

Joy Lane Primary School

Joy Lane, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 4LT

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2014

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.

- Pupils' achievement is good because pupils make good progress from their starting points, especially in mathematics. Standards in both English and mathematics have risen since the school's previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching is good and is improving. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well. They have high expectations of pupils and make sure that they understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils enrolled in the specialist provision receive a good standard of education and care, which enables them to make at least as good progress as other pupils.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are kept safe, feel safe and have few concerns about bullying.
- Leaders and managers have accurately identified the school's strengths and what it needs to do to become even better. They have addressed the improvement points from the previous inspection, acting decisively and effectively to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in writing.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a rich blend of experiences. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- Governors know how well the school is doing and what leaders are doing to improve teaching and to accelerate pupils' progress.
- The governing body keeps a close eye on the school's finances. This has enabled leaders to significantly improve the school's facilities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- During lessons, teachers do not always check pupils' learning carefully enough and adapt activities when necessary, which results occasionally in pupils making slower progress than usual.
- The role of teaching assistants in lessons is not always sufficiently clear. This sometimes limits their ability to support pupils as effectively as they could.
- Not all parents are convinced that the school does enough to provide them with timely information or to respond to their concerns.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 29 lessons, several of them together with school leaders, for varying amounts of time. They observed all the classes in the school and all the teachers present during the inspection, at least once. They made shorter visits to a number of other lessons and activities, looked at pupils' written work and listened to pupils read. Inspectors also attended two assemblies and visited the school's breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors and one other member of the governing body, members of staff and a representative of the local authority. They also held informal discussions with a number of parents.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress, and data on attendance. They examined safeguarding procedures and records of the school's own lesson observations as well as the school's self-evaluation, performance management and planning documents.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 49 responses to the Ofsted online survey Parent View which were submitted before or during the inspection, and a letter from a parent. They also considered the results of the school's most recent survey of parents' views, as well as 42 questionnaires completed by members of the teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Gough

Additional Inspector

Clifford Walker

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- About one in three pupils is eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for children in local authority care, children with a parent in the armed services and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is above the national average. About one in eight pupils is supported through school action. The proportion of pupils, about one in seven, supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has specially resourced provision, managed by the governing body, for up to 24 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). These pupils are based in a new annexe on the school site, which was opened in September 2012.
- There is an on-site nursery, which is managed by the school's governing body. This is subject to separate inspection arrangements.
- Since the school's previous inspection, there have been several changes in staffing, especially of staff employed as teaching assistants.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to ensure that all groups of pupils make rapid progress during lessons, ensure that teachers routinely
 - check all pupils' learning regularly and thoroughly, and adapt activities if pupils are making faster or slower progress than the teachers had anticipated
 - make sure that all teaching assistants are given clear responsibilities and specific guidance to enable them to give the most effective support to pupils in class.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's systems for communicating with parents, so that all parents are confident that the school gives them the information they need in good time and pays sufficient heed to their concerns.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Reception classes with levels of knowledge and skills which are below those normally found for their age. Pupils from different backgrounds, including those who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the school and in a range of subjects. By the end of Year 6, standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, which have risen steadily in recent years, are now either in line with or just above national averages. This represents good achievement.
- In Reception, children benefit from a wide range of resources, and well-organised and purposeful activities. They acquire a secure knowledge of letters and sounds, as well as counting and measuring techniques, while learning to work and play sensibly together and on their own.
- Leaders have accurately identified the reasons for the dip in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2012. Results in 2013, as well as the school's own reliable assessments, show that attainment for this age group is also rising.
- National assessments of Year 6 pupils in 2013 showed that they had made good progress from the end of Year 2 in both mathematics and reading, although their achievement in writing was relatively weaker. However, the work of current Year 6 pupils, and of those in lower age groups, shows that standards in writing are now similar to those in reading and mathematics. It also shows that they are making good progress in learning to write confidently and accurately, using a good range of vocabulary.
- Pupils, including the most able, gain a particularly good grasp of mathematical processes and problem-solving techniques. For example, higher-attaining pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 made excellent progress in learning about fractions and percentages. This was because the teacher used her own secure knowledge of mathematics extremely well, made sure that the lesson proceeded swiftly and gave pupils challenging and stimulating activities.
- Pupils enjoy reading the good selection of books provided by the school. Less able as well as higher-attaining pupils understand clearly what they have read, making good use of their knowledge of phonics (linking letters to sounds) to decipher unfamiliar words
- Pupils who are entitled to additional pupil premium support achieve well. This is because leaders carefully assess their progress and make sure they receive the extra support they need to catch up with other pupils. The standards reached by this group of pupils in mathematics, reading and writing in the 2013 national tests were just below those of other pupils in the school but were very similar to those reached by all pupils nationally. These pupils made faster progress than other pupils in the school, and their progress was much higher than it had been for similar pupils in the school in either 2011 or 2012. This shows that the school has been successful in closing the gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with ASD, make as least as good progress as their peers. This is because the school makes sure they receive the expert support they require, both in and outside of the classroom, and because teachers and teaching assistants understand and cater well for their particular needs.
- However, not all groups of pupils make as much progress as they could in lessons because teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively enough so that they can give pupils, including lower- and higher-attaining pupils, extra assistance when they need it.
- The school's success in ensuring that there are no significant variances between the achievement of different groups indicates its success in promoting equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good and there are examples of outstanding practice in all year groups.
- Teachers relate very well to pupils and have high expectations of them in terms both of work and behaviour. Lessons proceed at a good pace because teachers plan activities which engage

and maintain pupils' interest and correspond well to all ability levels. Teachers skilfully ask questions which enable them both to check pupils' understanding and to develop their learning.

