

East Farleigh Primary School

Vicarage Lane, East Farleigh, Maidstone, ME15 0LY

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Assessment in the school has improved and is now accurate. From their different starting points, pupils make particularly good progress in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching has improved considerably and is now consistently good. Teachers and their teaching assistants meet pupils' needs well and pupils enjoy their learning.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Pupils are able to use their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects and this helps them improve these skills and knowledge.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils show commitment and enthusiasm when learning and are proud of their school.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe. This view is supported by almost all parents. Pupils thrive and develop into confident young people who are fully prepared for the next steps in their education.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are ably supported by a very effective governing body. They are all fully committed to providing a high standard of education for all pupils. Leaders' actions have been effective in improving teaching and achievement significantly since the last inspection.
- Leaders have managed staff performance very well. This has helped to bring about improvements in teaching and achievement, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class because adults provide an interesting and well-planned range of activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fully supported through a well-designed and exciting range of subjects. Core values of respect and tolerance for others are embedded into school life and practised by adults and pupils alike. These values underpin all that the school does.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few pupils make better than expected progress in reading compared to writing and mathematics.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Some teachers are not fully confident in using new systems to gauge pupils' progress in reading.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 11 lessons, nearly all of which were seen with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and with representatives from the governing body and the local authority. Inspectors talked informally to pupils at lunch and break times, observed them in assemblies and around the school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' books and a range of documents including: the school's evaluation of its work; the plans for improvement; checks on teachers' effectiveness; the school's information about the progress of pupils; reports from the local authority consultant; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and safeguarding documents.
- The inspectors took account of the 71 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 12 confidential questionnaires received from members of staff. Inspectors met with parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Gay Whent, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- East Farleigh Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Significant changes have taken place since the last inspection. There has been a high turnover of staff. Staffing from September 2014 has been more stable.
- There are seven classes, including a Reception class. The Reception children attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much lower than the national average. This additional government funding is to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Fewer than five pupils were eligible in Year 6 last year.
- The school works closely with its cluster of local primary schools called the 'The Weald Collaboration'.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to typically outstanding in order to ensure that more pupils make better than expected progress in reading, by:
 - giving pupils, particularly those in the older year groups, more opportunities to practise and develop their reading skills in order to accelerate their learning
 - ensuring teachers become adept at using the newly introduced assessment system for reading to improve their awareness of what pupils still need to do to improve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- In the words of one member of staff, 'The school has gone from strength to strength, showing the commitment of the staff and governors in making a better East Farleigh school!' Parents are keen to share that they feel their children get off to a good start to school life and make good progress.
- The school's senior leaders and the effective governing body have the expertise and ambition to drive the school forward. Together, they ensure that all pupils make good progress. Leaders provide clear and decisive leadership and, as a result, good teaching and good behaviour flourish.
- Senior leaders work hard and successfully with staff to sustain and improve the quality of teaching. Teachers receive constructive feedback to help them improve their skills. There are termly opportunities for them to learn from each other through shared observations of teaching. Good practice is shared with the school's partnership of local primary schools. Staff feel happy and well supported with good quality opportunities for training.
- Subject and other leaders have a secure understanding of their levels of responsibility and a clear view of what needs to be done to further raise standards. Leaders at all levels promote equality of opportunity, foster good relationships and tackle any discrimination with determination.
- The school is now confident in the accuracy of its assessment because its judgements have been regularly validated by external agencies and teachers from other schools. Information is shared regularly with governors who challenge any underperformance. A new system is in place to check progress in reading linked to assessment without National Curriculum 'levels'. Not all staff are confident in using it.
- The pupil premium funds are allocated according to each disadvantaged pupil's needs. The impact of this is positive, but due to the small number of pupils involved no judgement about outcomes is reported here to prevent the possibility of individuals being identifiable.
- The leadership of the support for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is effective. This is because pupils' needs are accurately identified and their progress is assessed at least every six weeks to check that they are keeping up with their peers as well as pupils nationally.
- The new curriculum is being taught effectively. It supports and strengthens pupils' academic, spiritual, moral and cultural development well. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures through their lessons and assemblies. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. All staff actively promote British values such as respect and tolerance by example. Staff are excellent role models for pupils. This includes times when they participate in whole school assemblies and in after-school clubs.
