

Painters Ash Primary School

Masefield Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 8EL

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils have, in past years, made insufficient progress in Key Stage 1. This has adversely affected pupils' learning in Key Stage 2. Consequently, standards have been below average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in reading have been particularly weak.
- Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not consistently plan lessons which provide sufficient challenge for the full range of pupils, including the most able.
- Despite current strengths in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, other subjects, such as science, are not taught so effectively.
- Subject leaders are not consistently clear as to those aspects of pupils' performance which most require improvement. Their impact on school improvement varies.
- The curriculum provides more effectively for quality learning in literacy and numeracy than in other subjects. The most able pupils have not, in the past, been well served.

The school has the following strengths

- Weaknesses in early years have been successfully addressed. Provision is now securely good.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. This is contributing to better progress in reading.
- Robust action to improve teaching in the last four terms has ensured that pupils are now making much better progress across the school. Pupils' work and school data show that many are now making good progress and standards are rising.
- Pupils show consistently positive attitudes to learning, feel very safe and behave well.
- The school works hard to meet the needs of all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are learning more rapidly than others. Hence the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers, both in school and nationally, are closing.
- Recent appointments have given the senior leadership team greater capacity to drive change.
- Governance has improved. Governors are well informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and are active in challenging school leaders to accelerate improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons, five of which were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year. They listened to some pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of Governors and two other governors, the school's senior and subject leaders, and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 34 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also looked at the school's own surveys of parents' views from 2014.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered minutes of governors' meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to check pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Teresa Davies

Additional inspector

Danvir Visvanathan

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Painters Ash Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Around 20% of pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic groups. A very small number of pupils come from Gypsy-Roma families.
- One in every seven pupils speaks English as an additional language, although very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is close to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is slightly above the national average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- In the early years, all the children in Reception attend full time.
- The school offers daily breakfast and after-school clubs. These were included in the current inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently at least good by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - setting consistently challenging work for all groups of pupils, and particularly for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that all staff have sufficient knowledge of subjects other than literacy and numeracy so that pupils are able to achieve consistently well across the curriculum.
- Build upon pupils' increasingly rapid achievement so that standards are raised to be at least in line with the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6, by ensuring that:
 - actions already taken to improve pupils' skills in reading are sustained so that gaps in pupils' reading skills in Key Stage 2 are effectively addressed
 - the most able pupils make more consistently rapid progress and attain at higher levels.
- Improve the impact of leaders and governors by ensuring that:
 - the effectiveness and impact of subject leaders are at least good
 - the pace of change is accelerated as a result of the current enhanced senior leadership team
 - the curriculum meets the learning needs of the full range of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Prior to the appointment of the deputy headteacher and, recently, of an assistant headteacher, the capacity of leadership to tackle underlying weaknesses and accelerate change has been restricted. Considerable time has been required to manage the removal of weaker teachers and ensure that new staff are working effectively. Consequently, improvements in achievement have been slower to come through.
 - Not all key subject leaders have sufficiently detailed understanding of the school's performance data nor do they analyse the impact of actions taken with enough rigour. They have not always been proactive in driving necessary improvements.
 - Senior leaders promote a positive ethos. Significant improvement in leadership and provision in early years, the removal of weaker teachers and current more effective teaching have secured more rapid progress by pupils. Governors provide increasingly effective challenge and support. The current strengthened leadership team is well placed to secure more rapid improvement.
 - The monitoring of teaching is effective. The procedures for setting targets to improve teachers' practice are now securely established. As a result of the action taken by leaders and staff, the quality of work in pupils' books has improved and teachers' marking is generally thorough.
 - The school has prepared well for the implementation of the new National Curriculum. Currently, the focus is on improving opportunities for the most able pupils and on ensuring that pupils achieve as well in subjects such as science as they currently do in literacy and numeracy.
 - The existing assessment system has been maintained so that staff have access to detailed information about pupils' progress. Leaders have, however, identified a system which best meets its future needs without the use of levels.
 - School leaders evaluate the impact of pupil premium expenditure thoroughly. They recognise that, while some inconsistencies remain, eligible pupils are achieving increasingly rapidly across the school.
 - Although the school's self-evaluation is over-optimistic in places, leaders know where improvement is needed.
 - The primary school sports funding is used well to improve training and to provide specialist sports clubs. More pupils are now involved in sporting activities and competitions.
 - The local authority has provided intensive support to improve teaching and boost achievement. This help has enabled the school to tackle staffing issues and improve teachers' practice.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural social development is well promoted. British values are promoted effectively through, for example, teaching pupils about local history and about the British parliamentary and judicial systems. Consequently, pupils gain understanding of their rights and responsibilities as British citizens.
 - The school is striving to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
 - The school has positive links with parents and with neighbouring schools. Links with other schools have contributed positively to the development of the curriculum and allow teachers to observe good practice in other settings.
 - Safeguarding arrangements are robust. All staff are trained to the required levels.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Although initially slow to respond to declining performance in Years 1 and 2, governors have become closely involved in school improvement and monitor progress closely. Re-training and review have enabled them to become more effective and to hold school leaders to account more fully.
 - Governors know that school performance had dipped in relation to schools nationally and that the quality of teaching was not good enough. They are also aware that there is now much more good teaching, and better achievement by pupils. The management of teachers' performance is now effective. Governors ensure that pay increases are closely aligned to the outcomes of this process.
 - Governors are committed to supporting other leaders in ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. They monitor the performance of all groups of pupils more effectively to ensure that underperformance is eliminated.
 - The governing body, supported by senior leaders, ensures that statutory duties are met, including those for pupils' safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are highly motivated and approach their activities with commitment. They produce written work to the best standard they can.
- Pupils contribute well to the smooth running of the school through taking on tasks. Many Year 6 pupils have monitor duties, working as play leaders or buddies to the younger children.
- The school's records show that there are few serious behavioural incidents. Exclusions are rare and pupils' behaviour is consistently well managed. As one pupil observed, 'I would have been excluded by now if it had not been for the patience of my teachers.'
- Attendance is broadly average. The school is actively tackling a recent spike in persistent absence.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is secure and risk assessments are thorough. Staff are fully checked prior to appointment.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that adults will support them if issues arise.
- Pupils are well aware of the contribution of the emergency services to the community. The school actively helps pupils to protect themselves from the risks of internet abuse and cyber-bullying.
- Pupils know that bullying may arise in different forms. While they feel that it is not an issue, they are confident that staff would respond promptly if problems were to arise.
- Children who arrive early at school, or stay late, are cared for well in the breakfast and after-school clubs.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not enabled pupils, particularly those in Years 1 and 2, to make sufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations have not been high enough. As a result, pupils have joined Year 3 behind where they should be.
- Pupils' learning in subjects other than literacy and numeracy is not sufficiently rapid because teachers' subject knowledge is not secure enough. Consequently, teachers find it difficult to extend pupils' thinking.
- In the less successful lessons, teachers do not take sufficient account of the full range of pupils. They do not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able. The pace of lessons is occasionally slow, giving pupils insufficient time to produce enough good quality work.
- The pace of learning has improved in the last four terms. Phonics teaching in Key Stage 1 and the teaching in Year 2 are now significant strengths, leading to more rapid progress. This is enabling pupils to catch up. Pupils now learn effectively in almost all literacy and numeracy lessons.
- With effective leadership, the support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils has improved, so that their progress is now good. Overall, learning support staff are well deployed and effective.
- Teachers now have higher expectations of the quality of pupils' written work. Pupils take a pride in their written work. Effective systems are in place to check pupils' progress and provide better support where it is needed. Pupils have individual targets in writing and mathematics. Pupils' work, particularly in writing and mathematics, is marked thoroughly. Older pupils usually respond to the guidance teachers provide.
- Pupils make better progress when work is challenging. Pupils in Year 2 successfully extended their knowledge of their tables and number bonds because a range of activities at different levels of difficulty were planned. This ensured that all groups were suitably challenged.
- Homework contributes effectively to pupils' learning. Tasks are set and marked regularly.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Inadequate teaching in the past adversely affected pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, pupils have typically had significant gaps in their learning. The pace of learning in Years 3 to 6 has not, until recently, been sufficiently rapid, particularly in reading, to close these gaps. As a result, too many pupils have left Year 6 with below-average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils do not consistently attain the higher levels that they should, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Standards in subjects other than literacy and numeracy are not as high as they should be. There is limited time to promote better achievement in other subjects.

