

# Elaine Primary Academy

Elaine Avenue, Strood, Kent, ME2 2NY

**Inspection dates** 29–30 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement is not good enough. Progress has been too slow and standards are below the national average.
- Not enough teaching is good to ensure all pupils develop their basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Many teachers are in the early stages of developing their career.
- Too few teachers use information about pupils' learning to plan and adapt work that builds consistently on what pupils know. As a result, not all pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes do not have enough opportunities to develop their learning when talking with adults.
- Pupils do not spell or punctuate their work accurately and this is not addressed quickly enough by some teachers. Opportunities for pupils to write at length to practise these skills are limited.
- Pupils in many classes do not approach their learning with enthusiasm and, as result, they do not produce enough work of high quality.
- Where teaching is weaker, too few pupils actively join in with the learning. They become distracted, lose concentration and begin to disturb their classmates. There is too much variation in the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Many leaders at all levels are new to their posts and the impact of some of their actions is yet to be realised.

### The school has the following strengths

- The academy trust, head of school and governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the academy. They are taking rapid and decisive action to improve teaching. As a result, current pupils are making faster progress.
- The Chalklands Opportunity Centre gives outstanding support and teaching to its pupils, who make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils feel very safe. They appreciate the changes that have taken place and are now keen to come to school. As a result, attendance has improved and is average.
- Staff morale is good. Teachers want to improve their practice. They benefit from the training provided by the trust and the national leader of education who is supporting the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 23 lessons or parts of lessons, many of which were jointly observed with the interim executive headteacher, head of school and deputy headteacher. They looked at work in pupils' books and listened to some pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, including the Head of the Williamson Trust, two members of the governing body, the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the special educational needs coordinator, head of the Chalklands special provision and a group of pupils.
- A range of documentation was examined including the academy's plans for improvement and self-evaluation, information regarding pupils' standards and progress, minutes from governing body meetings, records of the monitoring of teaching and documents relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. Inspectors also examined action plans relating to the government's primary sports funding and the pupil premium.
- The views of parents were taken into account from the 12 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the 100 responses to the academy's own survey. Staff views were considered from the responses to their survey.

