

Lady Joanna Thornhill Endowed Primary School

Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, Kent, TN25 5EA

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher’s drive and high ambition for the pupils are shared fully by the very effective governing body and the highly committed leadership team.
- As a result, the school has maintained the high quality of all aspects of its work since the previous inspection.
- Outstanding teaching inspires and motivates pupils to work hard in all subjects. As a result, pupils have a passion for learning and take great pride in their achievements.
- The determination of the staff team to meet all pupils’ needs ensures rapid progress throughout the school. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their move to secondary school, attaining high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make an excellent start to their education in the early years. The rich and varied experiences enable them to develop an early love of learning.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and standards of behaviour in all lessons, in the dining hall and on the playground are exemplary. Attendance is high.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make excellent progress from their individual starting points. They work with confidence and independence because they are given high quality support.
- The rich curriculum promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- The governing body is highly effective in both supporting and challenging leaders to keep up the school’s high level of performance.
- Parents speak highly of the school and agree that it is well led and managed. The vast majority who responded to the Parent View questionnaire would recommend the school to others.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and carried out three joint observations with the headteacher. They also looked at a wide range of pupils’ work and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other members, a representative of the local authority, and members of staff including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities.
- Inspectors examined the school’s documentation including safeguarding policies, the school’s development plan, the management of teachers’ performance, the use of pupil premium funding, and displays of pupils’ work and achievement around school.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of information on how the school checks on the progress of the different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 138 responses by parents to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and the results from the school’s own consultations with parents. They also spoke to parents during the inspection. Responses from staff to the inspection questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

