

St Peter's Infant School

Holcombe Road, Delce, Rochester, ME1 2HU

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and governors have successfully maintained the school's good position reported at the previous inspection.
- Pupils' attainment has improved because progress is more rapid. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are at or above those found in most schools nationally.
- Children in the early years make good progress. They enjoy well-planned activities that develop their skills and understanding.
- All groups of pupils make good progress, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils do as well as and often better than others in the school and other pupils nationally.
- Teaching is good and improving because leaders carefully check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Effective support is provided when any weaknesses are identified.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are friendly and polite to each other and visitors.
- Teachers make sure that the very small number of pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are supported well and any inappropriate behaviour does not disrupt learning.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and arrangements to keep them safe are good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through all that the school does.
- Governors are committed to improving the school and are supportive of the leadership. Their plans to review the impact of their work reflect their determination to be rigorous in holding the school to account for its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet typically outstanding. Teachers' expectations are not always consistently high enough to ensure that pupils are challenged and engaged in their learning in order to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Progress in writing is not as rapid as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Work is not always demanding enough to ensure that more pupils reach the higher level in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- The presentation of pupils' work is not good enough consistently. Teachers sometimes accept untidy, poorly presented work when pupils' books show that they can do better.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classrooms, looked at work in pupils' books and listened to some pupils read.
- In addition, the inspector talked to pupils about their work, about behaviour and safety and other aspects of school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with pupils, governors and two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents including the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan, information on pupils' progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter received from a parent. The inspector also took account of 14 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils, about four in five, are of White British heritage, which is higher than the national average.
- At around one quarter of the pupils, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The school provides daily breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Provision is made for the early years in two Reception classes which work together as an early years unit. Children attend on a full-time basis.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is typically outstanding in order to raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' learning
 - all pupils are engaged and involved in their learning by challenging them sufficiently
 - the most-able pupils are provided with work which is demanding enough to help them achieve the higher level in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2
 - progress in writing matches that in reading and mathematics
 - the presentation of pupils' work is neat and tidy.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors have ensured that the school has maintained its good standing as reported in the previous inspection. Improvements have been made because the headteacher has determinedly ensured that the focus on learning is paramount. As a result, pupils' attainment has improved and is now good.
- Senior leaders carefully check how well the school is doing and what the main priorities are to improve. Their evaluation is rigorous although a little cautious in its outcomes. This is because there is no complacency and leaders are committed to providing the very best for pupils.
- There is a hardworking school community and an atmosphere of respect and courtesy among staff and pupils. There is strong teamwork and staff are very supportive of the leadership. A typical comment, the sentiment of which was shared by many staff was, 'The ethos of this school allows staff and children to grow and develop in a supportive and nurturing environment. We all work together to ensure every child is successful.'
- Senior leaders provide good support to teachers who are just starting on their career. One said, 'If I hadn't come to this school I don't think I would have carried on teaching.'
- Staff are committed to equal opportunities for all pupils who learn without fear of any type of discrimination.
- The headteacher manages the performance of teachers well. Regular performance reviews identify any weaknesses and areas for training and development. These are closely matched to the needs of the school. All teachers have targets that are linked to pupils' progress and pay increases are made only if targets are met.
- Middle and subject leaders support their colleagues well and alongside the headteacher have identified clear priorities for improvement in their subjects and areas of responsibility.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly and leaders use the information to identify pupils who need extra support to help them catch up.
- The subjects taught are broad and balanced and linked to whole-school topics that motivate and interest the pupils. Appropriate priority is given to pupils' reading, writing and number skills. The school is continuing to review its planning of the new National Curriculum to ensure that all requirements are met and that it meets the needs as well as the interests of pupils. There is a good range of clubs and additional activities that enrich the curriculum and give pupils opportunities to learn new skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum and assemblies. Staff provide good role models to pupils in promoting the school's values. Good relationships are fostered between all pupils and between pupils and staff.
