

# Northdown Primary School

Tenterden Way, Margate, Kent, CT9 3RE

**Inspection dates** 12–13 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 headteacher has strongly communicated his vision for the school to become a beacon of excellence. He has driven rapid improvements in achievement, teaching and behaviour over the past year.
- Throughout the school, teaching is good because teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of what all pupils can achieve.
- Standards in English and mathematics have risen significantly this year and most pupils are making rapid progress because of better teaching.
- Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading and make particularly good progress in it because it is well taught.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well in lessons and around the school. They say bullying is rare and they know it will be dealt with promptly if reported.
- The governing body knows the school well and supports and challenges leaders and managers effectively to bring about improvement.
- Pupils benefit from participation in an exceptionally wide range of sporting activities that promote their physical well-being and their enjoyment of school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet enabling all pupils to make rapid progress in all subjects across the school.
- The new marking policy is not always consistently applied in all classes, and pupils are not given regular opportunities to respond to feedback, limiting their progress.
- Fewer pupils attain the highest levels in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils of average ability do not make quite as much progress in mathematics across Key Stage 2 as they do in reading and writing.
- The necessary focus on English and mathematics has resulted in reduced time for other subjects, limiting pupils' learning in other subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons or parts of lessons and observed 17 teachers. The headteacher and deputy headteacher jointly observed four lessons with inspectors.
- Meetings were held with teachers and senior leaders, members of the governing body, representatives from The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT), and a group of Year 6 pupils. Inspectors also spoke to several parents.
- Inspectors looked at: pupils' workbooks; the school's own records of quality of teaching; school assessments showing pupils' progress; minutes of governing body meetings; reports written by TKAT representatives; and the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils.
- Inspectors heard a number of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors analysed the 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 staff questionnaires completed during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Angela Konarzewski, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jackie Edwards	Additional Inspector
Gianni Bianchi	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average sized all-through primary school, with a Nursery. It is sponsored by the Kemnal Academies Trust. The Academy opened in September 2012. When its predecessor school, Northdown Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- A new headteacher was appointed with effect from June 2013.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a higher than average proportion of other ethnic groups represented in the school. English is not the first language of more than a quarter of all pupils.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are all above the national average. The majority of these have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and speech, language and communication needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, additional government funding to support, in this school, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority, is also above the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that all pupils make rapid progress, especially the most able in writing, and pupils of average ability in mathematics in Key Stage 2, by:
  - ensuring that marking consistently tells pupils about what they need to do to improve their achievement, and providing more opportunities for pupils to act on the feedback
  - increasing the number of opportunities for high quality writing across the wider curriculum
  - establishing a secure, step-by-step sequence for the teaching of mathematics, building on the success of the new approach used in Key Stage 1.
- Develop a curriculum that enables pupils to make good progress in all subjects, and promotes and sustains a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress has improved significantly since the academy opened in September 2012 and particularly since September of this academic year.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills and in their mathematical development. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage so that, by the time they enter Year 1, the majority are meeting national expectations.
- From low starting points on entry, pupils make particularly good progress in their understanding and application of phonics skills (the sounds letters make). This is followed up throughout the school by daily reading sessions which develop pupils' skills and enjoyment.
- Pupils build on their good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in Key Stage 1, so that standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average in writing and mathematics, and above average in reading.
- Across Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress so that standards by the end of Year 6, which were significantly below the national average previously, are now much higher.
- Although progress for all pupils has been faster this year, the most able pupils are not yet achieving as well in writing as they are in reading or mathematics. This is because there are limited opportunities for them to demonstrate high quality writing in subjects other than English.
- Pupils of average ability do not achieve quite as well in mathematics as in reading and writing in Key Stage 2. This is because mathematics is not always taught in such a way that pupils are helped to build on their knowledge and understanding step by step.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, together with pupils who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. This is because they receive support that is well matched to their needs and abilities, and teaching assistants give good quality guidance to individuals and groups.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment is higher than that of their peers by the end of Year 6.
- The school successfully addresses gender gaps where girls tend to do better in English and boys tend to do better in mathematics, so that by the end of Year 6 boys and girls are doing equally well.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is now good and continuing to improve rapidly. As a result, attainment is now rising for all groups of pupils.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and behaviour is managed well, so time is not wasted in lessons.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, and children enjoy learning in an environment that is well organised and welcoming. Adults provide a range of interesting and enjoyable activities that promote children's learning across all areas effectively.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good. Pupils improve their knowledge, skills and understanding quickly because teachers have good subject knowledge. They also have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve, demonstrated through clear target setting.
- The focus on improving the quality of writing was evidenced in some pupils' workbooks. For example, one able Year 6 boy had written evocatively: 'Suddenly, the horn sounded.... We heard the clamorous death rattles of a machine gun.' However these opportunities are not provided

consistently across the school.