Christine Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carole Skinner

Additional Inspector

Jeannie Gibbons

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well below the national average. There were very few of these pupils in Year 6 in 2014. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils, in this school, known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- Children receive full-time education in the early years which is made up of two Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has National Support School status and is one of the lead schools initiating the local Teaching School – the Ashford Teaching Alliance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) in Key Stage 1 by ensuring all staff adopt consistent approaches when teaching pupils to sound out letters to ensure all make rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is highly effective in his drive for continuous improvement. His vision and sustained direction for school improvement are shared by staff, the governing body, parents and pupils. There is an imaginative and continuous pursuit of high standards in every aspect of the school's work which has been sustained since the previous inspection.
- The whole staff team has successfully created an outstanding environment for pupils to gain skills and knowledge which promote the pursuit of excellence in pupils' academic and personal performance. It is evident that all staff, leaders and governors are driven by a deep commitment, underpinned by the school's motto, 'Together everyone achieves more'. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Senior leaders are excellent role models to other staff and are very skilled at improving the quality of teaching and setting targets for others to aspire to. They ensure that expectations are consistently high and that minor variations in teaching or achievement are quickly addressed.
- Middle leaders are highly effective in their roles. They are rigorous in their checking of pupils' progress in different subjects and in ensuring that all pupils are achieving extremely well.
- The provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and for those supported by additional funding (the pupil premium) is managed exceptionally well to support their learning and ensure they can take part in all that the school offers.
- The rigorous management of staff performance has been a key factor in maintaining the school's high standards.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are fully met. They are supported by high quality record keeping and training for all staff.
- Pupils are provided with a curriculum that is exciting, meeting their different needs and helping them develop their skills. The school thoroughly tracks the progression of skills in all subjects, and leaders are in the process of implementing a new system to measure pupils' progress, following the phased removal of previous National Curriculum levels.
- The primary school sport funding is used effectively, enabling more pupils to take part in sport and to help them benefit from a wider range of sports. Specialist coaching from the local tennis club has greatly improved pupils' skills, as has the specialist gymnastics teacher. This funding successfully contributes to extensive involvement of competitive sports and team games.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. The highly supportive and positive climate helps all pupils to grow in confidence and self-assurance. British values are promoted well, including an emerging understanding of democracy through roles on the school council. This helps the school to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. There is an excellent programme of residential and other visits that develop pupils' social and personal skills. Pupils have a strong sense of community and show pride in their school and in the wider neighbourhood.
- The local authority gives appropriate light touch support to this outstanding school, which is held as an example to others. The headteacher and staff are effectively supporting the development of other schools locally through their role as a Teaching School.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very much involved in all aspects of the school's work. They have a high level of expertise and use this to ask well informed questions. They provide effective support for senior leaders, as well as making sure that they continue to improve the school.
 - Governors are a regular presence in the school and have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement over time compared to other schools nationally. The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school.
 - In their persistent drive for improvement, the governors check that the management of teachers' performance is rigorous and ensure that consistently good and outstanding teaching leads to appropriate salary progression.
 - They are dedicated to working with school leaders to ensure that the school is the best that it can be and they maintain regular communication with parents to seek their views.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very polite and considerate towards each other and they respond extremely well to the care that all adults show them. They listen attentively and are proud of their own and others' achievements.
- Pupils' conduct is exemplary. Pupils settle very quickly to work in lessons and move smartly around school. They are extremely attentive in assemblies and participate with enthusiasm.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They move quickly and efficiently to their tasks and work extremely well with others.
- Pupils learn in a calm and academic atmosphere. They know they come to school to learn and are ready and able to do so. This is helped by the excellent friendly and positive relationships that the headteacher and his staff firmly establish.
- Pupils work hard and often produce exceptional quality and quantity of work. They take great care of their books, school equipment and their environment, of which they are proud.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility and are proud of the initiatives that the school has introduced to ensure that pupils care for one another. Year 6 pupils take their responsibilities seriously as playground buddies for younger children and as table leaders in the dining room at lunchtime, providing support for the youngest children.
- High levels of attendance and punctuality reflect what the pupils told inspectors, that they love coming to school. Parents agree that their children are happy in their learning and are well looked after.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree. They know how to deal with any difficulties that may arise and have every confidence that adults will help them.
- Pupils understand the risks and dangers they may meet in their everyday life. They know about different forms of bullying, including racist and cyber bullying, through projects such as e-safety day and through personal, social and health education programmes. Pupils rightly feel that there are very few incidents, but know what they would do should they occur.
- Pupils are very tolerant of others' views and beliefs and they get on exceptionally well together.
- Staff provide considerable support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Parents very much appreciate all that the school does for their children. Inspectors saw examples of pupils whose behaviour has improved greatly as a result of the excellent support they have received.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers have very high expectations for all groups of pupils. Pupils respond very positively, are very ambitious and aim high. This is evident in the pride that they take in presenting their work and in being extremely productive. They talk about the 'challenge to do better', as well as how the adults help them by 'showing us different methods'.
- Routines are established extremely well. From the moment the children enter the Reception class, they follow adults' instructions immediately and no learning time is wasted.
- All staff work exceptionally hard to ensure the environment, both around the school and in classrooms, stimulates pupils' enthusiasm for their learning. High quality displays for English and mathematics keep pupils informed about the learning that is going on in class. Pupils refer to the prompts and this enables them to learn very effectively.
- As a result of high quality training, teachers have excellent subject knowledge, and they work well together. The skills of teachers in subjects such as music and sport enable pupils to reach high standards.
- Teaching assistants are highly competent and provide excellent support for pupils in lessons and when teaching small groups.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask very carefully considered questions to help pupils secure new knowledge and develop their thinking skills. They rarely accept simplistic answers and ask supplementary questions to address any misunderstandings.
- Work is marked regularly and guidance for pupils is precise and informative. It is used well to show pupils how to improve their own work and to deepen their understanding. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, the teacher introduced the term 'life expectancy' to extend a pupil's scientific vocabulary further.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils, receive excellent support to improve their skills and understanding.
- The most-able pupils are taught very well and make excellent progress. They show high levels of

independence and perseverance and are self-critical in their approach to learning. Teachers build rapidly and systematically on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and this enables pupils to achieve very high standards in many subjects.

