

Greenvale Infant School

Symons Avenue, Chatham, Kent, ME4 5UP

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching is not yet good enough to make sure all groups of pupils make rapid progress.
- On occasion, teachers' expectations are not high enough and pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make the progress they could.
- Teachers do not always give enough support to pupils, so that some struggle with their work.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is below average at the end of Year 2. They do less well in writing than they do in reading and mathematics.
- The development of some children's communication, language and literacy skills in the early years is slower than it should be.
- Pupils' handwriting and spelling are not good enough. Their work is not always tidy or neatly presented. Teachers do not provide pupils with enough models of good handwriting and spelling.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use technology to help them to learn and to develop computing skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has made rapid improvements since its previous inspection.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school effectively and inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection and pupils are beginning to make more rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making similar progress to their classmates.
- Teaching in the early years is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Pupils feel safe and secure and there are good, trusting relationships between pupils and staff.
- Governors are effective. They challenge and support the senior team and hold the school to account for its performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons. In addition, they talked to pupils about their work, looked at books, listened to some pupils read and observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and assistant headteachers and staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; and, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to see the results. They did, however, look at the school's own recent survey of parents and spoke to some parents at the start of the day. Inspectors also took into account 51 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Senior

Additional Inspector

Alison Marshall

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized infant school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Nearly one third of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the proportion that speaks English as an additional language is above average. The largest minority group is Other White, and many other groups are represented in smaller numbers.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- Provision is made for the early years in the Nursery, which children attend either in the morning or the afternoon, and two Reception classes which the children attend full time.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' written work by ensuring that:
 - pupils make more rapid progress in writing and improve the standard of their handwriting, spelling and presentation
 - teachers and support staff provide good models of writing and spelling for pupils to emulate.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of their pupils and provide the right amount of challenge for them all to make the progress they should
 - provide pupils with the support they need in lessons so that they are not left struggling with their work
 - continue to increase the speed with which children develop the necessary communication, language and literacy skills in the early years
 - give pupils sufficient opportunities to use technology to support their learning and to develop computing skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have worked together effectively to secure improvements since the previous inspection. They share a determination to provide the best possible education for Greenvale pupils. As a result, inadequate teaching has been eradicated and pupils are making better progress. Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good.
- The headteacher is a highly effective leader and has created a positive culture in which staff and pupils want to do their best. Supported by her senior leaders, she has gained the confidence of all staff and morale is high. Many members of staff commented on the 'motivating, inspirational and supportive' senior team.
- The senior team is aware that pupils' achievement remains below national expectations and requires improvement, particularly in writing, and that teaching is still not good across the board. Rigorous and accurate checks are carried out on all of the school's work to identify weaknesses. Improvement plans informed by this monitoring clearly show how leaders, including governors, check the impact of any improvement measures on pupils' achievement. For example, a recent initiative provides pupils with opportunities to talk about and rehearse what they will write in a range of ways before putting pen to paper. This is already having a positive impact on writing, especially for those who speak English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' progress is tracked frequently and robustly and, as a consequence, the senior team quickly identifies any pupil who is at risk of falling behind and provides extra support.
- Middle leaders are effective and fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their areas of responsibility. Regular scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and checks on how well pupils are learning are used effectively to monitor progress. Middle leaders also make a considerable contribution to improvement by providing support and guidance to colleagues.
- The quality of teaching is checked regularly. Effective arrangements for managing teachers' performance ensure that, where any weaknesses are identified, support is given and improvement is expected. Good professional development meets both whole school priorities and the needs of individuals. There is good support for those who are at the early stages of their career.
- All pupils have equal access to the opportunities on offer. Staff ensure that pupils are safe to learn without any type of discrimination and are good role models for a culture of respect and tolerance throughout the school.
- The school has a clear and effective strategy for spending the pupil premium funding. Additional staffing and extra support are provided for these pupils' academic and personal development.
- The additional support provided for different groups of pupils is improving their achievement. This includes support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language.
- The school teaches a broad and balanced range of subjects linked to topics and often inspired by high quality texts that pupils find interesting and motivating. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and communication skills. Trips and extra activities, including clubs, add to pupils' experiences and enrich their learning. Pupils said that they particularly enjoyed the visit by a mobile farm, where they learnt a lot about different animals.
- The primary sport premium is spent effectively. The school is part of the Greenacre Sports Partnership which helps to increase the skills of pupils and teachers. In addition, the school has increased its range of resources and equipment and provides additional after-school clubs such as a well-attended dance club.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum and assemblies and by the values of the school. The school helps to develop pupils' understanding of British values, as well as tolerance and respect for everyone in school and the wider community. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures.
- Parents are positive about the school and strongly support its leadership team. Parents are particularly pleased with the fact that teachers are readily available to talk to, and that their children are listened to. The school works very hard to engage parents in many ways, for example by providing a club for parents who are learning English as an additional language.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- The local authority has provided good support since the previous inspection and has worked well with the school to help bring about improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are well informed about all aspects of the school’s work by the headteacher and senior leaders and by their own monitoring visits. They understand the school’s data on pupils’ achievement and how well the school’s standards compare with other schools nationally. The governing body worked well with the local authority after the previous inspection to review its work. As a result, governors now provide good levels of challenge and support and effectively hold leaders to account for the school’s performance. They have a clear action plan to sustain and improve on their effectiveness. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and fully support the headteacher in expecting nothing less than good or better teaching. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance and ensure that pay progression is linked to pupils’ improving progress. Governors have a clear understanding of how additional funding is spent and its impact on pupils’ achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils display good attitudes towards learning and enjoy coming to school. They like working with their teachers and all the adults who help them. Good relationships mean pupils try hard and want to do well.
- Pupils’ behaviour at playtimes is good and pupils get on well together. They happily play with others and share equipment and games.
- Pupils understand the school rules because they are involved in deciding what they should be.
- There is a consistent and effective approach to managing any poor behaviour. School records reveal incidents involving pupils with specific and complex behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, but these have reduced over time. The recently developed nurture class now provides good support for these pupils. Meanwhile, a good complement of skilled support assistants largely ensures that learning in class is not disrupted for other pupils.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They are respectful of each other and adults, knowing to take turns when speaking and listening to others.
- Most parents agree that children are well behaved in school.
- Attendance is average and the school works diligently to promote regular attendance.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Almost all parents agree that the school keeps their children safe and that children are well looked after.
- There are good procedures in place to support and care for pupils’ individual needs.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are not aware of any bullying, but understand that it can take different forms. Good and trusting relationships mean pupils are confident to turn to adults if they have any concerns.
- Pupils think the school helps them to stay safe out of school. For example, they spoke about a visit from the police who told them about keeping safe, and they learn about road safety. Pupils do not have such a good understanding of e-safety when using computers.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club are provided with a safe, calm and happy start to the day. It is very well attended and has helped to improve the attendance of several pupils.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been good enough to enable pupils to achieve well. Teaching requires improvement because, although there is no longer any inadequate teaching, weaknesses remain.
- Teachers’ expectations are not always high enough. Sometimes pupils are not challenged sufficiently, or encouraged to think more deeply by skilled questioning. As a consequence, their progress is not as rapid as it should be.
- On occasion, pupils struggling with work that is too hard for them do not receive additional attention or resources and so their progress is hindered.
- Teachers provide pupils with too few opportunities to use technology to help them with their learning and to develop their computing skills.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is now improving, enabling pupils to make more