- The quality of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meets statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that all pupils are kept as safe as possible. Designated officers as well as governors are appropriately trained. As a result they understand their responsibilities well. Governors robustly monitor the policies and procedures.
- The school makes good use of the primary school sports funding. Specialist teaching has enabled teachers to improve their confidence in delivering lessons which involve a high level of pupil participation and engagement. After-school clubs now include a music and dance exercise club as well as maypole dancing. All age ranges have greater access to a wide range of outdoor adventurous activities which have a high take up.
- The local authority has provided effective support and guidance to the school since the last inspection. This has been useful and constructive in supporting the improvements made.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is well led. Governors take their responsibilities extremely seriously. They have carried out a complete restructuring in order to improve their support and challenge. They visit the school regularly. As a result, governors are well informed and able to ask searching questions of school leaders. These are precisely recorded in the minutes of meetings so that they are able to see the improvements needed easily.
- Governors are fully aware of the quality of teaching. They know how much teaching has improved. They have robust procedures in place to manage the performance of staff and they know that any underperformance is tackled and good teaching rewarded.
- Governors take an active role in monitoring pupils' progress through the scrutiny of pupils' books, analysis of assessment information and how the school compares to national data. They work closely with the headteacher to ensure priorities are focused on improving teaching and learning towards outstanding practice.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All staff and the vast majority of parents agree that pupils behave well. Pupils say that behaviour is 'just like this' and, 'If there are incidents, they are dealt with well by the adults here.'
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. In assemblies, their attentive behaviour enables them to focus on the values of friendship. A large number respond to questions and are willing to share their thoughts, from the youngest to the oldest pupils. They listen to the views of others attentively and respect what they say. The subject matter is carefully chosen so that it appeals to all.
- Pupils are very friendly. They willingly take on responsibility to look after those who are new to the school so that they quickly get used to their new surroundings.
- In all classes, pupils show that they are able to work individually as well as together. They like coming to school. Attendance has been in line with national figures and currently with over 98% pupils attending each day is above average. This reflects the school's focus on improvement.
- The oldest pupils in the school take on board real responsibilities. Some have been trained to act as peer mediators when pupils fall out. They all agree that this enables pupils to enjoy their playtimes much more.
- Pupils play well together in the playground. They look out for one another. Some pupils expressed a wish for a wider range of play equipment to have available at playtimes and a designated area where they could play ball games safely. Although inspectors might agree that this is desirable the lack of such opportunities does not constitute a major concern.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and happy. They look after each other and want their classmates to feel as safe as they do.
- Parents and pupils agree that the school is a safe place. Older pupils have asked pupils where they feel safe and unsafe in the school. This has resulted in changes to the access for the library which is now in a light, bright, open area with no 'dark corridors' to walk through.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors say that bullying of all kinds is rare. Although some parents show concern about this, pupils know exactly what to do and who to go to if they feel this happens.
- Pupils of all ages know how to keep safe when they use the internet. Older pupils can explain how they do this when they play games on the internet at home. Assemblies for the youngest children in the school provide valuable opportunities for reflection on the safe use of computers. Such instances provide excellent opportunities for them to be involved in safe decision-making. During the inspection pupils enjoyed reciting the safety rhyme featured in the presentation which helped to remind them of the messages they had heard.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching ensures that pupils achieve well. Pupils develop positive attitudes towards their learning because their relationships with their teachers are strong. Pupils understand what they are learning as teachers always make it clear. Pupils willingly offer answers to questions, even when they think they may not be right. They are not concerned about fear of failure. If a teacher unwittingly makes a mistake, they share their error with the class and use it as a valuable learning point.
- The clear improvements made in the teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics ensure that most pupils are making good overall progress. Older pupils make faster progress in mathematics and writing than in reading. The school is focusing on ways it can help pupils make even faster progress in developing their reading skills so that more pupils reach the highest levels.
- A new system whereby teachers evaluate pupils' progress in reading has recently been introduced. This is having positive effects on identifying what pupils need to do to make better than expected progress in reading. However, some staff lack confidence in using this process and this has a restricting effect. In-service training has been introduced to address this issue with early signs of success.
- Teachers plan carefully and pupils like the activities, particularly those that are exciting and imaginative. This contributes to their good attitudes to learning. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well. Consequently, there is a purposeful atmosphere in lessons with pupils almost always striving to do their best.
- Lessons all start with the school's approach that there is a 'short, sharp and very specific' focus to the lesson. Pupils understand what they need to do to improve their learning. This is apparent in their books where pupils use their headings when they reflect on their learning.
- The school teaches mathematics particularly well. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. In a Year 5