- The teaching of writing is highly effective, both in literacy lessons and across the curriculum. Frequent opportunities for pupils to write in subjects such as history, science and religious education greatly extend their skills and increase their enthusiasm for writing.
- Pupils learn rapidly in mathematics because teachers make sure all pupils are given work that gets the best out of them. Teachers relate carefully planned problem-solving activities to real life situations, such as taking medicine, so that they are meaningful and purposeful. Teachers and teaching assistants immediately address any misconceptions and pupils are encouraged to apply their skills in different situations. For example, pupils are able to apply their mathematical skills in a number of subjects, and they use precise and accurate mathematical vocabulary in their reasoning.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading. All teachers place a high emphasis on the importance of reading. As a result, standards in reading are high. Pupils are taught letters and sounds (phonics) in the early years, have opportunities to read regularly to adults, and have use of the school library, which underpin their success. However, there are some minor inconsistencies between classes at Key Stage 1 in the way teachers pronounce the sounds that letters make, which occasionally confuses the children.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All groups of pupils make excellent progress through the school. They build rapidly and consistently on their earlier learning in all subjects from the early years to when they leave school in Year 6. Pupils of all abilities have very positive and effective skills for improving their own learning, which contribute to their success.
- Pupils' attainment is well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. High levels of attainment have been sustained since the previous inspection. The evidence from pupils' current work reflects high levels of achievement throughout the school.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonic screening check. This shows that the school provides a very good foundation for pupils' future word recognition and spelling as pupils work towards the end of Key Stage 2. Throughout the school many pupils read fluently and with expression.
- In writing, pupils use their secure skills in punctuation, grammar and spelling to write accurately, with neat cursive handwriting. They write imaginatively and appropriately for different audiences on a range of subjects from the Victorians to detailed accounts of Chinese New Year. Pupils' imaginative writing becomes increasingly sophisticated and creative as pupils progress through Key Stage 2 and many reach standards that are higher than expected for their age.
- Standards are high in mathematics and pupils are very confident when applying their skills in real life situations, such as designing an extension to a school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make exceptional progress because their needs are fully met. Pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and given high quality support to help them to do the best they can.
- The very small numbers of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium make the same rapid progress from their different starting points as their classmates. This is because the support they receive is tailored to their individual needs and teachers track their progress carefully.
- The most able pupils achieve exceptionally well, especially in reading and mathematics, and during the inspection they told inspectors that they are constantly challenged to reach higher standards. The proportions reaching the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above average.
- Pupils now enjoy a wider range of sporting opportunities and uptake is high. As a result, their skills have improved and they achieve success in local competitions.
- Almost all parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) agree that their children achieve well at this school.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Excellent leadership and management of the early years provision ensure that children achieve extremely well. The school has successfully maintained the high standards seen at the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. The highly trained teachers and teaching assistants thoroughly

understand the needs of young children. They have the highest expectations for them and are especially skilled in asking children questions about their learning, which help them to develop their thinking and speaking skills very well.

- The staff establish excellent relationships with parents from the start through rigorous induction procedures. This enables the staff to build an excellent knowledge of children's starting points and move quickly to eliminate gaps in their learning.
- Children start school with skills and knowledge typically found at their age, with some exceeding that. All children, whatever their starting point, make rapid progress. As a result, they enter Year 1 with attainment that is well above the national average.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. Routines are very well established and children follow instructions very quickly, demonstrating high enthusiasm for learning from a very young age.
- Teaching is excellent. Teachers plan an exciting variety of opportunities that nurture children's curiosity and imagination and help to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- Children particularly enjoy the exceptionally well planned 'explore and challenge' activities, where they develop investigative skills. For example, on a very cold day, children were fascinated as they discussed and tried out ways to release the 'pesky penguins' from blocks of ice.
- The teaching of phonics is particularly effective in the early years and enables children to develop early reading and writing skills. Children of all abilities quickly learn good posture and how to form letters and words accurately. They have excellent opportunities to apply their skills in many role-play and problem-solving activities.
- Children of all abilities work and play happily together and concentrate in all their activities. Their behaviour and safety are outstanding. They feel safe and are well cared for. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well and they are curious about the world around them. They tidy up with care and enthusiasm and organise their work well.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed well to have a maximum impact on children's achievement across all areas of learning.

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	118706
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	453266

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Rose
Headteacher	Kevin Grout
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2009
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