

River Primary School

Lewisham Road, River, Dover, Kent, CT17 0PP

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school has maintained the high standards from the previous inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make an exceptional contribution to the progress and learning of all pupils. This includes pupils in receipt of support through the pupil premium.
- All groups of pupils make rapid progress across the school. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average.
- Lessons are exciting and capture the pupils' interest. Pupils are motivated to work hard and be successful.
- The range of subjects and activities on offer meets the needs and interests of pupils well. Literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced in other subjects.
- Children get off to an excellent start in Reception class as a result of outstanding quality teaching.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve highly and make rapid progress.
- The behaviour of pupils of all ages is outstanding. Pupils work hard and apply themselves very well to different situations. They are proud of their achievements and of their school.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in the school and know who to talk to if they have a concern.
- The headteacher is a highly effective leader, with a clear plan for the future of the school. Together with the full support of senior leaders, subject leaders and governors, she has overseen significant improvements since the school's previous inspection.
- The governing body has an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and its priorities for future development. The governors play an important role in both supporting and challenging, including asking searching questions of school leaders.
- Parents are fully involved in their children's education and speak very highly of the school, saying it is part of 'their community'.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons or part lessons taught by 16 teachers and teaching assistants. Several were observed jointly with senior leaders from the school. In addition, several short visits were made to lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. They also held meetings with two groups of pupils. Inspectors used lunch and break times to talk to pupils around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, members of the leadership team, teachers with responsibility for key subjects and a representative of the local authority. These meetings included discussions about: the analysis of performance information; records of monitoring of the quality of teaching; and tracking pupils' progress. Documents relating to the safeguarding of children were scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Consideration was given to the 43 responses to the online Parent View survey as well as the school's annual survey with parents.
- Questionnaires were analysed from 32 staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Sutherland-Harper	Additional Inspector
Diana Morgan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- River Primary is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding for pupils entitled to free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a group of local primary schools, the Samphire Learning Hub, who work together to offer support and share good practice with each other to help raise outcomes for children.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school provision, in the form of a number of activities, and these were included in the inspection.
- The school has a number of awards and accreditations including Green Travel Mark, School Games Kite Mark and Every Child a Reader accreditation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all staff insist upon high quality presentation of pupils' writing and mathematics work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children enter Reception with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. Parents appreciate the active role they have and the school's 'open door' policy, including the daily opportunity to see their child's progress captured in a photograph. The high quality provision means that children enter Year 1 with standards in line with the national average in all areas of learning.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils have achieved consistently above the national averages in all subjects.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils have made exceptional progress and standards are above the national average in both English and mathematics. Some pupils achieve at the higher levels in reading and mathematics, with writing rapidly improving. This is reflecting the many opportunities children have to apply their writing and numeracy in other subjects, such as science and history. An example observed was a Year 6 lesson when pupils were using mathematical skills to analyse the Second World War ration information.
- The school's inclusive approach to education makes sure that all pupils receive the right support to help them move forward. The support is reviewed regularly and adapted to meet the very specific needs of the individual. As a result, all groups make rapid and sustained progress.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is outstanding. Their attainment is either in line with, or above, national averages for similar groups.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding to provide additional support for eligible pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. There is no gap in attainment between pupil premium pupils and their peers within the school in mathematics and English.
- Children enjoy reading. Pupils who read to inspectors were enthusiastic about reading and demonstrate good skills and understanding for their age, using their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words.
- Teachers provide a stimulating learning environment and pupils use the resources well to support their work. Pupils are keen to learn and are very proud of their achievements and enjoyed talking about their work with the inspectors.
- Pupils describe their learning as fun and say that they enjoy learning. During the inspection, Year 5 had a Victorian day, which included wearing Victorian-style clothing for the day. In one activity pupils used their research skills to find out about their local area and, in another, links were made to Victorian music, which they thoroughly enjoyed, participating with tremendous enthusiasm.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding overall and inspires the pupils to want to learn as lessons are exciting. A strong feature of lessons is the positive climate for learning that is fostered through very good relationships between pupils and staff. This, in turn, contributes to promoting their excellent spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. At times, pupils were reluctant to stop work when the lesson had ended.
- Parents, pupils and inspectors agree that the outstanding achievement is the result of consistently good, and often outstanding, teaching. One pupil told the inspectors, 'All the teachers are well educated and they help us to learn.'
- There is a very strong focus on creating imaginative activities, providing opportunities to investigate and solve problems. For example, in Reception, children were learning about the Arctic, having access to ice that simulated icebergs and the chance to discuss properties of both water and ice.

