time with younger pupils to support their learning.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. Discrimination is tackled firmly. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and say that incidents of any kind are dealt with quickly. They understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. They are confident in talking with adults and happy to express their views and engage in conversation on a range of topics.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leaders have brought about secure improvements since the previous inspection. This is especially so within the last 12 months, but achievement over time is not yet good enough despite some recent rapid improvements in pupils' progress.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching regularly. Subject leaders are now fully involved in bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. However, this has yet to bring about a consistently positive impact on the learning and progress of all groups of pupils.
- Procedures to review teachers' performance against the achievement of pupils have recently been put in place. There are now clear links between allowances, pay and pupils' progress, with leaders and governors overseeing this.
- The school has detailed information on how well pupils are progressing. The data are being used to track the progress of different groups of pupils by leaders who are developing effective steps to help pupils who are not doing well enough.
- The local authority has supported the school effectively. It has provided advice and expertise to enable leaders to raise achievement and develop the quality of teaching. Tailored training for teachers is leading to marked improvements. Leaders are demonstrating strong capacity to build on recent improvements in pupils' achievement.
- The subjects taught enhance pupils' understanding within a range of creative themes. Planning

now provides for development in pupils' knowledge and understanding in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' activities provide meaningful experiences, for example exploring the messages behind Tudor portraits for a contemporary audience.

- Assemblies are organised well to contribute to pupils' spiritual understanding and promote a sense of empathy and social responsibility. for example developing pupils' use of sign language. Pupils are eager to take on a range of responsibilities and have a clear understanding of moral issues. Other cultures are celebrated, especially from within the Traveller community.
- The school meets safeguarding requirements. Staff and governors are trained in child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has improved considerably. Governors acknowledge that within this last year they have become more effective in challenging the school about its performance. Because of extensive training and the development of a wealth of data, governors now effectively address weaknesses in the school's achievement. They are confident in asking all leaders searching questions about performance. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and what is being done to reward good teachers and to tackle underperformance. They check how well the headteacher meets performance targets. Governors have been especially effective in their succession planning in moving toward the appointment of a new headteacher. While there are now enhanced procedures for accountability at all levels of leadership, governors have yet to ensure that the use of the pupil premium funding is having an impact on these pupils' progress. Governors make sure staff are committed to tackling discrimination and equality.

## 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>	118245
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	401732

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>	137
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Roberts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Manning
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19–20 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 703178
<b>Fax number</b>	01474 709419
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@darenth.kent.sch.uk



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