

Westgate Primary School

Summerhill Road, Dartford, Kent, DA1 2LP

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires 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

- Leaders are not putting changes into place quickly enough for writing. Although the quality of teaching has improved to raise standards in reading and mathematics, standards in writing lag behind.
- Teachers do not always use information about pupils' starting points effectively to set tasks at the right level. As a result, all pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Teaching in some year groups where there are temporary staff is not as effective as it needs to be to ensure good progress. In these year groups, pupils' learning slows.
- Some pupils are absent on a regular basis. This holds their learning back.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher, head of school and governors are ambitious for the school. They are successfully raising the quality of teaching and standards of achievement.
- There are robust systems in place to ensure pupils are safe and secure.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and courteous. They show consideration to others and understand how to play an effective role in the school and wider community.
- Children in the early years achieve well so that they are ready for Year 1.

Information about this inspection

- This was the fourth time the lead inspector had visited the school since it was judged to require special measures in December 2013. The inspection started as a monitoring visit and was converted to a full section 5 inspection when the inspector was satisfied the school no longer required special measures.
- The inspector considered evidence from this visit and previous visits when making judgements.
- The inspector observed learning in seven parts of lessons. Four observations were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, phase leaders for mathematics and English, curriculum team leaders for the foundation subjects, the special educational needs coordinator, two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils and attended a school assembly. On previous visits the inspector spoke informally to pupils at break and at lunch time.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). The inspector also looked at work in pupils' books.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. The 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were also considered, alongside 73 responses to the school's own survey of parents.
- A range of documentation was considered, including: the school's action plans; records of pupils' progress and attainment; records of attendance, behaviour, child protection and safeguarding; the school's evaluation of its own performance; documents relating to performance management and records of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Amanda Gard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Westgate Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are seven single age classes. Children in the Reception class attend school full time.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A range of other ethnic groups is represented, including pupils of African, Asian and Asian British heritage. The proportion of pupils whose first language is other than English is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium grant provides support is lower than the national average. This funding is used to support pupils in the care of the local authority and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is supported by an executive headteacher from Manor Primary School. Whilst the school required special measures, the deputy headteacher from Westgate was initially acting head of school. This position was made permanent in February 2015.
- Governors are exploring academy status for the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring tasks are set at the right level for all pupils so that they all reach the standards that they should
 - ensuring pupils progress at the same rapid rate in writing as they do in reading and mathematics
 - ensuring new or temporary teachers have the right subject knowledge to teach effectively, so that pupils in all classes make good progress.
- Improve attendance so that it is better than the national average rate by raising parental awareness of the role that they play in ensuring pupils attend school regularly.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Senior leaders acted effectively to bring about rapid improvement since the school required special measures. As a result of their work, teaching is much improved and most pupils are achieving more.
- Phase leaders (middle level leaders) have strengthened their roles. There is some effective work to improve teaching. For example, they involve teachers in the checks they make on standards in mathematics so there is a shared understanding and responsibility for change. As a result, teachers take effective action to raise standards in this subject. However, they do not check systematically what impact has been made, which slows the rate of improvement.
- New systems to check what pupils know and can do are helping pupils make more rapid progress in mathematics. However, leaders have been slower to introduce the same systems in writing and pupils do not progress as quickly in this subject.
- A change in teachers, including some extended teacher absence, means that the quality of teaching varies. Leaders put steps in place to support new or temporary staff. For example, they explain school policies on child protection so children are safe, and offer support with planning lessons. Nevertheless, they do not check carefully enough that these teachers have the right subject knowledge, and are setting work at the right level; some classes make less progress as a result.
- The curriculum engages and motivates pupils to learn. Pupils understand the purpose of their learning because there are strong links to real-life situations. For example, they visit the mayor in his chamber to find out about democracy, and deepen their understanding back at school by creating campaign posters and giving speeches in their own mock election.
- Pupils are well equipped for the next stage in their education because of the many opportunities the school provides to develop their social, moral, cultural and spiritual understanding. Pupils spoke animatedly about their role in planning fundraising for Red Nose Day. They look forward to events such as the St George's Day parade, which extend their knowledge of British culture and traditions. Key questions, such as 'How can a small change make a big difference?', stimulate deeper thinking and help pupils consider the impact of personal actions on others.
- All adults strongly promote the school's ethos of respect for others. Pupils explain that they learn about friendship and being tolerant in religious education and personal and social education lessons. They are caring and considerate, for example they recognise that 'it's hard being in a new place'. Consequently, pupils who join the school are welcomed and supported so they quickly become part of the school community. Initiatives such as Language of the Month help pupils develop understanding of, and respect for, pupils from other countries and cultures. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that funding for disadvantaged pupils (the pupil premium) is used well. For example, there is extra adult support to help these pupils achieve as well as they should. There is no discrimination because all pupils have equal opportunities to access activities such as school trips and after-school clubs. Consequently, all pupils are able to develop their different talents.
- Communication with parents is effective. Leaders provide helpful tips for parents to support their child at home, including keeping them safe on the internet. Responses to the parent survey show that parents strongly support the school. One parent commented, 'I couldn't be more pleased.'
- Sport premium funding is used effectively to widen the range of available sporting activities. Pupils are encouraged to engage in competition beyond the school, experiencing success in events such as tri-golf and cross country. Participation in sports has increased as a result, and this is helping pupils to develop more healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders ensure that the school site is well maintained and safe. Safeguarding procedures are robust and staff are vigilant in following up any concerns.
- The local authority provided effective support whilst the school required special measures. There was useful training to help governors and middle leaders to improve. The link with Manor School has developed and Westgate no longer relies on its support. There is now an equal partnership with teachers from both schools working together to share good practice and develop teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors know how well the school is doing because they visit regularly to see for themselves, as well as receiving reports from both leaders and pupils. Their very good understanding of the quality of teaching and the detailed information they receive about pupils' progress help them ask the right questions to develop the school. They carry out a thorough review of pay awards to ensure they link closely to teachers' performance; this has supported an improvement in

