

Vale View Primary School

Vale View Road, Elmsvale, Dover, CT17 9NP

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Pupils throughout the school make good progress. Their reading, writing and mathematics skills have improved dramatically since the previous inspection and are now broadly average.
- Pupils in Year 6 have made exceptional progress during the past year so that they have made up much of the ground lost due to previous inadequate provision.
- The rapid improvement in pupils' achievement is because the quality of teaching is good overall and outstanding in Years 2 and 6.
- Sharply focused support helps different groups, including pupils with special educational needs, those eligible for pupil premium funding and those at the early stages of learning English, to make equally good progress.
- Teachers make good use of information about what pupils know already and what they need to do next. They make learning lively, interesting and relevant.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Their attitudes to learning have improved and they are confident, cooperative, responsible and keen to learn.
- Senior leaders, including governors, pursue improvement systematically and relentlessly. They know what needs to be done and focus correctly on those actions which improve the education and achievement of all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement could be even better, particularly in writing.
- Teaching is not good enough to be judged outstanding in all classes.
- Attendance, although improving, is still below average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons. Four of these were observed jointly with senior staff. They also made further shorter visits to each class. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of early reading, letters and sounds. They discussed the pupils' work, school life and behaviour with groups of Year 4 and Year 6 pupils and checked the quality of pupils' work in different subjects.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, minutes of local authority review meetings, documents relating to safeguarding children, behaviour and attendance, and leaders' monitoring of teaching. They scrutinised the school's own data on pupils' current progress, including the progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, pupils new to the school, those with English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for additional support through the pupil premium funding.
- The inspectors had meetings with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority.
- There were no responses to the online parent and carer questionnaire (Parent View). However, the inspectors took into account the views of parents and carers from the school's own recent survey.
- Inspectors looked at the quality of the learning environment and pupils' work on display throughout the school. Evidence from Ofsted's previous monitoring visits was also taken into account.

Inspection team

Sheena MacDonald, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Juliet Ward

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Vale View is an average-sized primary school. It is federated with Aylesham Primary School in the Colliers Vale Federation. The schools share an executive headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and governing body.
- Although the school is mixed, there is a higher than average proportion of boys.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding, in this school, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average and the proportion whose first language is not English is just below average. The main minority groups of pupils come from Baltic countries or from Eastern Europe.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and are supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below average. The majority of this group have speech, language and communication needs.
- In 2012, the school did not meet the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum levels for pupils' attainment and progress. The school is likely to meet the floor standard this year.
- Higher than average numbers of pupils join or leave the school during the year.
- The school does not have alternative provision for any of its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more teaching is outstanding by:
 - using the sharing of the outstanding teaching which already exists as a model for further improvement.
- Raise attainment especially in writing by:
 - addressing remaining difficulties with handwriting and spelling
 - ensuring that pupils have varied experiences and opportunities to develop their speaking, listening and communication skills
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length.
- Improve attendance so that it is at least at the national average by working with families to reduce the number of pupils who take a lot of time off school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In the past, pupils have not achieved very well at all and there has been a lot of ground to make up. During this year, across the school, pupils have made good progress and almost all pupils have already achieved their very challenging end of year targets. The older pupils whose lack of progress had been the most substantial have made exceptional progress. Many pupils in Year 6 have achieved as much this year as many pupils do in the entire Key Stage.
- Children start in the nursery with knowledge and skills which are generally well below those normally expected of this age group. They are helped to settle very quickly into school and make good progress because of exciting learning opportunities in the nursery and Reception classes. By the time they start Year 1, they are achieving as well as most children their age. In Key Stage 1, the pupils continue to achieve well and this year the pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills are broadly average, which is much higher than in previous years.
- Improving the teaching of reading has been a key focus and the positive impact of this is evident throughout the school. Pupils enjoy reading and, particularly in the Reception class and in Key Stage 1, are able to use their understanding of phonics (letters and sounds) to read and write unfamiliar words. They increasingly read with expression and there was a very good example of this during the visit, when a Year 3 pupil was very convincing as the Troll in the Billy Goats Gruff play.
- Pupils enjoy practical learning and problem solving in mathematics. They can use quick recall of mathematics facts during problem solving activities and older pupils are able to explain concepts such as perfect numbers. They still find it difficult to explain their mathematical thinking but are confident in 'having a go'.
- All of the different groups of pupils make good progress. In Year 6, for example, pupils eligible for pupil premium funded support made better progress than their classmates. Overall, as measured by their average point scores, they do slightly less well than the other pupils but better than similar pupils elsewhere. This is because of the positive impact of the support provided. The same is true for other groups, such as pupils with special educational needs and those learning English.
- The work in the pupils' books and in the lessons seen during the inspection confirms this rapid progress. The way pupils eagerly tackle learning challenges in lessons and their increasingly neat presentation of work show that they take pride in their achievements.
- Pupils are keen to talk about their learning and share interesting examples of work in different subjects. Much of the work is challenging, such as the current Year 6 crime scene investigation. The pupils are investigating clues such as footprints, using soil analysis. At the moment, all the evidence is pointing to the executive headteacher as the prime suspect!
- Overall, although there are examples of rapid progress in writing such as in Year 5, the pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. This is partly because older pupils missed some crucial teaching of phonics, spelling and handwriting skills earlier in their school life. Whole-class teaching and well-focused small-group and one-to-one support are helping but it is more difficult to tackle these problems later rather than, as happens now, sorting them out at an early stage.