- Where teaching is most successful, teachers and teaching assistants use excellent subject knowledge and skilful questioning to check the learning and adapt activities. They make sure throughout the lesson that pupils are clear on their understanding and they provide both support and challenge to help pupils meet their individual targets. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, which in turn the pupils aspire to. Very occasionally, some staff do not ensure pupils present their writing and mathematical work as well as they should.
- Pupils regularly apply literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects because teachers effectively and routinely include opportunities for this in their planning.
- Teachers use imaginative and challenging activities to encourage independent learning. For example, a Year 4 class was creating burglar alarm circuits in a science lesson. Effective questioning and support encouraged pupils to talk with confidence about their designs.
- Reading is very well taught across the school. One pupil spoke about an opportunity to work with a writer who had, in turn, 'inspired' him to write.
- Pupils' progress is measured regularly and rigorously. Marking is frequent and feedback to pupils helps them to move on to the next steps in their learning. Pupils are clear on their targets and, as a result, they make rapid progress in their work.
- Pupils are set regular homework, which parents support. However, some parents did say they would like to see more grammar and mathematical tasks set.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is exemplary. Pupils have outstanding attitudes to their learning and are very keen to achieve the best they can. Participation in lessons is recognised and celebrated effectively.
- Relationships across the school are very strong. Pupils are very polite and thoughtful to each other and show respect to all adults within the school.
- Pupils in the school enjoy taking on responsibilities, including on the school and sports councils, eco club and as buddy readers. They also care for the younger pupils in the playground at lunchtime.
- Pupils are very keen to come to school and this is reflected in the high rates of attendance and good punctuality.
- Pupils say they feel happy and safe at the school and are very aware of who they could talk to if the need arose. Pupils are aware of what constitutes bullying, including cyber bullying and repeated name calling. Pupils indicate there is no bullying and know what to do should any incidents occur.
- The vast majority of parents and staff believe that behaviour in the school is outstanding. A typical view was expressed in the comment, 'My child gets lots of help and I would thoroughly recommend the school to anyone.'

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The ambition of the senior leadership team is clearly evident and, as a result, it has brought about considerable changes to both attitudes to learning and the progress pupils make in all areas of the curriculum.
- The leadership team's aspiring vision for the school is shared by the governors, subject leaders and staff. All have a clear view of the school's strengths, and areas for development, which they address with determination, striving for excellence in all that they do.
- The school's clear focus on moving forward is excellent and is well supported and driven by the school's development plans that are thorough and are frequently reviewed by both senior leaders and the governing body. The plans are used methodically to track and monitor the progress made across the school and to identify areas where the school can make further

improvements.

- Senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers make rigorous checks to find out how well pupils are achieving. All staff use data well to track the progress pupils make and to ensure that they are meeting the challenging targets set. Data are also used to review the support provided for small groups and to adapt the work to suit the needs of the individual pupils.
 - The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of the pupils very well, with a clear focus on literacy and numeracy. Using this knowledge to build their understanding in areas of history, science and music, pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities to sing as well as learning to play an instrument. All pupils are treated equally and senior leaders are determined in their efforts to ensure there is no discrimination.
 - There are additional opportunities for children, including a breakfast club, which makes a very positive start to the school day. There are also many after-school clubs which include a range of sporting activities, music and arts and crafts.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is important to all in the school as it addresses both the pastoral and academic needs of the pupils. During the inspection, an assembly was observed on the Jewish faith, providing pupils with a chance to learn about different cultures. The social element is another important aspect of the school curriculum, with a big emphasis on personal, social and health education for all pupils.
 - Teachers' professional development is central to the school's work. Leaders recognise that it is essential that all staff are fully trained so that they feel supported. This includes physical education supplementary training for staff, using the additional government funding available for all primary schools.
 - The school works well with the local authority, which both supports and challenges the school. The school is also recognised as having a number of successes and the local authority encourages the school to share best practice further afield and includes the headteacher and senior leaders taking the lead of some of the working groups, such as the development of middle leaders.
 - The school's arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements and demonstrate very good practice.
 - Links with parents are highly effective, including regular newsletters. Parents really appreciate that at the start of the school day senior staff are in the playground to meet the children and parents. There is also an opportunity to talk to teachers should the need arise. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and appreciate being able to gain access to the family liaison officer.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely clear on the school's effectiveness. Governors have an accurate awareness of the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and the importance of data to help set targets. They have a good knowledge of data and are fully aware of the school's performance in relation to that of other schools both locally and nationally. The expertise of the individual governors is used effectively to lead committees, as well setting priorities and challenges for the school. Governors make sure that pupil premium is well spent. They oversee the school's arrangements for managing staff performance and awarding salary increases, which are linked securely to pupils' progress. Governors make sure they are kept up to date with training to improve their effectiveness, especially in holding the headteacher to account. The governing body fulfils statutory duties, including safeguarding requirements.
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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

Unique reference number	118393
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	429555
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margot Wynne
Headteacher	Claire Eggleston
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2009
Telephone number	01304 822516
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