- For example, in a phonics lesson in Reception, the teacher made excellent use of images on the interactive whiteboard to gain and retain the children's interest as they made secure links between the pictures they were seeing with the words they were learning to read and write. The teacher used questioning extremely well to enable the children to reflect on and to discuss with one another their new learning.
- Teachers use homework well to reinforce and build on pupils' learning. Pupils know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve their work because teachers mark it frequently and accurately. Their detailed and specific written comments give pupils clear pointers about what to do next to make their work even better. Teachers also give pupils regular opportunities to respond to their advice, for example by correcting or extending their work.
- However, during lessons teachers do not always check sufficiently thoroughly on how much pupils have learned and how well they understand tasks. On these rare occasions, teachers do not give pupils additional work when they have finished what they are doing, or make sure that pupils who are stuck understand what they are meant to do.
- Pupils with ASD benefit from good teaching both in the annexe itself, which provides pupils with a calm, supportive and orderly environment, and in mainstream lessons. Leaders ensure that teachers are fully aware of the particular characteristics of all groups of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Mostly, teachers make good use of teaching assistants, several of whom are relatively new to their posts, to help all pupils to play a full part in classroom activities and to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils and their parents, as well as members of staff, report that pupils normally behave well in lessons and around the school, and that any form of disruption to lessons is rare. This is because the school makes sure that pupils whose behaviour has been a cause for concern are helped to overcome those difficulties which can hinder their own and others' learning.
- Pupils respond promptly to teachers' instructions. They are keen to learn in class and to answer teachers' questions. They participate maturely and enthusiastically in discussions and in paired and small-group activities. These factors make a good contribution to their progress.
- On the few occasions when pupils behave less well in class, this is usually because teachers have not made sure that they have fully grasped the nature of tasks they have been given, or because they have completed them more quickly than the teacher had anticipated.
- The school ensures that pupils from different backgrounds, including those who are learning English as an additional language, get on well together, and work and play harmoniously with one another. There is no evidence of any discrimination.
- Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work, and in their appearance, adhering closely to the school's rules for uniform. They also look after the school environment well, and there is rarely any litter to be seen.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Almost all parents believe their children feel safe in school and that staff look after them well and deal effectively with bullying.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including racist behaviour and cyber bullying, but they say, and school records confirm, that it is rare and that staff deal with it quickly and successfully when it does occur.
- The school has made good use of additional sport premium funding to increase pupils' participation in healthy activities and to improve their safety, by increasing the number who are able to swim. This is particularly important given the school's location close to the sea.
- Pupils attend school regularly and promptly. The school has succeeded in reducing significantly the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers at all levels, including those who are responsible for particular subjects and aspects of the school's work, such as its specialist provision, are strongly committed to raising pupils' achievement and promoting their well-being. They have created a culture in which good teaching and good behaviour, although they are not yet outstanding, are the norm.
- Leaders' assessment of the school's strengths and its relative weaknesses is accurate, and their plans to address areas for improvement are ambitious but realistic. Leaders' success in following up the recommendations arising from the previous inspection, for example with regard to teachers' use of questioning, as well as in bringing about a year-on-year rise in standards, demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.
- The headteacher, working closely with her senior colleagues, has been relentless in achieving her aim of eradicating poor teaching. She manages the staff's performance well, giving them, for instance, robust but supportive feedback following lesson observations and enabling them to attend relevant courses to strengthen their practice.
- Staff have clear and achievable targets which are related to improvement in pupils' achievement. Pay rises depend on the extent to which these targets are met. Newly appointed staff, including those who are new to teaching, speak highly of the support they receive from leaders.
- The school works well with the on-site nursery and with local secondary schools to ensure that pupils move smoothly from one stage of their education to another.
- The local authority has provided effective, light-touch support and encouragement for this good school by carefully monitoring its performance and enabling its staff to lead the development of good and outstanding practice in other local schools.
- The rich and varied curriculum enables pupils to make productive links between different subjects, including science, mathematics and information and communication technology. The breakfast and after-school clubs give pupils a safe environment for productive work and for play.
- Pupils benefit from a variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including visits, sports clubs and themed events, such as Enterprise Week. They have regular opportunities to learn about different cultures and traditions, including those not currently represented in the school.
- These features contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also help pupils to prepare well for the next stage of their education and for future employment.
- Parents' responses to Parent View and to the school's own most recent survey, as well as the extremely favourable comments they made to inspectors, confirm that most are very satisfied with the quality of education and care which their children receive.
- Nevertheless, a small minority believe that the school does not do enough to address their concerns and does not give them information promptly. Leaders recognise the need to improve the school's systems for communicating with parents, and have already begun a review of this aspect of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well because they regularly visit classes and take part in special events. They also make themselves available to parents, enabling them to be aware of and to respond to any concerns. Governors know and understand how well pupils are doing compared with those in other schools. They are fully aware of and support what the headteacher has done to improve teaching. Governors understand how performance management systems work, including the link between pay rises and the achievement of targets. They challenge senior leaders to justify and provide convincing evidence for their own evaluation of the school's performance. Governors make sure that all requirements for safeguarding pupils are securely met. Their careful oversight of the school's finances has enabled it to provide new and improved facilities, such as the annexe for pupils with ASD, from which staff and pupils are now benefiting.

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	135130
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	432183

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	424
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Mastin
Headteacher	Debra Hines
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 May 2012
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