- Pupils are helped to understand why there are rules, that everyone has to live by a set of rules and that they help you make the right choices. They learn about fairness, equality and respect for differences in faiths, cultures and backgrounds and taking care of resources in school and in the natural world. The school prepares pupils well for their next schools and for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are very positive about all that the school offers children and their families. They really appreciate the way that the headteacher is at the gate every morning to welcome them and the children and the way the school helps them support their children's learning. One parent wrote, 'The school recognises that a child's journey through education need not be taken alone. It provides parents with the tools to appropriately support their child's journey and most importantly provides the child with similar tools to support their peers.'
- The additional primary schools sports funding is well used. The school is part of a sports partnership with a local academy. This provides, for example, specialist physical education teachers to work with pupils and teachers to develop skills, more competitive opportunities and increasing what is on offer so there is greater participation in sporting activity.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. It has enabled the school to provide a range of support including internet-based programmes to support literacy and mathematics at home, additional support from teachers and teaching assistants, counselling for pupils with social, emotional or health needs and workshops for parents. These initiatives have helped to remove barriers to learning and the impact is seen in the school's success in closing the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others.
- The safeguarding arrangements are well established and effectively implemented by all staff to keep pupils safe.
- The local authority has supported the school well to ensure improvements over time.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are committed to the school and its improvement. They are well informed by the headteacher and their own monitoring about the school's performance and how it compares to other schools nationally. They question and challenge the school if progress falls below what is expected.
- Governors are very active and involved in the life of the school. They are well known by all staff and attend school events and functions to make themselves known to parents.
- The governing body has reviewed its skills and governors are exploring ways to review and increase the impact of their work. They are aware that they need to further increase their effectiveness in holding the school to account for its performance with robust challenge to bring about more rapid improvement.
- They know about the quality of teaching, understand how underperformance is tackled and ensure that pay rewards and promotions are linked to pupils' progress.
- Governors have a good awareness of the use and impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the primary sports funding and the benefits for pupils.
- The governing body ensures that all statutory duties are met including safeguarding requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff, governors and a very large majority of parents support this view.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground and when they are working with other adults outside the classroom. They understand the school's Golden Rules and know that they are there to help everyone do their best and learn well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive as well-planned lessons and experiences engage their interests.
- Pupils from all different backgrounds and cultures play and learn well together, are keen to please their teachers and usually work hard. They are friendly and polite.
- Pupils enjoy school as is reflected in their attendance which has improved and is now above average.
- There are a few pupils who have specific and sometimes complex behavioural needs who find it difficult to moderate their own behaviour. School records show that these pupils are supported well and are effectively helped to improve their behaviour over time.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given in school. Members of the 'Caring Crew', for example, act as role models for younger pupils and set a good example.
- Pupils enjoy a variety of fund-raising activities to support a range of charities. During the inspection, they participated in 'Christmas Jumper Day' to support 'Save the Children'. They knew why they were collecting money and had a good awareness of helping children who are less fortunate than them. As one pupil said, 'We can help other children who are not as lucky as us.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and most parents agree that the school keeps their children safe and looks after them well.
- Good and trusting relationships mean that pupils are confident to talk to an adult if they have any problems.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, a group agreed that to be safe, 'you need to hold hands if going on the road'. They said that they know to never give their name or address on the internet.
- Pupils understand that bullying can be, 'name calling, being unkind or hitting people'. They are confident that if anyone is unkind, teachers will always do something about it. A group agreed that there were one or two pupils who were 'sometimes naughty but it's because they can't help it and they don't mean to be unkind'.
- The breakfast club and after-school clubs provide a good start and end of the day. Pupils who attend behave well and are kept safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. As a result, all groups of pupils make good progress, including disabled pupils

