

Greenfields Community Primary School

Oxford Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8DF

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- The school has improved its effectiveness so that progress is now good and standards are average. Pupils achieve well in their basic skills.
- Pupils, staff, and parents and carers agree that the school has improved quickly.
- The quality of teaching is now typically good. Effective guidance to staff from senior leaders has resulted in more interesting and enjoyable learning for pupils. They say, 'Lessons are fun.'
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who need extra help to learn achieve well. Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception Year classes.
- The school cares well for its pupils. Pupils say that behaviour is good because it has improved, and that staff handle and resolve problems quickly if they occur.
- The headteacher, supported by the governors and senior staff, has remedied many weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. These include pupils' attitudes to learning, the quality of teaching and the Reception classes' outside learning area.
- Governors, spurred on by the findings of the previous inspection, liaise well with senior staff to identify what works well and what still needs to improve for the school to be even better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils in Years 1 to 6, particularly boys, do not always write with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- In some subjects in Years 1 to 6, such as mathematics, pupils' investigative skills are not fully developed.
- Sometimes, teaching generates work that is too easy for the most-able pupils.
- Middle leaders with responsibility for subjects are not yet fully effective at influencing other teachers to develop their teaching and raise learning to outstanding levels.
- Not all pupils benefit from using the wide range of modern technological equipment available to support and extend their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work, scrutinised information on pupils’ progress and looked at work in pupils’ books. They considered information about safeguarding, monitoring of teaching and behaviour management.
- Most of the inspection was spent observing learning. Inspectors observed 20 lessons, including six jointly with senior staff. Inspectors also observed small groups of pupils working with an adult other than their teacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6, and talked to these children about their learning and the behaviour of pupils over time.
- Leaders, members of school staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority had discussions with inspectors.
- Inspectors talked to a group of pupils formally and others informally in lessons, in the playground and at lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by a number of parents and carers who spoke to inspectors informally at the beginning of the school day. They also took into account 38 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Tait

Additional Inspector

Llyn Codling

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much bigger than most primary schools.
- The headteacher was appointed to the school just before the previous inspection.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is about average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Most pupils are White British and few are from minority ethnic heritages. A small proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is much higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs an early morning breakfast club as well as an after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to outstanding levels by:
 - checking that pupils in Years 1 to 6, particularly boys, spell and punctuate accurately
 - making sure that pupils in Years 1 to 6 apply their good calculation skills and mathematical knowledge to investigate problems in meaningful ways
 - ensuring that staff make better use of computers and other technological equipment to strengthen pupils' day-to-day learning
 - making sure that the most-able pupils in Years 1 to 6 are given hard enough work so they learn and understand more
 - helping subject leaders to support other staff to improve their teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their different starting points, pupils now achieve well in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave Year 6. The most-able pupils generally achieve well, but sometimes the work they do is a little too easy for them so that they make good rather than outstanding progress and do not reach high levels of which they are capable. Results in Year 6 national tests have risen since the previous inspection to broadly average levels.
- In the Nursery class, children make a good start in developing their social and early learning skills. In the Reception classes, a clear and effective focus on teaching reading and writing early helps children achieve well. There was great excitement in the class coffee shop as children thoroughly enjoyed their roles, and the real cake on offer! Improved outdoor resources help children develop their physical and creative skills. Occasionally, when they choose what they will do themselves, they do not learn much if adults do not subtly redirect their activities.
- A clear focus on teaching pupils phonics (letter sounds and combinations) is effective. Year 1 pupils achieved higher than average outcomes in the national phonics screening check. Pupils in all years say that they enjoy reading. Older pupils readily recall a range of popular authors and are confident readers by the time they leave.
- Pupils now enjoy writing as the school ensures that pupils are more motivated to persevere at it; pupils' confidence to write at length or for different purposes has improved. Their writing is sometimes let down by weaker spelling and punctuation; this is particularly true for boys.
- Pupils can calculate accurately and readily recall mathematical facts. However, pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not readily apply and so practise these skills enough when doing investigations. Pupils use their secure computer skills, in science for example, but relatively infrequently. So, for example, when they measured temperature in one class, they did not use some available, simple electronic devices to record the results easily and accurately; doing this would have given them more time to discuss the outcomes and learn more.
- Pupils enjoy competing against other schools and taking part in physical education activities to boost their levels of fitness. Pupils say they enjoy having more activities to choose and like their new sports equipment on the field.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding now achieve well. Gaps between the levels they and others achieve in English and mathematics have narrowed considerably. More one-to-one and small-group activities mean that pupils receiving additional funding are often no more than a term behind others. Current work shows that these gaps continue to narrow.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well. Extra adult support, combined with well-planned activities, means they can keep up with others in the class. This is also true for the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language, reflecting the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good in all years. Pupils are enthusiastic to learn as activities planned for them are relevant to their interests. Activities in the Nursery and Reception classes cater carefully for children's basic skills and foster simple social routines and pupils make good progress as a result.
- Pupils enjoy practical lessons and activities, which help them to work and learn together. In one Year 6 lesson for example, pupils enjoyed some practical artwork linked to their space topic, while Year 5 pupils became totally involved testing the insulation properties of different materials. They understood that the type of insulation makes a real difference to keeping warm or cold.
- Since the previous inspection, the strong focus on increasing pupils' willingness to write has

succeeded. Pupils' work shows that they have completed a lot of writing over the year. It is usually presented well and the content is interesting. Teachers do not always pick up pupils' misspelling of common words or mistakes in punctuation. This means that pupils continue to make the same or similar mistakes.

