

# East Borough Primary School

Vinters Road, Maidstone, ME14 5DX

**Inspection dates** 7–8 May 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Senior leaders and governors have been relentless and highly successful in raising the quality of teaching so that it is good and improving strongly, especially in the older year groups.
- Pupils' achievements are rising rapidly and are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, attainment is above the national average. Some pupils in Year 6 are working at levels well above those expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years enjoy a rich range of activities that enable them to achieve well.
- The teaching of writing has improved significantly. Teachers use imaginative methods to capture pupils' enthusiasm so that they use a wide range of vocabulary to write creatively.
- Mathematics is taught well. Pupils are confident in their ability to identify patterns in numbers and to select a range of methods and resources to help them to work accurately.
- Skilled and knowledgeable support helps disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do well in Key Stage 2.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning. They take pride in presenting their work neatly. Their behaviour and attitudes are often exemplary in Years 5 and 6. This contributes to the higher levels of achievement. Pupils say they feel extremely safe.
- Through training and participation in a research project, leaders and managers at all levels have developed their skills very effectively. All share the ambition for pupils to achieve highly. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness and eradicate weaknesses are robust.
- Regular visits to review the impact of developments make sure that governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school. They offer high levels of challenge and support to bring about a rise in achievement, and ensure the school plays an important role in the community. They also ensure the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are exemplary.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the most able pupils in Years 1, 3 and 4 are not always challenged to reach the high levels of attainment of which they are capable in writing and mathematics. This affects their attitudes to their work.
- While young pupils who are new to speaking English attend sessions that help them to communicate their needs, they are not supported well enough in lessons in the early years and in Key Stage 1.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 parts of lessons. Most were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff with leadership, management, family liaison and child protection responsibilities, with teaching assistants and with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Some pupils in Years 1, 2 and 6 read to inspectors. Pupils from a range of age groups spoke to inspectors about their views of the school. Samples of their previous work were scrutinised.
- The responses of 64 parents to the online survey Parent View, the responses of 171 parents to the school's own recent survey, and a letter were considered. In addition, 39 responses to the staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- Some of the school's documentation was reviewed. This included the school's arrangements to keep pupils safe, behaviour logs, records of attendance, information about pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation summary and its improvement plan.

## Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jackie Edwards	Additional inspector
Martin Garratt	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school. Children in the early years start school at age four and attend full time. They are organised into two Reception classes.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below that found in schools nationally. Pupil premium funding is money provided by the government to give extra support to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by carers who are not their parents.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. One fifth comes from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Some are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly similar to the national average.
- The school meets current floor standards set by the government, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes. The number of pupils who are new to speaking English has risen rapidly in the early years and Key Stage 1. Some come from Nepal. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs has increased. The school has joined Consortium F, a group of nine schools that share expertise to raise standards.
- The school provides accommodation for one class from Five Acre Wood, a local special school.
- Governors are responsible for the before- and after-school club, 'School's Out'.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of the most able pupils in Years 1, 3 and 4 in writing and mathematics by:
  - providing more appropriate levels of challenge in mathematics in order to deepen their knowledge
  - ensuring that the range and originality of writing found in the majority of classes are found in all pupils' work
  - providing learning opportunities that challenge and motivate pupils so they sustain their concentration.
- Enhance the progress of those new to speaking English in the early years and Key Stage 1 by:
  - developing the skills of all staff in helping these pupils to learn to speak English quickly, and to communicate confidently in speech and in writing
  - providing more effective support during lessons so that pupils extend their language skills and participate fully.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, managers and governors, under the skilled leadership of the headteacher, have successfully created a culture of high expectations and aspirations. As a result, pupils thrive and achieve highly in their academic work and personal development. This shared pursuit of excellence in all of the school's activities is at the heart of the drive for the school to become outstanding.
  - Training and participation in a research project have developed the skills of leaders and managers at all levels, including middle leaders. This has enabled them to make a significant contribution to the improvements in the quality of teaching, raising pupils' achievements. They all contribute to the school's rigorous self-evaluation procedures by monitoring and checking their effectiveness. They follow up identified weaknesses quickly, providing guidance that enhances teachers' practice.
  - Frequent checks on the quality of teaching have identified key priorities for improvement. Additional training for teachers and teaching assistants to improve teaching methods, especially in writing, have led to a rapid rise in pupils' achievements in Years 2 and 6. Work in books and school information shows that attainment at the end of Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is on course to be much higher this year than in previous years. However, progress is not as fast for some of the most able pupils or those new to speaking English in the younger classes.
  - Senior leaders review pupils' progress regularly and hold staff to account. Staff receive individual support and training that is specific to their needs. Senior leaders are not afraid to make difficult decisions where pupils are not making the progress they should, even if it means staff turnover.
  - Finances are targeted well to help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs or who are disadvantaged to receive additional support. Pupils who are new to speaking English attend sessions that are designed to help them begin to communicate with adults and their classmates. However, they are not always supported well enough in lessons to participate fully and extend their language skills.
  - The curriculum inspires most pupils to write confidently, imaginatively and creatively. It promotes enthusiasm for reading so that many read to a high standard, widely and often. The new mathematics curriculum provides pupils with the skills to recognise number patterns and use these to solve problems.
  - Additional funds have increased opportunities for pupils to play a wide range of sports, competing against other schools and winning tournaments. The wide range of extra-curricular sports clubs is enabling them to lead healthy lifestyles. The purchase of boccia equipment means disabled pupils can play sports with their classmates. This illustrates the school's strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in all that is offered, and ensuring equality of opportunity.
  - Pupils from Five Acre Wood join in many of the school's activities. Pupils and families responded with empathy and generosity to the plight of the families caught up in the Nepalese earthquake. These factors, together with an emphasis on music and art, make an important contribution to the school's strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all backgrounds, including those with disabilities, play and learn together well. This provides very good preparation for life in modern Britain.
  - The school's work in partnership with others in the consortium has contributed to the rise in achievement. Teachers share their work to check how well pupils are learning and how this could be improved. The partnership with Five Acre Wood is already proving beneficial not only for the pupils, but also for the staff. The expertise of staff from the special school is helping those in East Borough to make more effective provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the classroom.
  - Arrangements to keep pupils safe are of high quality. They meet statutory requirements and their effectiveness is reviewed frequently.
  - The partnership with parents has been strengthened recently through the introduction of home visits before children start school in the early years. Most parents responding to the school's survey and the online survey Parent View express their increased confidence in the school over the past two years, especially with regard to their child's happiness and safety and the quality of teaching.
  - The local authority has provided appropriate support to the school and set challenging targets for pupils' achievements.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors have managed their finance; strategic and school improvement committees extremely well and fully understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. Through their regular visits they check the developments set out in the school improvement plan and also their impact on outcomes for pupils. They know about the quality of teaching. They also know about how well the school is performing in

relation to other schools nationally and about the progress of pupils in different groups as they move through the school. They use this information in partnership with senior leaders to offer high levels of support and challenge. This has contributed significantly to the rise in pupils' attainment and progress.