lesson, pupils really grasped the ideas they were learning as the teaching checked their understanding. They enjoyed pretending that they needed to explain carefully to an alien what the difference was between ratio and proportion. They achieved this by working systematically and choosing just the right vocabulary. Mathematical knowledge is applied effectively in science lessons where pupils measure, assess percentages and carry out calculations as part of their investigations.

- Teachers work closely with their teaching assistants and deploy them effectively. Teaching assistants are well informed. As a result, they help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs sensitively to improve their skills and knowledge.
- Nearly all parents agree that teaching is at least good. Teachers make good use of homework to extend work and it is enjoyed by pupils.
- In every class, there is a positive atmosphere for learning. Teachers treat pupils with respect and pupils respond positively in return. They are enthusiastic and keen to engage in their learning. Attractive displays in every classroom reflect the well-planned activities which teachers provide. They highlight clear ways in which pupils can improve their work. Pupils often refer to these in lessons to remind themselves of what they need to do.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Since the last inspection, raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics has been an important focus for the school. As a result of good self-evaluation, more work is already in hand, to develop older pupils' progress rates in reading. Pupils' achievement is good overall even though published test information does not appear to support this judgement. This is because teaching is good and the school's assessment is now more accurate and robustly checked. The school's assessments show that pupils make good progress. This view matches the findings of Her Majesty's Inspector who carried out the follow up visit after the last inspection.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average compared to all schools. In the 2014 national tests, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in writing and mathematics compared favourably with the national figures. However, figures were lower in reading than other schools nationally.
- Pupils' progress is tracked very closely every six weeks in sharply focused meetings led by the deputy headteacher and the school's leader for those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. This is providing better and more accurate information to help the school spot those needing extra help.
- Current pupils' progress information and evidence in their books shows that, from different starting points, the vast majority of pupils make good progress. This is particularly so in their writing and mathematics throughout the school. Pupils are starting to benefit from the school's new approaches in teaching reading. These are enabling pupils to practise and hone their skills so that progress in reading accelerates.
- Reading is a high focus within the school and a priority for improvement. Pupils enjoy reading in a variety of ways, including to the school guinea pigs. Pupils also like taking photographs of themselves reading in unusual places to make it fun. This is helping to improve pupils' enjoyment of reading activities and capturing their interest. Older pupils can instantly recall their favourite authors.
- The needs of the most-able pupils are well met. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to provide challenging work that stretches all abilities in their knowledge and understanding. They set increasingly difficult activities for the most-able pupils which they choose themselves. Most able pupils do so readily and make good progress while applying their learning in different ways. Most-able pupils in Year 6 attained above national averages in their reading, writing and mathematics in the 2014 tests.
- Pupils learn phonics (the sounds that letters make) well. This is seen in the improving results in the phonics check in Year 1. Linking sounds to letters is carefully modelled, practised and reinforced in a range of interesting writing activities led by both teachers and teaching assistants.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. This is because their needs are quickly identified and support is skilfully provided to meet their individual needs. Teachers work closely with their teaching assistants to plan work at just the right level of difficulty and challenge.
- As there were few pupils in Year 6 in the school who are eligible to receive support through additional government funding in 2014, their progress is not reported.

The early years provision

is good

- Children have a good start to school because they are well looked after in a caring, stimulating environment. Parents are pleased with the way in which their children settle into school life.
- Children make good progress from their starting points which for the majority are typical for their age. Children make rapid progress in social and emotional development. They play and learn very happily together, and were observed engaging in earnest conversations as they sorted the possessions of three

very different toy bears.

- Children's behaviour is excellent, both inside the classroom or outdoors, and also in assembly in the hall, where they listen well.
- Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1. This is seen in their learning of phonics as well as number. For example, children measure bears of different sizes with cubes and find out what else they can discover inside and outdoors which is 'as big as a hundred' on their measuring tapes.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers and their assistants work together as a strong team. All staff have high expectations. They make good use of assessment to monitor children's progress over time and know the children very well. Activities are well planned to meet their next learning steps. Assessments are checked and evaluated regularly by senior leaders as well as external moderators to ensure that they are accurate.
- Information about children's progress is shared with parents as 'my unique story'. Parents relish this information and many say how amazed they are at the rate at which their child is learning. They say they are kept well informed about their child's progress. Parents say their child particularly liked the recent dinosaur topic, where children learnt interesting facts about these giant reptiles and improved their knowledge and understanding of the world
- The activities taught are well planned, and are exciting and interesting. Children were observed enjoying making porridge for the three bears. They were willing to try different flavoured porridge themselves, even one bowl which tasted very salty. They followed this taste with a long drink of water which they welcomed!
- Children are kept particularly safe. This is due to the vigilance of all staff ensuring that children's health, safety and well-being are of the utmost importance. Children enter the outdoor area by a number of steps which they manage carefully and sensibly.
- The early years provision is well led and managed. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They know that the outside area is in need of development and have set aside funding so that this can be carried out soon. Learning is well planned so that it builds continuously on children's next steps.

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	118289
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	453635

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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Robinson
Headteacher	Paul Sapwell
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 March 2013
Telephone number	01622 726364
Fax number	01622 729850
Email address	headteacher@east-farleigh.kent.sch.uk

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