

Dartford Bridge Community Primary School

Community Campus, Birdwood Avenue, Dartford, Kent, DA1 5GB

Inspection dates 4–5 March 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 make good progress in reading and writing and rapid progress in mathematics.
- In 2013, pupils' attainment improved to average levels at the end of Year 2 and above average levels at the end of Year 6.
- More-able pupils achieve well. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in 2013 was above average and was particularly high in mathematics.
- There was a substantial increase in the proportion of pupils attaining average levels in the Year 1 phonics check in 2013.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. The teaching of mathematics is a particular strength.
- Dartford Bridge is a happy school. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are fully involved in school life. Pupils behave well and feel very safe.
- The headteacher has provided a consistently strong and clear vision for the school's development from its opening in 2009.
- High expectations of both staff and pupils play a key part in the school's ongoing drive to improve.
- Governors work closely with school leaders and provide good levels of support and challenge to support improvements effectively.
- The school's use of technology to inform and engage parents and to support pupils' learning is innovative and very effective.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet strong enough to ensure that achievement is outstanding.
- Pupils make slightly slower progress in reading and writing than in mathematics.
- Occasionally, pupils make slower progress in lessons when they are not moved on to the next task quickly enough.
- Teachers are not yet given enough opportunities to observe and learn from outstanding practice.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons or part-lessons, including eight observations carried out jointly with the headteacher or the interim deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils. Meetings were also held with four representatives of the governing body, including the Chair, and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the online Parent View survey in addition to letters received from parents during the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the 14 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and analysed a range of documents and policies, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils’ progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work in lessons, as well as a sample of pupils’ work provided by the school, and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bryan Meyer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children with a parent in the armed forces.)
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion supported through school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school opened in September 2009 with 39 pupils in its first year. Since then, the school has grown rapidly, with classes now in all year groups from Nursery to Year 6.
- The school has a breakfast club, which is managed by the school and was included in this inspection. An after-school club, which is privately run, did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to the highest levels by increasing the amount of outstanding teaching, through making sure that:
 - pupils are always interested and attentive and their learning is moved on quickly
 - pupils have the right guidance about what they need to do next to improve their work, and time for them to respond
 - there are more opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from outstanding teaching, both within the school and through attending other schools
 - pupils in receipt of support provided by pupil premium funding make the same progress as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from Year 1 through to Year 6 and achieve well. Standards were average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6 in 2013.
- Pupils make very rapid progress in mathematics because teachers are knowledgeable about how to move pupils to the next level in their learning. In 2013, pupils' attainment in mathematics was above the national average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make slightly slower progress in reading and writing than in mathematics. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2012 were well below the national average. The school responded swiftly by providing training for teachers in the teaching of phonics (the sound letters make) which led to improvements in its teaching. As a result, pupils' phonics skills have developed rapidly and the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2013 were close to the national average. In 2013, standards at the end of Year 6 were average in reading and above average in writing.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding which are generally below those expected for their age, particularly in speaking and their use of language. They make good progress so that, by the end of Reception, the majority of children have achieved a good level of development and are well prepared for learning in Year 1. Recent improvements in the quality of teaching mean that children are making even better progress this year, with more children on track to achieve a good level of development in 2014.
- Fluctuations in pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages over the past three years have been caused largely by variations in the numbers of pupils in each year group as the school has grown. A dip in attainment in 2012 at both key stages was successfully reversed in 2013. School data about pupils' progress indicate that pupils are on track to reach standards in line with the national average in 2014.
- All groups of pupils make good progress overall, demonstrating the school's commitment to providing for all pupils equally. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates because teachers ensure that tasks are suitable for every pupil's needs.
- More-able pupils and those who speak English as an additional language make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is because teachers' expectations are high and the work set for pupils is challenging and stimulating.
- The school is particularly successful in making sure that more-able pupils achieve well in mathematics. In 2013, the proportion attaining the higher levels was substantially above the national average, including a significant proportion reaching Level 6. Current information indicates that more pupils are on track to attain Level 6 in 2014.
- Pupils joining different year groups in the school settle quickly because they feel welcomed by their teachers and classmates. Teachers quickly assess their needs and make sure that the work set for them is at the right level so that no time is lost in their learning.
- While pupils in receipt of support provided by pupil premium funding make good progress overall, they make slightly slower progress than their classmates. In 2013, their attainment was about four months behind their classmates in reading and about six months behind in writing and mathematics. Some of these pupils joined the school more recently than others or have specific learning needs. Information about pupils' current progress indicates that the gap is narrowing and these pupils are catching up with their classmates. When compared with pupils nationally, this group's attainment was above average in mathematics, average in reading and below average in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching of mathematics is especially effective because pupils are consistently taught the

skills they need to tackle calculations and are given regular opportunities to use these to solve problems. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, and the work set builds strongly on what they know already, including by ensuring that it meets the needs of more-able pupils.