- Procedures for checking the performance of staff are well established. Governors ensure that good teaching is rewarded and that the procedures to tackle underperformance are followed correctly.
- Finances are monitored carefully and spending targeted to meet the priorities in the school development plan. The impact of the spending from additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and sports is checked regularly.
- Governors are determined to ensure the school plays an active and central role in the community. Their decision to appoint family liaison and community liaison officers means vulnerable pupils are safeguarded, supported extremely well and helped to overcome barriers to learning. The out-of-school clubs operate at times that enable parents to work. Governors ensure that all pupils and their families are made welcome. Events are organised where families from all backgrounds are brought together to celebrate their cultures and to become involved in school life.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Many pupils, especially in Year 6, demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning, which contribute to the rise in their achievements. They listen carefully to their teachers, sustain their concentration and work hard. However, this is not always the case. In Years 1, 3 and 4 when activities for the most able are not sufficiently challenging, they do not motivate these pupils to remain sufficiently focused on their learning.
- When moving around the school, pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are polite, well-mannered and respectful to all the adults working in the school. Pupils who find it hard to behave are supported well and their behaviour improves. Lunchtime is a pleasurable, social occasion. In the playground pupils of all backgrounds, regardless of their particular needs, play very happily together.
- During lessons, pupils sensibly select the resources they need to support their learning in mathematics and writing. They work well in small groups, helping one another if they get stuck.
- Pupils take pride in looking smart, in presenting their work neatly and keeping the classrooms tidy. They like to come to school, often attending the wide range of activities at lunchtime and after-school clubs, including 'School's Out'. Attendance is above average and pupils arrive promptly.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- All staff, including in the early years, and governors are trained to keep pupils safe, and know who to report to if they have concerns. Staff and visitors are vetted carefully for their suitability to work with children.
- Through the curriculum, pupils are taught how to take care of themselves, particularly when using the internet. Senior leaders ensure that parents receive up-to-date information to alert them to new dangers in order to keep their children safe when using modern technology at home.
- Pupils spoken to, and their responses to surveys carried out by teachers, show that they feel extremely secure in school. They know about different types of bullying, and that it is wrong to discriminate and to use derogatory language.
- Senior leaders, family liaison and community liaison officers work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that all pupils, but especially those who are most vulnerable, are kept safe.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- Inspection evidence confirms that staff, governors, parents and pupils are right to say that teaching is good, and much better than at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers set out high expectations for achievement and behaviour in line with ambitious targets set by senior leaders. They have good subject knowledge, and are very clear about the methods they are to use to help pupils achieve highly.
- Dynamic teaching in Years 5 and 6 is helping pupils who entered Key Stage 2 with low levels of attainment to catch up quickly and exceed the attainment of all pupils nationally. Teachers use imaginative methods that motivate pupils to want to write. Pupils said their attitudes to writing are more positive this year.

because they are interested in their tasks.

