

# Thames View Primary School

Bloors Lane, Rainham, Gillingham, ME8 7DX

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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:

- While improving rapidly, achievement is not yet good in writing and mathematics because some pupils do not make enough progress.
- Teachers do not make effective use of opportunities to help pupils improve their writing and mathematical skills by practising them in different subjects or by using their knowledge of number to solve mathematical problems.
- The quality of teaching over time has been too variable, and as a result pupils have not achieved well. In part this is because a number of teachers have left or joined the school since it opened in April 2012. Nevertheless, some teaching in the school still requires improvement.

### The school has the following strengths:

- Leaders and managers have worked determinedly to improve the quality of teaching and have taken decisive action where necessary to ensure it improves. The governing body holds senior leaders to account for teachers' performance. As a result, pupils' achievement is rising.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and are eager to learn. They show respect and courtesy towards adults and one another. Attendance is above average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons and conducted a series of short walks to look at aspects of the school’s work. Of these activities, seven were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed two assemblies. Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons, in the playground and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and talked to other pupils in lessons and in the playground.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils’ books during lessons and one inspector scrutinized a selection of books with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Years 1 and 2 read and talked to other pupils about their reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other school staff, nine members of the governing body and the school’s improvement officer from the local authority. Inspectors spoke informally with other members of staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 77 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke informally to parents and carers as they brought their children to school at the start of the day.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including: the school’s checks on how well it is doing and its plans for improvement; evidence about how teachers are set targets to improve pupils’ progress; records of observations of the quality of teaching; minutes of meetings of the governing body; the school’s information about progress over time; the school’s information about how it works with parents and carers, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school’s view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

Sandra Hayes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Carol Vant

Additional Inspector

Janet Bicknell

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Thames View is larger than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British origin and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported by school action is lower than in other schools. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is similar to that in most schools.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (extra funding from the government). These pupils are eligible for free schools meals, or have been eligible at some point in the last six years, are looked after by the local authority or are from service families.
- Privately funded before- and after-school clubs take place on the site. These are managed separately and are not part of this inspection.
- The school opened in April 2012 following the amalgamation of infant and junior schools on the same site. Since then, a number of teachers have left or joined the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good and increase the proportion that is outstanding by making sure that in all lessons:
  - teachers plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils, based on what they can already do
  - teachers move all pupils on to more challenging work as soon as they are ready
  - pupils assess their own work against agreed 'steps-to-success' or their own personal targets.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics by:
  - giving pupils plenty of purposeful opportunities to use writing and mathematical skills in other subjects
  - enabling pupils to use their knowledge of number to solve mathematical problems in meaningful real-life situations
  - ensuring marking gives pupils precise guidance on what to do next and that these suggestions are always acted upon
  - building upon the established programme of coaching and mentoring to spread the excellent practice that exists within the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Some pupils do not make good progress in writing and mathematics. Progress in writing is improving more quickly than in mathematics, but it is variable across the school and so is not yet good.
- Many children start in Nursery with skills and knowledge that progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, many are still not quite ready to start the National Curriculum when they join Year 1.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in reading, so they are working at average levels by the time they enter Year 3. Progress in writing and mathematics is slower and so pupils' attainment is currently below average at the end of Year 2. Pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved this year and they now use these skills confidently when reading or spelling new words. As a result, the number of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check this year was much higher than it was in 2012.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 did not make good progress in the year following the opening of the school. Standards were below average. Inspection evidence shows progress is improving and that standards are currently above average in Year 6. Nevertheless, achievement is not good in writing and mathematics because pupils' progress varies between classes and it is better in reading than in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding scored around a year behind their classmates in the 2012 English and mathematics Key Stage 2 national tests. Overall, gaps have closed slightly this year. Nevertheless, in some classes these pupils still do not attain as well as others.
- Pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs make good and sometimes excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of pupils who receive extra help through school action is similar to that of most pupils, so it is variable.
- Pupils do not write as well in some subjects as they do in English lessons because opportunities for them to do so are limited. They enjoy being challenged in mathematics and can think logically. However, they do not use their skills effectively to solve challenging mathematical problems or help them learn in different subjects.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it has not been good enough over time to ensure pupils achieve well. A number of teachers have left the school since it opened in April 2012. Some pupils have had several teachers during this time. Parents and carers say this has adversely affected their children but that teaching is now much better. During the inspection pupils made good progress in almost all lessons, indicating that the quality of teaching is improving.
- Teachers create a supportive atmosphere so pupils are keen to learn, try hard and take risks in lessons. This is helping to raise achievement.
- The best teachers build learning throughout the lesson. They deepen pupils' understanding by asking challenging questions, giving them time to explore ideas and talk about their learning.
- In stronger lessons teachers set work that challenges each pupil. They check how quickly pupils are learning, moving them on to harder work as soon as they are ready. No opportunity for learning is wasted. This is not the case in all classes and it happens more often in English lessons than in mathematics ones. This explains the inconsistency in achievement.
- Teachers are skilled at teaching reading, so pupils achieve well. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 and

the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved the way they teach phonics so pupils now use this knowledge more confidently when reading.