the quality of teaching. Governors ensure additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to raise standards and also keep a close eye on the school's overall finances to ensure pupils get the most benefit from the budget.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy learning and talk proudly of their achievements and talents. Their positive attitudes make a strong contribution to the improvements in their progress.
- Pupils usually behave extremely well in lessons and around the school because most teachers set high expectations. Whilst systems are in place to enable pupils to reflect on poor behaviour, these are now rarely implemented and are limited to the small minority of classes where teaching does not support learning as well as it should.
- The well organised playtimes, with plenty of play equipment, ensure pupils play happily together. Pupils say staff support them well and deal with any instances of bullying quickly. They say there are plenty of adults to go to in the playground. There have been no recent exclusions; incidents of poor behaviour are reducing, are well managed and responded to quickly by leaders.
- Pupils demonstrate good manners and courtesy. They clearly know the expectations teachers have of them with regard to uniform and learning behaviour during lessons, and follow instructions promptly so that learning flows uninterrupted.
- Occasionally, where there is less supervision, for example in assembly, a small minority of pupils find it harder to regulate their behaviour. Very occasionally, low level disruption at such times interrupts others because they have to wait for these pupils to get their behaviour back on track.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good
- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, such as when cycling, using the road or using electricity. The school has recently launched an e-safety charter with parents, and pupils talk confidently about how they can keep themselves safe online. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- Pupils are supervised well at all times and move around the site safely. School risk assessments are robust and support good pupil safety, both on and off site.
- Overall attendance has improved and is broadly in line with national averages. A small number of pupils do not attend school regularly and their learning suffers. Leaders recognise this, and have recently appointed a family liaison officer to offer support to these families. It is too early to see the impact of this role.
- Parents and carers who responded to the school's recent survey agree that their child feels safe at school and is well looked after.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has improved strongly since the time of the last inspection and is supporting better progress in reading and mathematics, although writing lags behind. Teachers have high expectations in most classes. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and the majority achieve well. Pupils welcome the increased challenge in lessons. They understand that learning has a purpose, using phrases such as 'I need to apply and not just know'.
- The excellent relationships between pupils and adults engender an atmosphere of trust and support. Pupils are confident to offer and share ideas and opinions, even if they get it wrong, and this helps them do well.
- Teachers and support staff often use questioning effectively to challenge pupils to think hard and to probe their understanding. At these times, progress is more rapid, but this is not always the case.
- Some teaching is less effective because activities are not adjusted to the right starting point. Work is sometimes too hard and this slows progress for some groups of pupils and in particular subjects.
- Teachers mark books regularly, providing useful pointers to help pupils to improve. Pupils respond thoughtfully. At the start of each school day, there is the opportunity for pupils to make improvements or tackle additional challenges which further extend their learning.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning regularly. Their judgements are accurate because they compare pupils' work across the school and with their partner school. This information is used successfully to help pupils

progress rapidly in mathematics. Progress in writing is slower because the same systems to plan work at the right level of challenge are not in place.

