

Dymchurch County Primary School

Dymchurch, Kent, TN29 0LE

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Attainment this year has improved substantially, following a slight dip in 2012.
- Pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and are well prepared for the move to Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is usually good. A very small proportion is outstanding.
- Pupils behave well in the classroom and around school. They are happy, confident and they feel safe. They like their school.
- All staff are committed to raising standards. They feel well supported in their professional development so that they can achieve this goal.
- Leaders make rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress, and quickly identify any pupils needing extra help so they can provide appropriate support. As a result, pupils are making faster progress.
- Governors provide the right balance of challenge and support to keep improving the school.
- The areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Work is not always planned well for more able pupils to reach their full potential, especially in writing.
- In a few lessons, teachers talk for too long. This does not allow enough time for pupils to work by themselves.
- Although closing, there remains a small gap between the attainment of pupils who receive extra funding and that of their peers.
- Progress is stronger in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons. Four observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. They listened to pupils read and looked at their workbooks to see how much progress they make while they are at school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a number of other leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, three other governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and to parents and carers, to ascertain their views about the school.
- Inspectors looked at all relevant documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan and policies, including those for behaviour and attendance, and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors examined the most recent government data on the attainment of pupils in the school and the school's system for checking on pupils' progress through the school year.
- Inspectors took account of the responses by 33 parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses from 25 members of staff to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mina Drever, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Senior

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British, with very few representing other ethnic groups. These include Other White, Other mixed, and Chinese.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Boys outnumber the girls, spread across all year groups.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium (additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families) is above the national average. In this school, it applies to pupils eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of pupils identified with special educational needs at school action and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.
- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2012.
- The school is a member of a seven-school partnership, which includes a secondary academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is good or better by:
 - reducing the amount of time teachers spend talking in lessons so that pupils have more time to work by themselves
 - providing more challenging learning activities for the more able pupils, especially in writing.
- Raise achievement by:
 - making sure that pupils in Key Stage 1 make more rapid progress and work at a good pace when working by themselves and that they are clear what the tasks require of them
 - further closing the gap between pupils in receipt of the pupil premium and other pupils across the school by reviewing their progress more regularly and adjusting support accordingly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter Reception with skills below the levels expected for their age. By the time they leave school in Year 6, their attainment is broadly average.
- Children in Reception make good progress and are well prepared to move to Year 1. Teaching provides a lively climate for learning. Children are happy and enjoy themselves. They talk confidently about their activities and can link them to previous experiences. Some of them spoke animatedly about the Polish Café, while explaining that the idea came from the World Languages Day the day before.
- After a dip in attainment in 2012, standards are rising. In 2013, more pupils attained the expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics, with a substantial increase in pupils attaining this level in writing. More pupils are attaining the higher Level 5 in reading and mathematics, but not in writing. Two pupils attained the highest Level 6 in mathematics in 2013, which was a first for the school. Fewer Key Stage 1 pupils attained the expected Level 3 in writing.
- Since September 2012, good progress has been sustained in reading, writing and mathematics, but rather less consistently in Key Stage 1, where progress is not even across subject areas. For example, Year 2 pupils made more progress in mathematics than in reading and writing and Year 1 pupils made more progress in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Boys made good progress across all year groups. For example, over the last year, boys in Year 4 made particularly good progress in reading.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the minimum required standard in the phonics screening check (to see if pupils know the sounds of English) in Year 1 has almost doubled from 2012.
- This year, the majority of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium have made good progress and have attained standards similar to those of their peers at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. This is an improvement on the 2012 results, when the gap in attainment was wider, with eligible pupils four terms behind their peers in English and mathematics.
- The gap between eligible pupils and others is narrowing across the school. This progress results from appropriate actions put in place by the headteacher since September 2012 to raise standards with rigorous tracking of progress, further staff training and additional resources.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress due to an accurate identification of their needs and targeted support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and all those from other minority ethnic groups make good progress because of the strong focus on developing their communication skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is generally good and a very small proportion is outstanding. It is well planned and well structured, so that pupils make good progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is good balance between activities led by the teacher and teaching assistants and those chosen by the children.
- Where teaching is good or better, the content is well pitched to match pupils' different needs and the pace is appropriate. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibilities for their own learning in working by themselves. Teachers check pupils' understanding during the lesson with well-constructed questions to encourage longer explanations from pupils.
- In one outstanding lesson, there was very good balance between the times when the teacher was talking and when pupils were more actively involved in learning. A calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning enabled pupils to produce high-quality word problems from number sentences, which were designed for different ability groups, with the most able required to solve quite complex calculations. There was an excellent blend of literacy and numeracy. Pupils collaborated with honesty and confidence in peer assessments. Occasionally pupils have too little time to work by themselves when teachers talk to them for too long.