- The most able pupils in Year 6 attend sessions before school, led by staff who know the secondary curriculum well. Pupils apply the skills learned in these sessions well when they write for a range of purposes across the curriculum, and when they solve problems in mathematics.
- While pupils overall make good progress in acquiring essential skills in reading, writing and mathematics, the most able pupils in a few classes are not always challenged sufficiently to deepen their learning in mathematics. Writing tasks do not always encourage these pupils to work effectively at the same high level of originality or quality of work as found in other classes.
- Reading is taught extremely well. Pupils have a thirst for reading because they have the skills to read unfamiliar words and interpret the text. This has helped them to develop an extensive vocabulary that helps many to write imaginatively and in a way that provokes an emotional response from the reader. Pupils are confident to write well. They have a good grasp of punctuation, spelling and grammar.
- Most lessons are planned thoughtfully with imaginative activities that are designed to appeal to boys and girls. They stimulate their curiosity and capture their enthusiasm for learning. From their detailed information about pupils' progress, teachers take care to plan tasks that build on previous learning.
- In the early years and Key Stage 1, teachers' plans do not always identify clearly enough the support pupils who are new to speaking English are to receive in lessons. While some staff are trained to help these pupils acquire skills in speaking English, not all are familiar with the best ways to help them play a full part in lessons, and extend their spoken and written language skills.
- The atmosphere in lessons is purposeful. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations that they will work without interrupting others. They know the routines well, and this means teachers can check pupils' work while it is in progress, and offer immediate, constructive feedback that takes learning forward. Marking is clear and explains what pupils have done well and the areas that need improvement.
- Teaching assistants are very clear about their roles. They are well trained and are exceptionally knowledgeable about the pupils they support and the ways in which they are to help them. They use effective questioning to enable pupils to think through their ideas, make decisions and clarify their learning.
- Homework builds very effectively on the work pupils do in school. Pupils say they enjoy the projects set over the holidays because, 'It helps us, so that we do not forget what we've learned.' They say they relish the challenges which encourage them to read a wide range of children's literature. Mathematics tasks help pupils to develop good mental recall of numbers, calculations and methods to resolve problems.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Over the past two years, pupils in Year 6 have made rapid progress from low starting points. In 2014 national tests, their attainment was average in reading, writing and mathematics. Scrutiny of work and information from the school's records about pupils' progress this year shows that attainment in reading and mathematics is high, and in writing it is well above the national average.
- In 2014, attainment in Year 2 was above the national average in reading and mathematics but average in writing. This reflects a consistent rising trend over several years. The work with the consortium of schools, and the implementation of well-thought-out methods to teach writing, is raising attainment in that subject. Most pupils are now working at levels above those expected for their age.
- The most able pupils in Year 6 are working at levels typically found in the first year of secondary education. Those in Years 2 and 5 are also challenged appropriately. This is not consistently the case in some classes in other year groups. Activities in mathematics do not always deepen their knowledge and understanding sufficiently. Expectations about the quality and originality of work these pupils are to complete in writing are too similar to those for all pupils and this slows the progress of the most able.
- Additional support for disadvantaged pupils has ensured that the gap in their performance in Year 6 is small. They make good and sometimes sometime better progress. In 2014 they outperformed other pupils nationally in reading, but they were a term and a half behind in mathematics and writing. When their attainment is compared to that of their classmates, they were ahead in reading, less than half a term behind in writing, and a term and a half behind in mathematics.
- The careful identification of the precise needs and provision of targeted support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs enable them to make good progress. The work they are to undertake in class is planned thoughtfully, and support staff are skilled in taking their learning forward.
- By the time they leave the school in Year 6, pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The number of pupils starting school in the early years and Key Stage 1 with little spoken English is increasing. While they attend activities designed to help them to begin to communicate their needs in English, they are not supported well

enough to play a full part and extend their language and literacy development in lessons.

### The early years provision

is good

- Robust self-evaluation means that leaders and managers are effective and have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of this aspect of the school. Concerted action taken since the previous inspection to improve teaching and the outside area has raised children's achievements. Consequently, children's attainment at the age of five has risen year-on-year and is well above the national average, especially in the expressive arts and design, and in their personal, social, emotional, and physical development.
- Children are enthusiastic about reading and enjoy talking about the books they like and have chosen after their visits to the library. Effective teaching methods ensure children quickly acquire knowledge of the sounds letters make. This gives them the confidence to read and to make a good start with writing. Parents listen to their children read and frequently help them with their homework in writing. This helps children to read and write well before moving into Year 1.
- Children have good attitudes to learning, especially in mathematics. Engaging activities help them to count in sequence and double small numbers accurately. They cooperate well, sharing the resources and their ideas.
- Teaching is good as staff have high expectations. They plan a rich range of activities that provide engaging and demanding experiences for children. These enable children to play and explore, be active in their learning and use their own ideas to solve problems. As a result, children behave extremely well, sustain their interest and feel very safe.
- Staff use information about children's progress to plan activities that meet the needs of the most able children and those who are disadvantaged, disabled or have special educational needs. Children joining the school who are new to speaking English receive very effective one-to-one or small-group support. This helps them to acquire essential skills in speaking English. They are not always supported sufficiently in other activities to extend their language development in speech and in their writing or to participate fully in lessons.
- The partnership with parents has strengthened with the introduction of home visits to ease the transfer of children from home to school. Picnics and 'stay and play' sessions enable parents from all backgrounds to get to know one another and become involved in their child's education.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118298
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	462419

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	423
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Palmby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Herbert
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 April 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01622 754633
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