

West Borough Primary School

Greenway, Maidstone, ME16 8TL

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Overall standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are not rising quickly enough. Standards in writing were low at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- Although some pupils are making mostly good progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils in Key Stage 1 have not typically built rapidly enough upon their good skills and knowledge when they enter Year 1.
- Poorly formed handwriting affects the progress of a minority of pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and the overall presentation and quality of their work.
- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and do not achieve as well as they should.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not always provide lesson activities that sufficiently challenge the full range of pupils.
- Although much marking of pupils' work is thorough, not all teachers implement the school's policies as consistently as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- The restructured senior leadership team has given leaders greater capacity to drive improvements.
- Early years provision is outstanding. High quality teaching and rich, stimulating activities ensure that children make outstanding progress, particularly in developing their language and literacy skills.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved and these pupils often make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) has improved. This is contributing to much improved progress in reading.
- Behaviour has improved significantly. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning, feel safe and behave well.
- The governors are well informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They actively challenge the school's leaders to accelerate the rate of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 21 lessons, eight 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 read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, a representative of the local authority, and the school’s senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 70 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered records of governing body meetings and those relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to check pupils’ progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jackie Edwards

Additional Inspector

Luisa Gould

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- West Borough Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. There are a few pupils from the Gypsy/Roma community.
- Around one quarter of pupils, mainly of Eastern European heritage, speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school other than at the usual times is much higher than usual.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is close to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. This is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In the early years, children of Nursery age attend only the morning or afternoon session. Children in Reception all attend full time.
- The school hosts specially resourced provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the form of provision for 12 pupils of primary age with autistic spectrum difficulties. These pupils are judged to have the ability to access the academic demands of a mainstream school curriculum. All of these pupils are on the roll of Bower Grove Special School, Maidstone, are integrated with West Borough pupils as appropriate, and are supported on site by staff from that school. All aspects of the provision are managed by Bower Grove and are evaluated in the inspection reports of that school.
- The school provides pre-school care through a daily breakfast club. This was reviewed as part of the current inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement, so that progress is consistently rapid across the school and standards are raised further by the end of Years 2 and 6, particularly in writing, by:
 - showing consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve by setting challenging work for all groups of pupils, particularly the most able
 - ensuring that pupils in Years 1 and 2 in particular build more effectively upon the good skills and knowledge they have when they enter Year 1
 - insisting that pupils' written work, including their handwriting, is of a consistently high standard
 - extending the high-quality marking evident in some classes across the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good because the determined and clear-sighted drive of the senior leaders has led to recent rapid improvements in teaching and learning which in turn are leading to an acceleration of pupils' achievement. The school now has greater capacity to respond to weaknesses promptly and to greater effect.
- The capacity of leadership has improved considerably. The senior leadership team has been strengthened. The leadership of early years has improved, so that provision is now outstanding. The management of behaviour is now much more effective and this is reflected in a significant reduction in incidents. The leadership of support for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is now very effective. The proportion of weak teaching has reduced considerably.
- Senior leaders promote positive attitudes and strong values. The school's core values permeate all its work. These contribute to the school's high expectations of pupils' behaviour and its increasingly high aspirations for teaching and learning.
- Key subject leaders, including those in charge of English and mathematics, recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects and are closely involved in supporting their colleagues. They understand their responsibility to drive improvement. Expectations of all staff have increased and this is contributing to an increased momentum of improvement. Leaders closely analyse data on pupils' performance.
- The monitoring of teaching by school leaders is increasingly effective. Although some weaker aspects have not yet been fully resolved, there have been improvements in the overall pace of pupils' learning and, in most classes, the quality of work in pupils' books. Leaders set targets to improve teachers' practice. There have been considerable improvements in the marking of pupils' work.
- The school has prepared well for the implementation of the new National Curriculum. It has planned new themes and topics to incorporate all the expected subjects, although it is currently evaluating the breadth and balance of pupils' learning across all the subjects. The school has temporarily maintained its existing assessment system to provide detailed information about pupils' progress. It is now evaluating a modified system of assessment and intends to review its effectiveness by the end of the year.
- Leaders rigorously evaluate the impact of pupil premium expenditure on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, eligible pupils are making better progress and the gap with their classmates is steadily closing.
- Senior leaders' view of the school's effectiveness is mostly accurate. They know where improvement is needed. The school improvement plan defines the correct priorities. While there is still work to do to boost achievement further, the school is moving in the right direction.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used well to improve staff training and to provide sports clubs. Additional specialist staff have been engaged. More pupils are involved in a much wider range of clubs and competitions. Year 1 pupils now go swimming. Competitive sport has a higher profile.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. With an increasingly diverse intake, pupils' awareness of other cultures has increased. British values are emphasised effectively through, for example, teaching pupils about local history, the British judicial system and local democratic structures. Pupils are involved, through the school council, in planning for the school's forthcoming centenary. As a result, pupils come to understand their rights and responsibilities as British citizens. These activities prepare pupils increasingly well for life in modern Britain.
- The school endeavours to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- The school works hard to establish good links with parents and almost all parents are very affirmative about the school. Good links with other schools, including well-established relationships with other local schools as part of an informal collaboration, allow teachers to extend their experience and share good practice.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school over recent years. This has enabled the school to make steady progress in moving from an historic position of low achievement.
- The school's effective safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements. All staff are trained to the expected levels.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is good. Governors are ambitious for the school and communicate high expectations. They