## Inspection team

Penny Spencer, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector
Susan Senior	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average primary school.
- It became a sponsored academy in September 2012, under the sponsorship of the Williamson Trust. The trust consists of two secondary schools and three primary schools, all situated in the Medway area of Kent.
- There is a specially resourced provision for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional needs, The Chalklands Opportunity Centre, attached to the school. It currently has provision for 18 primary-aged pupils from across the Medway area. It is due to expand to 25 pupils from September 2014.
- The academy is being supported through the Williamson Trust by a national leader of education (NLE) who is headteacher of Avenue Primary School in Sutton.
- Approximately half of all pupils are eligible for support from extra government funding called the pupil premium. This is above the national average. In this academy this funding supports pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra support is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The academy meets the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been significant changes to the leadership team, teaching staff and governing body since the school became an academy. A substantive executive headteacher has been appointed from September 2014.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that it is consistently good or better, by ensuring teachers:
  - make better use of the checks on pupils' progress to plan work that consistently builds on what pupils understand
  - improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting to a higher standard
  - mark work in pupils' books so that pupils understand what they have to do next to improve their work
  - provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length across all subjects so they can practise their skills regularly
  - provide more opportunities for children in Nursery and Reception classes to practise their speaking and listening skills with adults, across all activities.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring:
  - all lessons are engaging and maintain pupils' interests and enthusiasm
  - all teachers consistently follow the academy's policy for behaviour, including for those who are behaving well.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership by:
  - improving the skills of newly appointed leaders so they quickly become more effective in checking and supporting the work of other teachers
  - ensuring newly qualified or inexperienced teachers have more access to training and support that are specific to their needs, as well as to the needs of the academy, in order to improve their confidence and skills quickly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement and is not yet good because too few make the progress they should by the end of Year 6. As a result, standards are not improving quickly enough. Too few pupils reach the higher standards in any subject.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are too low. Pupils do not have sufficient skills to be able to read or write at the higher levels because teaching has not been good enough in the past.
- In the sounds that letters make (phonics) screening check in Year 1, in 2013, pupils' achievement was below the national average. Evidence for current pupils shows considerable improvement because the teaching of sounds and letters has improved. The proportion of pupils who have been assessed as having already reached the standard is closer to the national average, and improving. Pupils in Year 2 who missed the standards last year have made good progress and have caught up.
- Pupils who read to inspectors from Year 2 demonstrated this improved understanding and used their phonic knowledge confidently to read unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 6 read with enthusiasm and used a wide variety of skills.
- Across all year groups, most pupils' writing is hampered by poor spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Opportunities for pupils to practise the skills they have are too infrequent. As a result, progress has been too slow.
- Progress made by pupils eligible for free school meals is variable. In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013 they were approximately a year behind their peers in mathematics and reading, and eight months behind in writing. checks by leaders show the current Year 6 pupils have made good progress and are working in line with their classmates. Progress in other year groups has also accelerated for this group of pupils.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, not in the specialist resource provision, has improved; although, in some year groups, this improvement is not as rapid as it could be. Many of these pupils make better progress because checking information is more accurate and is being used more effectively to provide better support.
- Pupils enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and understanding below those typically expected for their age. Progress in the Nursery is inadequate, but better teaching in the Reception classes allows children to catch up. However, the majority of pupils enter Year 1 below national expectations, especially in the key areas of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in Chalklands make good progress from their starting points because the care, support and quality of teaching they receive is outstanding.
- The progress and standards of current pupils are improving. The academy's latest information scrutinised by inspectors shows all year groups making better progress. In Year 6, progress is now good. More pupils are now on track to achieve well.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement and is not yet good because it is not yet ensuring all pupils make consistently good progress. Many teachers are at the beginning of their teaching career and are still developing their skills. A lack of experienced teachers to act as role models makes this process slower.
- Teachers do not use information on the checks on pupils' progress accurately enough in most year groups. Teaching does not build consistently on pupils' prior knowledge or understanding. Gaps in pupils' knowledge are not rectified quickly enough and pupils move on to different work without fully understanding previous teaching. This slows the pace of learning.
- Pupils do not always receive helpful advice on how to improve their learning. Marking focuses too much on what pupils achieve during the lesson, rather than on improving some of the underlying issues such as poor spelling and punctuation. Opportunities for pupils to respond to

this marking are not regular enough in all classes.

- Opportunities for pupils to have a sustained period of time to write at length and practise their skills are infrequent. This means progress is slow, with many pupils only producing short pieces of work that are often difficult to read or understand.
- Teachers in the Nursery do not provide enough stimulating activities to enthuse the children. Adults do not engage the children in conversation well enough to improve their language skills quickly. In the Reception classes progress improves, but opportunities to develop children's understanding through conversation and questioning are still too limited. The outside space is not set up to ensure all areas of learning are available to children, especially in developing their early literacy skills.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the classroom. Better liaison with teachers and good behaviour management mean progress for this group has improved rapidly over a short period of time and standards are rising. Small group work sessions, using specific programmes of study, led by teaching assistants are beginning to have an impact on learning.
- More effective teaching in Year 2 and Year 6 and carefully planned programmes of intervention are leading to improving rates of progress.
- Teaching in Chalklands is consistently good, with much that is outstanding. Teachers have a depth of experience in dealing with pupils' behavioural and emotional needs. Lessons are carefully planned to match individual needs. Close relationships, built up between staff and pupils, enable lessons to proceed with relatively few disruptions. Pupils in Year 6 have made good progress and achievement is in line with national expectations for this group.
- The quality of teaching is improving in all year groups because the academy trust is providing mentoring and coaching from experienced external consultants and ensuring teachers have opportunities to observe excellent teaching in other schools.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