- Staff changes in the last four terms have contributed to a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching. This is now addressing the legacy of underperformance, although there is still significant 'catch-up' required in Year 6. There is clear evidence in lessons, in pupils' work and in school data that progress is no longer insufficient, as historic data may suggest. However, there has not been enough time for this to show through convincingly in school data.
- Better organisation and new staff contributed to the improved progress and attainment of Reception children in 2014.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in the Year 1 screening check of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) was above the latest national average in 2014. This reflects recent improvements in the teaching of phonics. Greater priority is given to the teaching of reading and to supporting older pupils who need to make up lost ground.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are securely on track to attain broadly average standards in the current year. The majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also making at least the progress expected. Current Year 6 pupils are at least two terms ahead of Year 6 pupils at a corresponding point in the last school year. In this context, the more able pupils are now being challenged more effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils have generally attained less well than their classmates and other pupils nationally. In 2014, the gap between the attainment in writing and mathematics of disadvantaged Year 6 pupils and others in the school was less than one term. The gap for reading, at four terms, was considerably wider. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils nationally was around three terms in reading, writing and mathematics. School data shows that disadvantaged pupils are currently making similar progress to the others across the school and that the gaps in attainment are narrowing.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified. They mostly receive appropriate support. In general, they make broadly similar progress to that of other pupils.
- The few Gypsy-Roma pupils attend regularly and they mostly make similar progress to the other pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language made more rapid progress and attained at higher levels than the others last year because they are well supported.

The early years provision

is good

- Much-improved teaching, effective experienced leadership and skilled external support have ensured that the early years outcomes have improved more rapidly than the rest of the school.
- Most children enter Reception with skill levels below those typical for their age. Consistently good teaching ensures that children make good progress so that, on leaving Reception, they are well prepared for entry to Year 1. The proportion of children achieving the expected good level of development in 2014 improved to be well above the national average.
- Children are effectively challenged to achieve well, including those who have special educational needs. There is an appropriate focus on developing basic skills in literacy and number. The learning environment is stimulating and engaging. Children have positive attitudes to learning. They select resources with confidence and sustain concentration well.
- Children have regular access to the outdoor learning area. Many activities, such as playing in the sand and construction area, contribute to children's growing knowledge of the world and promote their personal development well.
- Staff ensure that children behave well and that they are safe and well looked after. Good links are established with parents prior to their children joining the school. Subsequently, parents are encouraged to have a positive involvement with their child's learning.
- Staff know individual children well. Their detailed checks and observations provide accurate information about children's progress.

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	118491
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	453634

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Russell
Headteacher	Georgina Salter
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2013
Telephone number	01474 568991
Fax number	01474 568991
Email address	headteacher@painters-ash.kent.sch.uk

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