are well informed about the school's work and the improvements achieved. They are closely involved in school improvement, monitor progress carefully and hold leaders to account more fully.

- Governors evaluate the school's performance in relation to schools nationally and have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching. They have a good understanding of data about the performance of groups of pupils. They ensure that the management of teachers' performance is effective. Staff pay increases are closely linked to pupils' achievement. Governors know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance.
- Governors are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. They ensure, alongside senior leaders, that all statutory duties are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are very committed to the school core values which set clear expectations of all members of the community. The vast majority apply themselves well in lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, particularly where the teaching is challenging and engaging. Pupils eagerly take on jobs around the school and this gives them an opportunity to take responsibility.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. Although occasional incidents arise, the introduction of a new behaviour policy two years ago has had a positive impact upon the level of incidents. Exclusions have reduced considerably with none recorded this school year. Behaviour-management systems are well-established and well-trained staff deal effectively with any incidents.
- Attendance continues to improve and is now broadly average. Effective systems ensure that pupils attend frequently. School staff closely monitor absence patterns, working closely with families to ensure that children's attendance improves.
- Most pupils, particularly those who are older, take pride in what they are doing. However, their written work indicates that, where teaching is less motivating, their enthusiasm sometimes wanes and the quality of their work deteriorates.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site and premises are secure, and both staff and pupils are protected by thorough risk assessments. Staff are fully checked prior to appointment.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in the adults around them. They are well informed about road safety and fire safety and recognise the importance of remaining alert when out on their own.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils are equipped to keep themselves safe. Staff ensure that pupils are aware of the potential dangers of internet abuse and cyber-bullying.
- Assemblies and personal, social and health education sessions promote pupils' understanding of bullying well. Pupils are aware that bullying may take different forms. Most, however, feel that it is not a significant issue. The school tracks any issues rigorously and tackles any emerging problems promptly.
- The breakfast club provides well for pupils who arrive at school early.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because although it is getting better quickly, it has not been good enough over time for pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, or provide enough challenge, particularly for the most able. The pace of learning is sometimes too leisurely.
- While there are examples of high-quality written work, particularly in Years 5 and 6, overall, pupils' written work is not always produced to a high standard. There are pockets of lower expectations across the school.
- Despite some remaining weaknesses, the pace of learning has improved since the last inspection. Teaching has become increasingly effective in promoting pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. More effective teaching in the early years, and subsequently of phonics and early reading skills, has laid the foundation for older pupils to make better progress.
- The school has effective systems to check pupils' progress and provide additional support where it is needed. Pupils' work, particularly in writing and mathematics, is marked thoroughly in some classes, especially in Years 5 and 6, although less comprehensively in others. Not all teachers provide clear enough advice for pupils about how to improve their work further and they do not always make sure that pupils

follow up this advice by applying it and showing their teachers that they have understood.