- The school has rightly identified the teaching of reading and writing as a priority for development. Improvements in the teaching of phonics have already raised pupils' achievement. Further steps to improve other aspects of pupils' reading and writing skills, such as the development of children's early speaking and language skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the development of pupils' understanding of texts, are well advanced.
- The school is a hub of activity throughout the day. Teaching assistants and other adults work flexibly with pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to provide extra help and support where needed so that these pupils make good progress.
- Technology is used particularly well in the school to help pupils' learning. For example, tablets and laptops are regularly used by pupils in lessons, from Nursery through to Year 6, helping to interest pupils and deepen their understanding. During the inspection, pupils in a Year 2 mathematics lesson were shown film clips of the pupils themselves demonstrating how to use number lines. This, combined with skilful and well-timed explanations by the teacher, meant that pupils were strongly engaged and made excellent progress.
- Pupils take care when working in their books because they know that their teachers regularly check and mark their work. Pupils know what they have done well and, in most cases, what they can do next to improve their learning, so that they are able to move on more quickly. However, there are slight variations in the quality of marking across the school, so that in a few cases pupils are not clear about how they can improve their work. Pupils are not always given the time to read teachers' comments and to answer a question or complete a follow-up task where asked to do so.
- Teaching overall is not yet outstanding because, while there is some outstanding teaching in the school, there is not yet enough to raise achievement to the highest levels. For example, occasionally pupils are not reminded of the need to always do their best to move their learning on quickly enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well, are polite and welcoming and enjoy talking to visitors about their work. Relationships in the school are very good and inspectors saw a number of acts of kindness between pupils during the inspection. Older pupils know that it is important for them to provide good role models for the younger pupils and do so sensibly and maturely.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, listen carefully to their teachers and respond quickly to their instructions. One pupil said teachers are 'firm but fun'. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are keen to do well and are fully involved during lessons. Pupils consider behaviour to be good and most parents who responded to Parent View agree.
- The importance of attending school regularly is given a high priority and robust systems are in place to support pupils' attendance. As a result, pupils attend school regularly and are punctual to lessons. Pupils wear their school uniform with pride and look very smart.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally some pupils lose concentration during lessons when the pace of learning slows.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils' strong sense of security and belonging is reflected in the confident way pupils enter the school at the start of the day, including the youngest children.
- Pupils know that adults will look after them if they have any concerns. For example, one pupil explained that she was posting a note in the school's 'Worry Box' because she knows that her teacher will read what she has written and understand how she's feeling. All parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are safe and happy in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and know what they can do to help to stay

safe. For example, regular school events ensure that they are well informed about how to use technology safely, including the internet. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated and school records indicate that bullying is rare. This view was confirmed by one pupil, who said, 'I've never seen a bully!'

- 'Ubuntu', a holistic approach to learning and behaviour, has been adopted by the school and makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The breakfast club is well organised and provides an enjoyable and positive start to the school day for those pupils who attend.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership for this successful school. She has been instrumental in ensuring that the school adapts to the changing needs of pupils as the school grows. She has very successfully taken staff and parents with her on the school's journey to this point.
- A number of recent changes in staffing have been managed very well, and the quality of teaching continues to improve. Leaders' expectations of teachers are high and teachers are committed to doing their best for the pupils.
- The headteacher and interim deputy headteacher provide consistently strong role models for pupils and staff. The interim deputy headteacher has quickly gained a thorough and accurate view of the strengths and development needs of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Middle leaders provide clear and effective leadership. For example, the mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) leaders have played a key role in raising achievement and engaging parents through providing training and support for teachers. The website includes valuable advice for parents about how they can help their children to practise mathematical skills at home. For instance, film clips show parents how number lines can be used to solve addition and subtraction problems.
- Training for teachers and teaching assistants is used effectively, and procedures for checking and managing staff performance are robust. The school has rightly identified the need to give teachers more opportunities to observe outstanding teaching, both within the school and in other schools in the area.
- The primary school's sports funding has been allocated appropriately. For example, training in the teaching of gymnastics is scheduled and the school is currently arranging a new multi-skills club for pupils. It is too soon for the school to measure the success of these initiatives.
- The local authority has provided support for the school. For example, earlier in the year the local authority visited the school to help leaders to check how well it is performing and to identify areas for development. The local authority's feedback confirmed the accuracy of the school's own evaluations and helped to clarify the next steps for the school.
- The school offers a wide-ranging curriculum, and makes the fullest use possible of the school day to extend pupils' learning. For example, a 'study club' is held for Years 5 and 6 every morning. This provides pupils with the opportunity for extra practice in using basic mathematics and English skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is strong. The governing body provides very effective levels of support and challenge for the school. 'Governors' Conferences' are held twice a year so that governors can consider how well pupils are learning, and governors regularly ask senior and middle leaders searching questions. As a result, they have a clear view of how well pupils are achieving in comparison with pupils nationally. The governing body knows how pupil premium funding is being used to help eligible pupils to learn, and they talk with confidence about the progress groups of pupils are making in different year groups and subjects. They know how sports funding has been allocated, and a governor has been given responsibility for checking its success in increasing pupils' participation in sports. Governors oversee target-setting for staff well. They know how well pay is aligned to staff performance, and how training is being

used to improve the quality of teaching. Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet statutory requirements.

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	135280
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	441099

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alistair Jefford
Headteacher	Samantha Crinnion
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 October 2010
Telephone number	01322 424021
Fax number	01322 424062
Email address	headteacher@dbcps.kent.sch.uk

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