- Pupils' speaking and listening develop well as lessons often have a good range of opportunities to use them, either through discussions with partners or in talking to the whole class. Pupils like using the school's computers, video cameras, recording devices and other electronic equipment, but say they would like to use them more often because they help them to learn.
- Pupils are not afraid of making mistakes as teachers develop good relationships with them and ensure that anyone's contributions are valued. Pupils' skills develop well in other subjects, particularly their writing. Their investigative skills are not always catered for as effectively, particularly in mathematics and sometimes in science activities, as they are a little predictable.
- Teachers give pupils regular and helpful advice on how to improve work across different subjects and pupils clearly understand the school's new colour-coded system of marking. Pupils also say they enjoy having simple targets and knowing what level they are trying to reach to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say that behaviour has improved quickly and that it is always good now. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that the school is quick to 'step in' if problems occur. They are keen to point out that the headteacher and senior staff have set high standards but 'trust us more', which they feel has helped them to behave better. Others said, 'Teachers are not as boring, and if we do something wrong, they have a friendly chat with us!'
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about how the school rewards good behaviour by giving out house points. They particularly enjoy 'spending' them in the 'house point shop' at the end of term. Members of the school council are particularly keen to voice any concerns brought to them by fellow pupils, knowing that school staff will listen to their views. Many value and follow the school's motto: 'Lead the way, set the example'.
- Additional adult support in school helps to provide individual pupils with good one-to-one support should they be experiencing difficulties either in the school or at home. Pupils say they enjoy being able to have 'time out' at lunchtimes if they need it or attending both the breakfast and after-school clubs. Making breakfast is a particular favourite as pupils are encouraged to serve themselves and make healthy choices.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep safe using the Internet and know what they should do if problems occur. They know that name-calling is unkind and not allowed. They are also very safety conscious when using the extensive open spaces, which they now use more regularly at playtimes and lunchtimes.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by the assistant headteachers and governors, quickly put in place a number of initiatives and actions to help move the school forward after the previous inspection. These succeeded in raising pupils', staff's, and parents' and carers' expectations, which resulted in pupils' achievement, behaviour and the quality of teaching being better.
- The school acted to improve the quality of teaching through regular checks, assessing its quality accurately, increasing the expectation of what good learning looks like and by effective training for staff. This has eliminated the weak or inadequate learning seen in the past. Staff clearly know that their salary progression is linked to gains in pupils' achievement over time.
- Parents and carers have noticed differences in the school. At the beginning of the school day, they made comments like, 'The headteacher is always positive.' Many spoke highly of the parent support group set up by the school.
- Middle leaders are relatively new to their roles. In their subject areas, they have succeeded in

gauging how well pupils make progress. However, they are not yet fully effective in providing guidance to other teachers and staff about how pupils' achievement can be improved to even higher levels.

- The range of subjects taught and the way that they link together have helped to improve pupils' motivation and learning. Activities in the Nursery and Reception classes cater well for children's academic and social needs. Older pupils benefit from work connected to topics ranging from space to the Tudors. Other activities, such as studies of different faiths, help broaden pupils' understanding of others. Aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are skilfully woven into lessons and assemblies, and the school rightly wants to extend pupils' cultural experiences.
- Pupils have noticed an increase in sports-based activities. They really like using the new range of outdoor, keep-fit equipment on the sports field, which they use more extensively than in the past. This has complemented other initiatives to develop pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles. These developments have been financed by the new primary sport funding, which the school has spent wisely.
- The local authority, recognising the school's improving level of effectiveness, has gradually reduced its support. A recent two-day review helpfully gave the school a clear view of what it was doing well and what aspects still needed improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors acted quickly to tackle weaknesses following the previous report. Their relatively new system of different committees, introduced shortly before the previous inspection, is proving to be more effective. For example, governors' meetings are fewer in number but more productive, and governors arrange extra meetings as and when needed.
 - Some governors visit the school regularly to gauge the progress of initiatives. Not all of them take up the offer of making regular visits to gain first-hand knowledge of what works well or needs improving. Governors benefit from training, which enables them to be more confident in weighing up how the school's performance compares with others both locally and nationally. They also check on spending carefully to ensure the effective use of additional funds for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and those requiring extra help.
 - Regular reports from the headteacher enable them to have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and how teachers' pay and progression link to improvements in pupils' achievement. Governors do not tolerate discrimination of any sort, and ensure good-quality safeguarding, child protection procedures and checks on staff appointments. They keenly promote equal opportunities within the school.

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	134857
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	442484
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Morley
Headteacher	Dan Andrews
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 October 2012
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