

Pembury School

Lower Green Road, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 4EB

Inspection dates 3–4 February 2015

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 early years staff teach children well and ensure that they make good progress.
- Pupils' results in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 1 and most subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 are very high.
- Pupils currently in the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection. It has become much more consistent in quality.
- Pupils are keen to learn and apply themselves well, especially when they are challenged enough. Their behaviour is courteous and friendly.
- The school is thorough in making certain that pupils are kept safe. The teaching of e-safety is a particular strength.
- The headteacher's strong drive for improvement is shared by other leaders and governors. Together they have ensured that teachers get the support and encouragement that they need to perform to a high standard. As a consequence, pupils' results are much stronger than at the time of the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- While very strong in many ways, pupils' achievement is not yet of the highest standard possible. Pupils' results in English grammar, punctuation and spelling are not high enough. Too few pupils have made rapid progress in writing in recent years.
- The teaching of spelling is not as effective as it should be in all classes. Sometimes pupils are given weak advice about how to improve their spelling. Teachers do not always check the accuracy of pupils' spelling sufficiently.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching across the school. They observed two assemblies, 17 lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime. Five lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with pupils, three members of the governing body, the headteacher and other members of staff. A discussion was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for what pupils should learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development, and records of the school's use of the primary sports funding and pupil premium funding. They also scrutinised the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is monitored and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- The views of parents and carers were taken into account through discussions with several parents and carers. The inspectors also took note of 114 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 39 staff members and through discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alison Botarelli	Additional Inspector
Christopher Andrew	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for children known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about the same as in most other schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Early years children have two full-time Reception classes provided for them.
- The headteacher currently provides support to another local school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2011. The mathematics leader joined the school in September 2012 and took up his leadership responsibilities in April 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement in English grammar, punctuation and spelling by:
 - ensuring a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling
 - making certain that pupils receive effective guidance about how to improve their spelling
 - checking the accuracy of pupils' spelling in all subjects more rigorously.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has strongly improved the school. He has developed the role of other leaders considerably and made certain that staff across the school share his high expectations. Pupils' standards are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection. However, the school leadership team have not yet ensured that pupils reach the highest levels of achievement. This is why leadership and management are good rather than outstanding.
- Performance management has become much more rigorous since the headteacher's appointment. The headteacher carefully checks how well teaching helps pupils learn and make progress. Senior leaders give teachers constructive and effective advice about how to strengthen their performance. Teaching has improved as a result.
- Subject leaders have guided other teaching staff and developed their skills and knowledge of their subjects well. They have also made certain that the school has been ready for the new National Curriculum.
- Senior leaders have developed the school's approach to assessment very carefully. They use data about pupils' progress to make sure that pupils are offered teaching that is well matched to their needs.
- The school curriculum is good and provides a broad education. School displays illustrate the wide range of subjects in which pupils are engaged. Pupils learn about all major faiths and the geography of the world. They explore different types of art and pupils' own art is of a high standard. The school offers pupils a wide range of after-school clubs and activities.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. It takes care to develop pupils' appreciation of Britain's values and different cultures and religions. Pupils learn to take responsibility for others through, for example, becoming anti-bullying ambassadors or school council members. The school teaches pupils about democracy and develops their understanding of rights and responsibilities. Such work promotes equal opportunities and guards against discrimination well.
- Sports premium funding is spent effectively. Teachers have received training that has developed their skills in teaching physical education. The school has increased pupils' participation in sport through competitive activities and after-school clubs, such as archery.
- The school spends other additional funding carefully. As a result, disadvantaged pupils learn well and make good progress.
- The school's safeguarding work meets the recently revised statutory requirements very well and is of very high quality. Leaders and governors ensure that all staff are properly trained and understand the importance of work in this area.
- The local authority has supported school improvement effectively through providing good training for staff and governors. It has helped the school develop links with other schools, which have enabled staff to share good practice and expertise. The local authority has utilised the headteacher's skills to support another local school to good effect.
- The headteacher, other leaders and staff have formed very positive relationships with parents and carers. A very large majority of parents and carers who offered an opinion considered that the school was led and managed well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body monitors the school's performance carefully. Governors use their good understanding of data about pupils' achievement to check that teaching has sufficient impact on pupils' learning. Governors conduct regular focused visits to the school to see the quality of teaching for themselves. They regularly challenge leaders about the effectiveness of school provision. They check that performance management is used effectively and that any pay awards are properly related to good performance. Governors also make sure that leaders give teachers sufficient support to enable them to develop their practice. They check that leaders' expectations are high enough. Governors have a strong impact on school improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils relish learning and are quick to respond to their teachers. They concentrate well most of the time.

However, pupils' concentration sometimes dips during the few times when tasks are not well matched to their needs. This is why the behaviour of pupils is good rather than outstanding.