- With effective leadership, the support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils has improved, so that these pupils now make progress at least in line with their classmates. Learning support staff are well deployed and support learning effectively. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well and quickly develop confidence in the use of English, this enabling them to access the rest of the curriculum and to achieve well.
- Pupils learn well when the work is challenging. Pupils in a Year 4 mathematics lesson were developing their understanding of time problems. The main tasks, where pupils worked independently on well-chosen activities, provided appropriate levels of challenge for each group. This successfully sustained pupils' interest, enthusiasm and learning. Consequently, the pace of learning was rapid.
- Homework contributes well to pupils' learning. Teachers set tasks and respond to them regularly.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have not made consistently rapid progress in Key Stage 1, given their above average entry points to Year 1 in most years. Despite some improvement in standards at the end of Year 2 in 2014, this still represents progress which is broadly as expected.
- The most-able pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Although low-attaining pupils typically achieve better than their counterparts nationally this is not the case for the most able. They attain less highly and, in 2014, made less rapid progress than similar pupils nationally. A lack of challenge for the most able was a common feature of learning in a number of lessons observed.
- A minority of pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4, have poorly formed handwriting. This has had a negative impact upon the overall quality of their work. However, the school is currently addressing this weakness.
- The sustained priority given to the systematic development of basic literacy skills, particularly reading, resulted in outstanding progress in the early years in 2014. These positive outcomes are likely to be improved upon further in 2015.
- Effective teaching of phonics in the early years has underpinned steadily improving outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in 2014 was well above the latest national average. Pupils across the school have increasingly secure skills in reading.
- There is a steady trend of improvement in attainment. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are on track to attain broadly average standards in 2015. Pupils' written work suggests that the rate of progress is improving, although it is generally more rapid in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4.
- The attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2014 was broadly average overall, but low in writing. Progress in writing was significantly weaker than in reading or mathematics. While the proportion of pupils making the expected progress in 2014 was at least in line with the national average, the proportion making accelerated progress was below average, especially in writing.
- There has been significant input to improving writing in the current year, so that pupils' progress across the school is accelerating. Attainment in Year 6 in all subjects, including writing, is on track to be higher in 2015.
- In 2014, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged Year 6 pupils and others in the school was around one and a half terms in mathematics and reading. There was no difference in outcomes in writing. They were just under two terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics, reading and writing. School data show that some disadvantaged pupils are currently making more rapid progress than the others. Consequently, the gaps in attainment across the school are narrowing year on year.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified. They are mostly well supported, so that their progress is sometimes better than that of other pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language often make more rapid progress than the others and attain more highly. The school's analysis of the impact of pupils who arrive in the school other than in Reception indicates that these pupils do not have an adverse impact upon overall attainment figures.
- The achievement of the few Gypsy/Roma pupils is variable. Most are currently young. Some attend regularly and are working at the levels expected.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The early years provision has improved more rapidly than the rest of the school. Outstandingly effective teaching, particularly of language skills, together with sustained outstanding leadership and management, have ensured that children make consistently rapid progress. On leaving Reception, they are very well prepared for entry to Year 1. In most years, the proportion of children reaching standards typical for their

age is well above average.

- Most children enter Nursery with skill levels which are below those typical for their age. Staff focus particularly on promoting children's personal, social, communication and language skills. This is increasingly important given an increasing proportion of children who enter Nursery with little prior knowledge of English. All children, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are challenged to achieve well. Only around half of the children who start in Nursery continue to Reception, so that, with new children arriving, the focus on language continues to be a key priority in Reception.
- Recent initiatives to improve the teaching of reading have been particularly effective. Children now acquire a thorough knowledge of sounds and letters and build their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. In phonics, children are grouped by ability and assessed regularly to ensure that progress is rapid.
- The early years environment, including the outdoor area, is richly resourced and stimulating and children are engaged and motivated exceptionally well by the activities provided. These successfully support their growing knowledge of the world and their personal development. Children have outstanding attitudes to learning and apply themselves to tasks with enthusiasm and motivation. They sustain concentration well.
- Staff ensure that children behave very well. They are completely safe and very well looked after. The school works successfully to engage with parents and encourages their close involvement in their children's learning.
- Staff know individual children very well. Thorough checks and regular observations provide detailed information about children's progress. Staff compile comprehensive portfolios of evidence.
- Staff regularly review the effectiveness of their work. There are robust systems in place to drive improvement and raise achievement.

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	118568
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	453641

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Barker
Headteacher	Ashley Crittenden
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2013
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