- Teachers check pupils' progress regularly and accurately. They use assessments to identify pupils who may be falling behind and provide extra support to help them catch up rapidly. They correct any misconceptions as they arise during lessons.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning. They are especially effective in supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to ensure they make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers generally apply the new marking policy to good effect. However, there are some inconsistencies in practice across the school and pupils are not always given opportunities to act on feedback and advice given. The limited amount of writing that is completed in subjects other than English is often not marked so pupils are not able to achieve as well as they could.
- Most parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire believe that their child is taught well. This view is supported by pupils who say that teaching is now good at the school.
- The full time sports coach provides good quality teaching in a wide range of physical activities. As a result, pupils develop their skills to a high standard, enhancing their enjoyment of school and improving their health and fitness.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils say behaviour has improved considerably since the headteacher took over last summer. They enjoy aspiring to the goals of 'Good to be Green', and are clear about what is right and wrong and how they should take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- The pupil support manager logs and follows up all incidents of misbehaviour. Support is given to pupils appropriately, as required, and some pupils have been excluded by the headteacher as a result of persistent misbehaviour. However, the number of incidents of misbehaviour has fallen significantly, together with the number of exclusions.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, are keen to learn and want to do well. They work together effectively when discussing questions or sharing ideas, and listen attentively when adults are speaking.
- The school is a very well-organised, tidy environment, and pupils take pride in ensuring that these high standards are maintained both inside the classroom, where their work is usually neatly presented in workbooks, on display, and outside.
- Attendance has improved significantly over the past year as a result of rigorous procedures for following up absence, rewarding good attendance, and working closely with families through a full-time education welfare officer; it is now average and rising.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes bullying of all kinds, including cyber-bullying, and they say that bullying is rare because the headteacher will not tolerate it. They understand that racism is wrong and that it can be hurtful to use the word 'gay' in a derogatory way.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Almost all parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire agree that the school keeps their children safe.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher, supported effectively by the deputy headteacher, the governing body, newly appointed middle leaders and The Kemnal Academy Trust, has successfully led the school through a period of rapid improvement.

- The headteacher has ensured that teaching is constantly improving by observing lessons regularly and giving teachers appropriate advice, checking pupils' workbooks frequently and reviewing assessments that track pupils' progress over time. He has secured professional training for staff where needs have been identified.
- The school has clear systems for checking pupils' progress. Leaders hold teachers to account for the progress of the pupils they teach, and teachers are rewarded for improvements in pupils' progress through pay progression linked to target setting.
- Middle leaders are relatively new to their roles, but they are already showing a strong commitment to leading and driving improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- The curriculum other than English, mathematics and physical education, supported by the government's sports funding, is underdeveloped. The headteacher has rightly prioritised these areas, and plans are in place to allocate more time to other subjects next year in order to promote and sustain pupils' thirst for knowledge and love of learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well, and displays around the school indicate that the school provides a rich environment for developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence, preparing them well for the next stages in their education.
- Equal opportunities are well promoted, and discrimination is addressed proactively. As a result, pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds and with a wide range of abilities and interests get on well together and make good progress.
- The breakfast club provides a healthy breakfast and a good start to the day for pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium funding.
- The school has robust safeguarding procedures for keeping pupils safe and secure, and staff are well trained in child-protection procedures.
- Initially, when the school became an academy, improvements were slower than they should have been. However, this year, representatives of the The Kemnal Academy Trust have been influential in making sure that all aspects of the school improve rapidly. They regularly visit the school to support the headteacher in leading rapid and sustainable improvement, and the school's track record of improvement indicates that it has good capacity to improve further.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The Chair of the Governing Body is highly effective in his role as leader of the governing body. He and other governors regularly visit the school to support and challenge the headteacher and to gain an independent view of the school. They provide detailed reports on their observations during visits, and undertake training that helps them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities well. Governors know how the additional pupil premium funding and sports funding are spent, and check on the difference this is making to the progress of pupils. Governors are well aware of information about the school's performance; they meet regularly and receive reports from the headteacher enabling them to check the school's performance, particularly in relation to pupils' attainment and progress. Governors have a clear understanding of the overall quality of teaching, and know that pay progression is linked to teachers' performance as measured by pupils' progress. The performance of the headteacher is also managed well. Governors manage the finances of the school well and ensure that all their legal responsibilities are carried out, including checking that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and reviewed regularly.

## 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>	138434
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	426377
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	375
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dave Holland
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Kendall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 226077
<b>Fax number</b>	01843 222341
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:james.kendall@northdown-tkat.org">james.kendall@northdown-tkat.org</a>



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