- Pupils enjoy reading because there is a good range of books in the bright and lively reading corners in each room. In guided reading sessions, pupils explain, 'We each have our own specialised job so we understand the story more.' This approach motivates pupils and helps them to develop the range of skills needed for successful reading. Progress in reading is improving strongly as a result.
- Generally, interventions are considered according to the needs of individual pupils. Teachers offer appropriately targeted support in the majority of classes. This supports the work carried out in whole-class lessons, so that most pupils achieve as well as they should. Disadvantaged pupils have equal opportunities to access these sessions because additional adult support and resources are made available for them.
- Homework is linked to real situations and provides a useful extension of learning outside the classroom

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The school went into special measures in December 2013. At that time, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 were significantly below the national average. Improvements in teaching, alongside better use of information about what pupils can do, have helped to raise achievement.
- By July 2014, standards in Key Stage 1 were in line with the national average in writing and reading and only just below the national average in mathematics. The school's progress information for pupils currently in Year 1 and Year 2 and work in books show that pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They are more likely to meet or exceed the expected standard in 2015.
- In Key Stage 2, there is similar improvement. By the end of 2014, attainment was significantly above the national average in mathematics and reading and broadly in line with the national in writing. Pupils in the current Year 6 continue to make expected progress and are well prepared for secondary school.
- Reception children make good progress from their different starting points. As a result, a higher proportion than the national average reached a good level of development in 2014. Tracking data show the current class is on track to achieve just as well. Strong foundations for learning are put in place to prepare children well for Year 1.
- In 2013, disadvantaged pupils were a year behind other Westgate pupils and 18 months behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. They now make better progress because leaders ensure they get the right support to respond to their teachers' marking and make improvements to their work.
- By July 2014, gaps for disadvantaged pupils were narrowing. In mathematics, their attainment was six months behind their peers and in line with other pupils nationally. In reading, they were eight months behind their peers and four months behind national levels. In writing, however, there was a wider gap of 10 months, both when compared to other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. The school's current tracking information indicates that these pupils now make progress in line with other pupils in the school. There are still some gaps in attainment because standards have improved for all pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language join the school at different levels of ability in reading, writing and mathematics. School tracking information shows them making good progress in reading, so they attain as well as other pupils in the school. In mathematics, their progress is more rapid and they are nearly a year ahead of other children. However, they make slower progress in writing, leaving them four months behind their peers.
- More able pupils make at least expected progress in reading and mathematics from their starting points. As a result, in 2014, more pupils reached the higher Level 5 in these subjects than the national average. In writing, however, these pupils did not make as much progress as they should and the proportions attaining Level 5 were below national. The school's tracking information shows these pupils continue to make progress at a faster rate in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- Boys now usually make progress that is as good as, or better than, girls. They often reach a higher standard than girls in mathematics, but gaps in their attainment in reading and writing remain in some year groups.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has recently become more effective because staff working with small groups target the specific areas pupils need to improve. However, the work set for these pupils in class is sometimes too hard and this holds them back. Although they make progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics, this is not always rapid enough to help them catch up with where they should be.
- The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is effective. As a result, a far higher proportion of pupils in

Year 1 met the required standard in the phonic screening check than seen nationally. Older pupils tackle texts with confidence and become fluent readers.

The early years provision

is good

- Leaders make sure there is good transition from pre-school settings into the Reception class. The effective programme of home visits and short sessions at school before children start full time helps them become familiar with staff and make new friends. As a result, they settle quickly to learning and achieve well.
- The action plan for the early years provision focuses on the right areas. For example, leaders have developed the outdoor area to include a range of good quality activities, covering all areas of learning, to help children make good progress.
- Children are excited by the way the teacher skilfully links learning to their own experiences. For instance, photographs of the previous day's porridge-tasting session helped children develop their vocabulary as the teacher reminded them how they described the taste. Learning was extended further as the teacher helped children to link sounds and letters to read the captions and speech bubbles on the photographs.
- All staff who work in the Reception class are involved in assessing the children's progress. Their good knowledge of each child helps them tailor their questions during activities so children think hard and make the next step in their learning.
- Children learn to respect others and behave fairly right from the start. For example, they are supported to tell each other, 'You wrote your sounds well.' They learn to use a timer to decide when someone has a turn on the computer. Everyone joins in at tidying-up time.
- Behaviour is generally good. Any poor behaviour is well managed so that learning continues. Children learn to say sorry if they do something wrong.
- Safety is included in everyday routines. There are daily checks of outdoor play equipment and children are taught good habits, such as washing their hands before lunch, to keep them safe. Staff are well trained in child protection procedures and children learn how to stay safe when using computers.
- Parents appreciate the weekly opportunity to see their child's work and make comments. Staff maintain good communication with working parents through contact books or phone calls if necessary. This keeps parents in touch with their child's 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	118252
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	446313

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Trixie Ball
Headteacher	Mr David Lloyd
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 December 2013
Telephone number	01322 223382
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