- Progress is sometimes less rapid in Key Stage 1 when pupils, especially the more able, work at a slower pace by themselves on writing tasks with too little challenge. Occasionally, pupils are not always clear exactly what the tasks require of them.
- Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants work very well together, with good effect. This cooperation plays a big role in all pupils' progress.
- Homework is set and marked regularly, as is all other work. Marking is good, with comments that pupils understand. There is evidence of a dialogue between pupils and teachers which indicates that pupils know how to improve their work.
- The quality of teaching has improved over the last year because of strong policies for teaching mathematics, reading and writing and rigorous progress tracking systems, which are used to plan appropriately.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's ethos involves building a 'rich supportive community, working together to motivate, inspire and celebrate learning'.
- There is hardly any disruptive behaviour. On the rare occasion that it arises, teachers and teaching assistants deal with it instantly, yet sensitively. Pupils respond very well. A system of rewards and sanctions is used to good effect.
- Pupils' behaviour in the playground can sometimes be more boisterous, with the very occasional incident of mild bullying. The school has effective measures to deal with this issue and is working towards strengthening them. Pupils feel safe and most of the parents and carers agree that their children are safe.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of all forms of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- Around the school, pupils are mostly well behaved, polite and respectful towards one another and adults.
- Attendance has improved over the last three years and it remains broadly average.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Even when work does not challenge them sufficiently, or fully interest them, pupils stay on task because they like learning.
- The school is a fully inclusive community and promotes equal opportunities well, by carefully checking on the progress of every child. All adults are committed to raising achievement. The support provided to disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium is rigorous.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has put in place very rigorous systems to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards. Senior leaders and all staff share a clear vision to give all pupils opportunities to 'go for gold'.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with specific educational needs are accurately assessed and their progress is regularly reviewed so that appropriate extra support is adapted as the need arises so that they continue to make good progress. Extra government funding is also used to support educational visits and participation in clubs and other out-of-school activities.
- The impact on attainment and progress of these actions is strong. Although there remains a small gap between pupils in receipt of additional funding and others, this has closed very substantially in the current school year. The school knows that it needs to review the progress of these pupils more regularly and adjust support accordingly.
- The school is committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is greatly enriched by clubs, charitable activities, visits and residential trips, creative art and drama productions. Pupils learn French and know that different languages are spoken in different parts of the world. These and other cultural and

spiritual experiences bring the wider world into these pupils' lives.

- Self-evaluation and school improvement plan are rigorous, honest, accurate and linked to pupils' achievement. Leaders monitor teaching well, with moderation undertaken from outside agencies and with collaboration with other schools in the partnership.
- The local authority has been supporting the school for a number of years. Currently it assists the headteacher with appraisals, which include lesson observations and staff training.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met and are effective.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because they have not yet secured the above average progress in all areas in Key Stage 1 as they have in Key Stage 2, although they are well on their way to doing so and have the capacity to do it.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a balanced set of skills, supports the school well and holds its leadership to account through a review of the headteacher's performance, linked to achievement. It approves and ratifies teachers' performance management. Governors approve pay increases and promotion only if teachers meet well-defined criteria for raising achievement. Governors know very well the strengths of the school and the aspects of teaching that require improvement to raise achievement further. They understand progress data and play a full part in the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. It is a member of the seven-school governing body in the partnership, tackling common issues together such as improving attendance, and also receiving training to improve governors' expertise, for example in understanding pupil progress data. They have a good overview of the budget and make sure that the pupil premium is spent appropriately.

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	118565
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	400108

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	County
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Marnham
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Evans
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2011
Telephone number	01303 872377
Email address	headteacher@dymchurch.kent.sch.uk

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