rapid progress. The teaching of reading is a relative strength. It is now being taught well with a range of additional support, including from specialist teachers, which is helping the weaker readers to catch up.

- Teachers' marking and feedback are regular and effective and give pupils good pointers on how to improve their work.
- A good complement of teaching assistants are deployed well. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, both in and out of the classroom.
- The family liaison officer makes a significant contribution to removing barriers to learning for pupils at risk of falling behind and supports their families.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start in the early years with levels of skill and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. Some children do not develop these skills as quickly as they should in the early years. In 2014, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 remained below average.
- The most able pupils are not achieving as well as they should. The tasks they are set are not always challenging enough and do not motivate them to extend their thinking and learning sufficiently.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonic (the sound that letters make) screening check was below average.
- Pupils do less well in writing than they do in reading and mathematics. Pupils' handwriting is not good enough because pupils are not given good models to follow and their work is not always presented clearly and neatly. Pupils' spelling remains a weakness with too many repeatedly inaccurate spellings.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics, although improving, is hindered because there are too few opportunities for pupils to work with the range of resources necessary to develop their mathematical thinking.
- Efforts made since the last inspection to raise standards are beginning to have an impact. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the good provision and many more pupils are now making the expected progress through Years 1 and 2. Pupils' current work shows that pupils are reaching higher levels than at the same time last year. Pupils who have been at the school since the early years do better than those who join at a later stage.
- Pupils are now making more progress in learning phonics and are using their phonic skills well to help them read unfamiliar words. They are not as competent in using their knowledge to help them spell accurately. Pupils like to choose from a range of good quality books in the new school library and this helps to promote their enjoyment of reading.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are identified early and well met; this is leading to improvements in their progress from their various starting points. Many are making more rapid progress because of higher expectations of their behaviour, which has improved and supports their learning.
- The gap between the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school and their classmates has narrowed. In some cases, the gap has closed altogether because they are given effective support.

The early years provision

is good

- Children now get a better start to school in the early years. Teaching is now good. Those who enrol with skills and knowledge lower than those typical for their age achieve well and are being helped to catch up more quickly.
- In 2014, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of Reception was below the national average; in particular, children were not developing their communication and language skills quickly enough. In the current Reception, however, more children are reaching a good level of development and are better prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- Staff provide a good range of stimulating, interesting activities that motivate and engage children. Children settle well, are happy and quickly grow in confidence. They behave well and have good, trusting relationships with staff.
- Staff make particularly good use of the outdoor Nursery area. This encourages children to be curious, develop enquiring minds and learn how to take considered risks, for example when balancing on

equipment. The outdoor Reception area is not used quite so effectively.

- Staff work well in their teams and have a good understanding of the needs of young children. They place appropriate emphasis on ensuring children’s welfare and well-being and keeping the children safe.
- Staff talk to the children when they are playing and work to develop their language and communication skills. This is especially helpful for those who are at the early stages of learning English. At the same time, the spacious and attractive early years classrooms do not have stimulating literacy displays and children do not make enough use of a range of technology, such as tablets, computers and electronic whiteboards. As a result, opportunities to speed up the development of all children’s communication, language and literacy skills are missed.
- The leadership and management of the early years, supported by the headteacher, are good. A close check is kept on children’s progress and there are good links between home and school.

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	118317
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	462648

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John McDonald
Headteacher	Amanda Allnutt
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 January 2014
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