- The school sets clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and manages it well. School records show very few incidents of poor behaviour over time.
- Pupils treat others respectfully and thoughtfully. They behave well in and out of lessons and across the school.
- The school teaches pupils about different forms of bullying well. Some pupils act as 'anti-bullying ambassadors'. Pupils take on a high level of responsibility for their own behaviour and that of others.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that behaviour was good in the school. They also said that staff would be very quick to sort out any issues that might arise.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Children in the early years and pupils throughout the school are kept safe at all times. The large outdoor area is supervised very well. Leaders and governors have taken pains to ensure that the school is kept secure.
- The school teaches about e-safety extremely well. Pupils who talked to the inspectors demonstrated much knowledge about key strategies they could use to keep themselves safe and minimise risk in a range of situations.
- A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey thought that their children were safe, happy and well looked after at the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching across the school is of good quality. Pupils make good progress and consequently attain high results. There is more good teaching in the school than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Leaders and teachers constantly share ideas about good teaching with each other. Teachers learn from advice and examples of effective practice across the school. Teaching continues to develop in quality and consistency as a result.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have warm working relationships with pupils. They question and listen to them well.
- Teachers typically give pupils, including the most able, high levels of challenge. This enthuses them about their learning and deepens their engagement. However, there are a few times when the work given to some pupils does not match their needs as well as it should.
- The school teaches reading very well. Pupils develop a genuine love of reading and immerse themselves in a wide variety of texts. Because of this, pupils attain very high standards in reading.
- The school's teaching of mathematics is also good. It enables pupils to explore mathematical concepts carefully and achieve very high results.
- The school's teaching of writing has not always ensured that enough pupils make fast progress in the subject. However, the teaching of writing has improved. Work in pupils' books indicates that pupils currently in the school are making much faster progress than in previous years.
- The teaching of spelling is not consistently effective. Pupils are not always given good advice about how to improve their spelling. Teachers do not routinely check pupils' spelling carefully enough, including in their writing across different subjects. The inconsistent teaching of spelling is a key reason why pupils' results in English grammar, punctuation and spelling are not as high as they should be.
- A very large majority of parents and carers who offered an opinion thought that their children were taught well in the school.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils attain high results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Their results in reading and mathematics are particularly high.
- Pupils' progress has solidly improved over time. Pupils currently in the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the classes. However, until this year, too few pupils made fast

enough progress in writing.

- The school's results in the Year 1 national phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) check are consistently higher than average. This is because phonics teaching is linked well across Reception and Year 1.
- Pupils' results in English grammar, punctuation and spelling at the end of Key Stage 2 are not high enough. This is because the teaching of spelling is not effective in all classes.
- The most able pupils' results at the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have improved and are now well above average in writing, mathematics and especially reading. These pupils make rapid progress across all year groups.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the school make good progress which is more or less in line with that of other pupils in the school. Their attainment is lower than that of other pupils, but is improving in relation to other pupils nationally. The school meets the needs of this group of pupils well through carefully tailored individual support.
- Disadvantaged pupils in the school also make good progress broadly in line with other pupils in the school. The gaps in attainment in English and mathematics between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are being narrowed successfully by the school. There are currently in-school gaps of approximately three terms in writing and two terms in mathematics, with no gap at all in reading. Disadvantaged pupils' performance compared to that of other pupils nationally is less than one term below in mathematics and about two and a half terms below in writing. However, disadvantaged pupils outperform other pupils nationally by about one term in reading.
- A very large majority of parents and carers who offered an opinion thought that their children made good progress in the school.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start school with skills more or less typical for their age. Their good progress means that they end the Reception Year well prepared for learning in Year 1. More children attain a good level of development by the time they leave Reception than in most other schools.
- Early years teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants listen to children well and are skilled at making good use of their interests and discoveries. The indoor and outdoor classroom are used well to advance children's learning.
- A typically high level of challenge keeps children engaged and makes sure that they learn well. However, there are times when this high level of challenge is not sustained. Children's normally high concentration does dip during such moments.
- Children enjoy learning with each other. They respond to staff well and are eager to share their work and achievements. Their positive attitudes to learning help them make good progress.
- Children use space and equipment carefully and sensibly. Staff supervise children very well, including in the outdoor area, and keep them safe at all times.
- Early years staff assess children's skills carefully throughout the Reception Year. However, their records of children's activities tend to describe what children have done rather than identify the learning that has taken place. Because of this, these records are not as helpful in planning children's next steps as they could be.
- The early years classrooms operate an 'open door' policy before school starts. This encourages good communication and good relationships between staff and parents and carers.
- The early years leader has ensured that the school's early years teaching is of good quality in both reception classrooms. She has made sure that there is good continuity in the school between the Reception and Year 1 classes. Children progress smoothly from the early years into Key Stage 1 as a result.

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	118280
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	448806

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	507
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Davies
Headteacher	Peter Wibroe
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 May 2010
Telephone number	01892 822259
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