The quality of teaching is good

- The rapid improvement in pupils' skills is because the quality of teaching is good overall and outstanding in Years 2 and 6. Teachers plan very carefully, taking into account, and building on, what the pupils know already. The work is well matched to meet pupils' different needs and abilities and the support given by teaching assistants is well targeted and very effective.
- Lessons are lively and interesting and teachers make good links between subjects to make the learning richer and more relevant. Teachers plan exciting events and activities to stimulate

enthusiasm for learning. For example, during the visit, Year 4 pupils, and adults, dressed as Romans and walked down to the town museum to take part in a Roman event. There are good examples of this approach everywhere in the school, in classrooms, corridors and in the termly 'Big books' which celebrate the topic work. Children in the nursery and Reception classes benefit from exciting planned learning opportunities in the outside areas as well as in the classrooms.

- Most of the adults use good questioning skills to prompt and encourage the pupils to think and solve problems themselves rather than telling them exactly what the answer is or what to do. This is a significant improvement and although there are times when adults talk for too long or give the pupils too few opportunities to try things out first, these are rare now.
- In most lessons, there are well-planned opportunities for the pupils to discuss and explain their ideas. This is important, as it gives the pupils, including those learning English, time to develop their vocabulary and communication skills.
- Teachers make good use of marking, class and individual targets so that the pupils are very aware of what they are learning and how well they are achieving. Marking in the books is consistently helpful and there are many examples of pupils responding to the marking and also evaluating their own and their friends' work.
- Teachers' good understanding of assessment is used to pinpoint extra teaching activities to meet the needs of particular pupils. Good quality small group and individual teaching was observed during the inspection with older pupils who need extra support for reading and phonics and younger pupils whose speech and language skills are weak.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are delightful. They are cheerful, polite and friendly and behave well in lessons around the school and in the playground. The recent parent survey showed that most of those who responded agree that behaviour is good. Over 95% also said that the school was helping their children become independent and mature. Serious incidents such as bullying or racism are very rare and pupils feel safe in school.
- Pupils consider the needs and feelings of others and this is supported by lessons which focus on good social development. For example, in Year 2 they worked in pairs modelling good and bad listening behaviour and were very articulate about how the behaviour made them feel. This moved on from what might be expected when one partner was a little over-attentive and the other pupil said it was making her rather nervous!
- Pupils are eager to learn and work independently without the need for constant reminders. They understand the school's behaviour policy but also know that good behaviour brings its own rewards such as getting on well in learning and in play.
- There are good opportunities for them to organise activities and events such as Year 4's project about Gambia. This involved organising fundraising events and deciding the best way to spend the money. The pupils are very clear about how this sort of approach helps them to develop good teamworking and their understanding of concepts such as fairness.
- It is expected that all pupils, whatever their age, will behave sensibly and they respond well to good established routines in lessons. They are also expected to take on responsibilities. For example, in the younger classes, pupils are responsible for meeting visitors and explaining the class 'I can' targets such as 'I can solve problems a step at a time' or 'I can use a small voice inside the school'. Older pupils have a range of responsibilities but they understand that their most important task is to be good role models for younger pupils. They take this very seriously and do it well.
- The school staff work hard to highlight the importance of regular attendance and most pupils arrive on time every day but there are some pupils whose attendance is poor. So, although attendance has improved this year, it is still below average.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and head of school know the strengths and weaknesses of the school in impressive detail. They are well supported by the Key Stage leaders who act as excellent role models because the quality of their teaching is outstanding. The rapid improvement in all aspects of the school is evidence of their relentless focus on doing what needs to be done, doing it well and doing it promptly. Some of the changes are too new to have had full effect. Nevertheless, there are positive indications of success.