- Behaviour requires improvement and is not yet good because pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good across all subjects. Too few pupils are enthusiastic or positive about learning and many need lots of encouragement to complete work to a good standard.
- Behaviour in the playground and corridors has improved and pupils are generally polite and respectful towards each other and adults. Any instances of less good behaviour are swiftly and effectively managed by both teachers and teaching assistants using the academy's updated behaviour policy.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors were keen to explain how behaviour had improved since the school had become an academy. As one pupil said, 'Teachers used to let you get away with stuff, but now they don't. You have to accept the consequences.' School councillors were involved in the planning of the policy and spoke with pride about their role.
- Other pupils take on roles and responsibilities as play leaders and buddies at break times, supporting younger pupils.
- Opportunities for pupils to be involved in more clubs and sporting events during lunchtime and before and after school are having a positive effect on behaviour, as pupils learn to become more responsible for their actions when working as a team.
- Parents feel the academy looks after their children well and that behaviour is generally good.
- The safety of pupils is good. Pupils feel very safe and report that bullying that was once common is now rare. They know exactly who to go to for help and believe that adults will swiftly sort things out. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe on the roads and in the wider local environment. Regular lessons and assemblies on how to use the internet safely mean pupils are knowledgeable know how to deal with any problems, including cyber bullying.
- Improving attendance is a focus for the academy. Intensive work with families and pupils is having a positive impact. Attendance is now broadly average.

**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- When the school became an academy in 2012, the head of the academy trust and the head of school put in place comprehensive action plans that rightly focused on the key priorities to improve teaching in order to raise standards. However, this improvement was slowed by sudden, unplanned changes in leadership at senior level.
- The trust rapidly sought support from a national leader of education, who has been effective in ensuring these action plans are back on track. They are beginning to have a positive impact on both teaching and achievement. Nevertheless, leadership and management require improvement because teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- Substantive appointments for the executive headteacher, plus other senior leaders, have been made for the start of the academic year in September 2014.
- This swift action and the expertise it brought into the leadership team are ensuring teaching is improving and pupils' progress speeding up, demonstrating the academy's capacity to improve. However, this is yet to be reflected in national tests.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are regular and detailed, including checking work in pupils' books and assessing their progress. Subsequent training is of high quality. However, some of the training is more focused on whole school initiatives rather than the individual needs of teachers in order to improve specific skills. Teachers' targets and salaries are closely linked to the progress pupils make.
- Newly qualified teachers and teach first students are supported well by an experienced leader. Regular weekly meetings and coaching sessions are having a positive impact on their practice. This is further supported by teachers from outstanding schools who act as role models and support teachers in checking the standard of pupils' work.
- Leadership of Chalklands is outstanding. The academy is now using this expertise more widely to ensure the behaviour policy is being followed consistently and to train teachers and support staff in behaviour management techniques.
- Leaders, other than at senior level, are inexperienced and new to their role. Their skills are developing, but the impact of their actions is yet to be fully realised.
- The primary sports funding is used to provide extra opportunities for pupils to become involved in sport, and for teacher training. Trampolining is proving to be very popular with pupils and the club is expanding. The academy is engaging successfully in more competitive sports and tournaments. Initial evaluation of the impact of the funding shows more pupils enjoying an active lifestyle and achieving higher standards.
- A more exciting and relevant range of subjects and programmes of study has recently been introduced. However, opportunities to use these topics to improve pupils' writing are still too infrequent and have not yet had an impact on raising standards, particularly in writing.
- The academy offers a wide range of experiences to develop pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural understanding. Displays in classrooms and corridors reflect pupils' work through art and the use of computer technology.
- The academy promotes equality of opportunity well. A recent successful event, to raise pupils' aspirations in the world of work, saw pupils in every year group learning about a wide range of career opportunities from visiting experts and local tradespeople.
- All safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body was restructured following its conversion to an academy and contains members of the board of trustees as well as parents and other members. The governors are ambitious for the academy's improvement and are anxious to move the academy forward quickly. They are a visible presence in the academy and ensure discrimination is not tolerated in any form. They understand how to interpret the information on pupils' progress and how it compares with schools nationally. Minutes of meetings, examined by inspectors, show there

are increasing levels of challenge to academy leaders about these statistics. However, this is not yet ensuring the academy's performance reflects that of similar schools nationally. The governors check the quality of teaching and understand the link between teachers' pay and pupils' achievement. Governors know how additional government funding is being spent and check to see it is having a positive impact on closing the gap for these pupils. They have taken positive action to ensure the primary sports funding is being used to improve pupils' health and well-being and increase their participation in sporting activities.

The academy trust is undertaking a review of governance to see how it can be further improved



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138504
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	426382

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	357
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Frances Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 4335740
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@elaine.medway.sch.uk">office@elaine.medway.sch.uk</a>

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