

Kents Hill Junior School

Kents Hill Road, Benfleet, SS7 5PS

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve well, because teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium achieve well and reach similar standards in English and mathematics as their classmates.
- Teachers and other adults work particularly well together in ensuring that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy being at school and feel very safe and well looked after. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher and the senior leaders' constant drive for improvement have led to better teaching and faster progress. Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics have also improved.
- The governing body supports the school well and has a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. It is rigorous in holding the school to account for pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work that pupils are given, especially for the most able, is not always at the right level to help them achieve the best they can.
- Although diligent in marking pupils' work, teachers do not always point out how pupils can improve it. Some pupils do not take enough notice of teachers' comments or respond to their questions when their work has been marked.
- In the process of monitoring teaching, leaders do not always make steps for improvement clear enough, so they can be followed up in later observations.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, of which two were seen jointly with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors took account of the 75 responses to the online (Parent View) questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at many documents including: the school’s own information on pupils’ current and recent progress; planning of work in different subjects; leaders’ monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Nelson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Helen Booth	Additional Inspector
Alison Moore	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average junior school. The school converted to academy status in November 2011. When Ofsted last inspected its predecessor school, of the same name, in October 2010, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. Only a few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is slightly below average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding to assist certain groups, which in this school applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority) is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected nationally for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - setting work at the right level of difficulty for all ability groups and particularly the more-able pupils
 - making sure that marking consistently shows pupils how they can improve their work
 - ensuring that pupils respond to comments made when their work is marked
 - giving teachers clear steps on how to improve their teaching, and following these up in later observations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- School data show that most of the current Year 6 pupils have made good progress, and increasing numbers very good progress, in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected levels for their age is high, and more pupils are exceeding the expected levels this year.
- The school's leaders have taken decisive and highly effective action to deal with pockets of past underachievement. They hold frequent meetings to check on the progress of every pupil. Any pupil who is in danger of falling behind is given additional support to enable them to catch up. As a result, pupils are making good progress across the school.
- The school's national test results for 2012 did not paint a positive picture of attainment and progress. However, the data did not reflect how much the school is improving. Detailed school records show that since the conversion to academy status, pupils from all ability groups and backgrounds have made accelerating progress in developing their key skills.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and apply their numeracy skills well to new situations. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils working productively in pairs made good progress, calculating the costs of a camping holiday from a fixed budget.
- Pupils write for different purposes and in different styles effectively. Their writing is often interesting and imaginative. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are developing well. Pupils' handwriting is of a good standard and they take care in presenting their work.
- The school has successfully improved pupils' reading skills through daily guided-reading activities. Pupils enjoy reading, both for pleasure and to find information. They are encouraged to read widely and often. Older pupils are enthusiastic readers, have favourite authors and recognise the features of a good story.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium achieve well and make good progress. The school invests carefully and wisely in staffing to ensure these pupils receive the support they need. The attainment of last year's eligible pupils in Year 6 was on average less than a term behind that of their classmates in English and nearly two terms behind in mathematics. However, current progress data show that the gaps have closed this year and eligible Year 6 pupils are doing as well as other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs across the school make good progress as a result of the extra help they receive. The school acts quickly to support pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Good teaching, together with well-tailored and planned literacy and numeracy support, is very effective in speeding up their progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is now good and sometimes outstanding. This is because the school has appointed some effective new teachers and improved teaching practice across the school. As a result, pupils' progress is rapidly improving.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well and confidently teach lessons that engage, motivate and interest pupils. They use questioning effectively, particularly to challenge pupils to respond

in detail and explain their answers.

- In the best lessons, pupils are given opportunities take responsibility for their own learning and to find out things for themselves. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils were encouraged to assess their own writing of complex sentences and decide on the next step in learning.
- Other adults make important contributions to pupils' progress, sometimes teaching small groups and at other times providing support for individuals. Good liaison with the class teachers gives assistants a clear understanding of what is expected of them.
- Teachers give pupils good opportunities to work individually and in groups on a variety of tasks and activities. Working with partners helps pupils to challenge one another and share their ideas, such as how to use language effectively or which calculation method would be the best to use in a mathematical task.
- Teachers usually set work that helps all pupils to make good progress. However, work is sometimes too easy for the more-able pupils, who are not always pushed to do their best.
- The teachers are diligent in marking pupils' work, but not always rigorous enough in pointing out where and how pupils might be able to improve its quality. They often ask pupils a question or redirect them to look again at what they have written, but do not always check to see that pupils have responded or learnt from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are courteous, respectful and friendly. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. This, and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, contributes to the good progress they make.
- Pupils act responsibly on the playground, where they are well supervised. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe, including when using the internet, and take responsibility for their own actions. They understand the different types of bullying such as cyber-bullying and name-calling. They say that bullying is very rare, and that when it does happen it is dealt with swiftly.
- School records show that there are very few behavioural incidents across the school and most are minor. Where pupils have had difficulty with behaving appropriately, the school has supported them effectively. As a result their behaviour has improved.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils have good opportunities to take on extra responsibilities, for example as 'buddies' for younger pupils or members of the school council. Pupils have good social skills and strong moral values. This is because they have frequent opportunities to work together in lessons, and they develop good levels of mutual respect as a result.
- Attendance is above average and the efforts made by senior leaders in promoting regular attendance continue to achieve success.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong ambition of the senior leadership team, driven by the effective headteacher, has brought about rapid improvement in many areas of the school. Staff are all committed to raising pupils' achievement and morale is high. The governing body is rigorous in holding the school to account.
- The drive to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has been successful and they are improving rapidly. Inconsistencies in progress have been ironed out, and pupils are making good progress across the school. Weak teaching has been eradicated and the quality of teaching is good across the school.
- Rigorous management of teachers' performance is helping to improve teachers' skills. Staff are held to account for the progress of pupils in their class. However, when leaders monitor teaching, their feedback does not always give clear steps on how to improve, which can then be followed up in later observations.
- The school has an accurate understanding of how well it is doing and where further improvements are needed. It has good procedures for checking the progress and attainment of all individuals and groups of pupils to make sure they all perform equally well.
- The range of subjects taught meets the needs of different pupils well. Pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills effectively across different subjects. Educational visits and after-school clubs such as fencing, cricket and craft clubs help promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school actively seeks support from external advisers, and has successfully used the academy's school improvement adviser to help improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective because governors are well trained and have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including how it compares with other schools and how well different groups of pupils achieve. Governors are supportive while ensuring the school does all it can to improve pupils' achievement further. They make sure that national safeguarding requirements are met. Governors ensure the pupil premium is spent well on extra support so that eligible pupils achieve as well as other pupils in the school. They manage the school finances effectively, ensure that leaders take action in the event that any teaching is weak, and make sure pay and promotion are linked to the achievement of pupils.

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	137631
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	406677

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stewart Taylor
Headteacher	Michael Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01268 792133
Fax number	01268 795357
Email address	admin@kentshill-jun.essex.sch.uk

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