- The school improvement plan is sharply focused on improving pupils' learning and the quality of teaching. There are challenging targets for each class and groups of pupils and these are regularly checked to make sure improvement is happening.
- There are good systems to make sure that the school is a well-ordered and safe place where everyone knows exactly what they should be doing and why. Policies on aspects such as behaviour management, marking, calculations in mathematics and the use of guided reading sessions are agreed, support is provided and then practice is monitored to make sure that the policies are being used by all staff.
- Senior staff check the quality of teaching rigorously and in different ways so that they get a rounded picture about how the teaching is making a difference to how well pupils are achieving. Staff have individual improvement plans with follow-up activities and support specific to their individual needs.
- All staff have targets which are specific, measurable and closely related to their responsibilities. Regular discussions about how well pupils are doing have helped teachers develop real strength in their understanding of the links between their teaching and pupils' progress.
- The leadership and management of support for pupils with disabilities, those with special educational needs, and pupils from other groups which potentially underachieve, is excellent. No stone is left unturned to find strategies that work and all actions are carefully evaluated to make sure that they are making a positive difference. As a result, these pupils are making at least good progress. The special needs coordinator works across both schools and this is just one example of how the federation is adding strength to the school.
- The pupil premium funding is very carefully targeted and evaluated regularly by leaders, including governors, to make sure that it really is helping to improve the skills of this group and also the pupils at the early stages of learning English. The gaps in achievement between different groups are closing, which, along with the absence of racism, bullying and harassment, shows that the school effectively promotes equal opportunities.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school. In the recent school survey, very few had any criticisms and over 95% said that the school was helping their children become independent and mature. The school has strongly developed values and there are many opportunities to celebrate different cultures and academic, personal, sporting and creative achievements.
- Teamwork is strong and, as one of the phase leaders said, 'staff and pupils have a genuine desire for continuing improvement'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The chair of governors has used her considerable experience of education to challenge and support the school and also to develop the skills of other governors. Meetings now include workshop activities to develop governors' knowledge and understanding of particular aspects of school such as the use of data. The governing body is responsible for both schools in the federation and there are smaller strategy groups specific to each school. Since the previous inspection, the strategy group has met every fortnight and knows the school inside out. This is partly because of the excellent and detailed information provided by the executive headteacher and also because the governors pay focused visits to the school to look at things such as the quality of work in the pupils' books. Governors carry out their various statutory duties very well. For example, safeguarding arrangements are very thorough and governors are fully involved in staff performance management arrangements and links to salary progression. They are also fully involved in improvement planning and are strongly focused on

pupils' achievement. The members of the strategy group, in particular, are very knowledgeable about both adults' and pupils' performance.

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

Unique reference number	118494
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	420442

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Valerie Clough
Executive Headteacher	Abigail Birch
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 March 2012
Telephone number	01304 202821
Fax number	01304 202821
Email address	headteacher@vale-view.kent.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