and those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils.

- Throughout the school there are good relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils. Skilled teaching assistants work effectively with class teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Teachers are good role models for pupils and foster a culture of care and respect. Teachers and other adults create a positive learning atmosphere and plan lessons that encourage pupils to be resourceful and creative. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic, happy learners.
- Work is marked regularly and pupils check to see what their teachers have written. Pupils are given opportunities to respond to marking and improve their work. This was an area highlighted for improvement in the previous inspection.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well throughout the school because teachers now expect pupils to work through the phases of phonics learning at a faster pace. This means pupils are able to use the skills of segmenting and blending to read words. Pupils have opportunities to read widely and often and enjoy reading.
- Pupils have many opportunities to write for many different reasons. For example, during the inspection pupils wrote poems, improved their own story versions of *The Three Little Pigs* and sentences for their circus tents. Their books show many other writing opportunities across different subjects. This was an area for improvement in the previous inspection. Errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling are corrected and pupils receive good guidance to improve. This contributes to the better progress they are making in writing.
- Mathematics teaching is now more consistent across the school as there are agreed whole-school approaches to teaching, for example in the calculations policy. This is helping pupils to make good progress.
- However, pupils' books show that their work in writing and in mathematics and other subjects is not presented well and is untidy. This is because teachers are too willing to accept work that is not as neat and well presented as it should be. The school has an agreed handwriting style but teachers do not always demonstrate this well for pupils to follow.
- Pupils who require additional help are quickly identified and support is given, enabling them to catch up. The school makes sure that pupils who have specific difficulties with their learning are given tasks that are achievable and closely tailored to their needs so that they can experience success.
- On a few occasions, however, there is a lack of challenge for some pupils of all abilities. This is when teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and the level of engagement and involvement in learning are not high enough. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- The most-able pupils are not always given work that is demanding enough in writing and mathematics to help them reach the higher level by the end of Year 2.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. In 2014, the attainment of pupils who were assessed at the end of Year 2 and who achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was at or above average. Over the past three years this shows an improving trend, particularly in mathematics.
- The proportion of most-able pupils achieving the higher level at the end of Year 2 was above average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics.
- In the 2014 phonics check (the sounds that letters make) for Year 1 pupils, the proportion of pupils that reached the required level was below that found nationally. The school took this seriously and identified that many pupils were trying to make sense of the 'nonsense' words rather than read them phonetically and that the pace of pupils' learning was too slow. Additional support was given to the pupils who had not achieved the expected level so that by Year 2 they were up to speed in their phonic knowledge. Effective actions have been taken to address weaknesses in phonics teaching. Pupils currently in Year 1 and Year 2 are using their phonic knowledge well to read unfamiliar words and are making good progress in reading.
- Resources for reading and writing are carefully chosen to engage and motivate all pupils, and boys in particular. This is helping to narrow the gap between boys and girls as boys in Year 2 are now making faster progress than girls, which is helping them to catch up.
- The school continues to focus on raising achievement in writing to match that in reading and

mathematics. Improvements have been made because the school has developed more exciting and purposeful reasons for pupils to write in all subjects. As a result, progress, although remaining less rapid than in reading and mathematics, has accelerated. However, work in books in all subjects is often untidy and poorly presented.

- Pupils' mathematics books show that more practical problem-solving activities and the consistent application of the school's calculation policy have helped pupils to make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their varied starting points because their needs are well met.
- In 2014, by the end of Key Stage 1, the school successfully closed and reversed the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others. This is the result of effective use of additional funding. Disadvantaged pupils did better in reading, writing and mathematics than their classmates and similar pupils nationally. The progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is good and often they are making more rapid progress than others.

The early years provision

is good

- The leadership of the early years is good. The staff know the children very well and plan effectively for their next steps in learning. The two classes work together as a unit so the leader has a good overview of the quality of provision for all children.
- Good relationships are forged with parents and children before they start and with the pre-schools that children attend. As a result, children settle happily into the early years with confidence and good attitudes to learning.
- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that vary from year to year but are often below the levels typical for their age. Last year they were weaker in personal, social and emotional development but in the current year their reading and writing skills are weaker.
- Children make good progress from their starting points. The proportion that reached a good level of development by the end of Reception in 2014 improved considerably from 2013, although it remained below average.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs also make good progress because their needs are identified quickly when they start and appropriate and effective support is provided.
- Children have a range of interesting and stimulating activities to choose from giving them a wide variety of experiences in all the areas of learning which develop and build on their skills. Activities are frequently initiated by the children based on their own interests. Children were very enthusiastic to write about a local circus that had captured their interest. They are proud of their achievements. One girl was thrilled to share the fact that she had written all the letters in her name.
- Children concentrate and persevere with tasks. They work and play well together, share resources and often help each other out without prompting by adults. Behaviour is good.
- Children are kept safe and encouraged to learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, children are shown how to use scissors safely and ride their bikes without bumping into others. They know that they have to wash their hands after going to the toilet because, as one child said, 'the germs might make us sick'.
- In the outdoor area, part of which can be used in all weathers, activities are provided that motivate and challenge the children. They can choose to learn inside or outside.
- By the end of the early years, children are well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.

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	118576
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	443764

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lawrence McVeigh
Headteacher	Denise Curzon
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 March 2011
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