- Teachers are less skilled in teaching mathematics and, to a lesser extent, writing. Marking gives pupils advice about how to improve, but comments are often too general so pupils do not know exactly what to do next. Suggestions are not routinely followed up so progress is limited.
- Teachers often miss opportunities for pupils to practise their writing and mathematics skills in other subjects. Nor do they ask pupils to use their knowledge of number to solve meaningful mathematical problems in real-life situations often enough.
- In the best lessons, pupils challenge themselves, using lesson objectives or personal targets, to improve the quality of their work. For example, a Year 2 pupil checked that she had included in her writing all the features in the 'steps to success' given by the teacher and then used her target card to help her make her work even better.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' achievement. They give extra help to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, enabling them to progress at least as well as others in lessons and sometimes to learn even more quickly.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage spend much time working directly with adults. They learn well in these situations. However, they are not given enough chance to build on what they have learned by investigating and exploring for themselves. Teachers do not make good use of outside learning spaces. The range and quality of equipment in these areas is limited.
- Teaching supports pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils learn to consider different viewpoints. They talk confidently to adults about their learning. They are sensitive when giving each other suggestions to improve their work and reflect honestly about their own.

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

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say they feel safe and happy there. This is reflected in above-average attendance rates and high levels of punctuality.
- Pupils usually behave well in lessons. They are keen to learn and apply themselves well to their work. Teachers deal calmly, swiftly and effectively with any minor misdemeanours and pupils quickly refocus on their learning.
- Pupils play together safely at playtimes. They move calmly and sensibly around the school, politely opening doors for adults and treating each other courteously.
- The school responds well to any incidents of poor behaviour and supports pupils in developing respect. For example, it recently organised training for parents and carers and pupils on appropriate use of social websites to address issues that had occurred. Consequently, unacceptable behaviour is rare.
- Pupils told inspectors about events and activities the school has organised to help them understand about different forms of bullying. A few have experienced some verbal bullying but say this has been dealt with well. Most parents and carers agree with this view. Nevertheless, the school is aware that a few parents and carers are not so satisfied and is taking steps to improve this area of concern.

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

- Thames View Primary has a reflective leadership team that constantly strives to improve learning for all pupils. The headteacher and her deputy work well together to drive forward a determined focus on the quality of teaching. They expect only the best. They are ably supported in this by a strong team of subject leaders and teachers with responsibility for different aspects of the school's work.
  - Teachers have clear targets, based on closing gaps in achievement between groups of pupils.
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The headteacher makes appropriate decisions about teachers' salaries linked to these targets. Senior leaders observe lessons, check teachers' planning, examine pupils' books and talk to pupils about their learning. They use what they find out to give teachers clear points for improvement. They make frequent checks that these improvements are happening. This is why the quality of teaching is improving strongly.

- Leaders keep a close check on the progress of all groups of pupils and have an honest view of how well the school is doing. Information on this is shared widely with staff and governors. This process generates a significant amount of paperwork which can be time-consuming. Leaders are aware that this can sometimes impede their efficiency and are considering ways to present information more succinctly.
  - Plans for different subjects and access to a number of interesting after-school clubs give pupils a range of experiences which help them develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. There are limited high-quality opportunities for pupils to practise their writing and mathematical skills in different subjects.
  - The school promotes the involvement of parents and carers in many ways, such as the 'Males in School' day. Most parents and carers are very positive about the school and feel the school involves them well. A small number feel the school could respond better when they raise concerns and some would like more information about what is happening.
  - The local authority provides a range of effective support and challenge. The challenge and intervention lead carries out in-depth checks on the achievement of pupils and provides helpful guidance to senior leaders and governors on how to use this information. Termly performance reviews have held the school to account for its improvement. Local authority consultants have provided effective advice to the school in its work to secure the improvements in teaching seen in English and mathematics. Governors have also benefited from a range of training programmes and bespoke support that have helped them to develop their skills and expertise. Some aspects of local authority support have had more limited impact. For example the advice given to help the school address underperforming teachers has been inconsistent, impeding the speed with which the school has been able to resolve issues.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors are well informed about the achievement of pupils and how this compares with that of those in other schools. They use this information to challenge the headteacher about the performance of teachers and monitor how this information is used in the salary progression of staff. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and support the headteacher in taking necessary action to tackle underperformance. They check on the impact of actions such as whether the new approach to teaching phonics is working or if the use of pupil premium funding is successfully closing gaps in achievement. Governors ensure that statutory responsibilities, including safeguarding and equality of opportunity, are met by reviewing processes and policies regularly.
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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 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>	118528
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	400200

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	384
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Trevor Croucher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline Milton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 June 2006
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 335480
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 335497
<b>Email address</b>	office@thamesviewprimary.medway.sch.uk



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