

Petham Primary School

Petham, Canterbury, CT4 5RD

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The head of school and leaders in the school and from the wider academy, including those responsible for governance, provide clear and determined leadership. As a result, considerable improvements have been made in the school over the past two years so teaching and achievement are good.
- Directors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve and hold leaders to account effectively.
- Pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils reach standards that are in line with expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Senior leaders have successfully reversed a legacy of underachievement so that pupils are now making rapid progress to catch up in their learning.
- Previous inadequate teaching has been eradicated and good teaching has helped pupils to improve their achievement.
- Teaching engages pupils well in their lessons. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils so pupils work hard and want to do well.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children make good progress and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils behave well and are polite and courteous. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy all the activities the school offers.
- Pupils appreciate the benefits of a small school and also the wider opportunities offered through being part of The Village Academy.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and are well looked after.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to be resourceful, work things out for themselves or manage and organise their own work.
- The whole-school marking policy is not consistently implemented at the same very effective level across the school.
- Expectations for pupils' attainment, especially in writing, are not consistently as high as they could be.
- The level of challenge from directors is not as rigorous as it could be to ensure that the rapid rate of improvement in the school's performance can be sustained.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, some together with the head of school. In addition, the inspector 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 head of school and staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with pupils, and with directors and the principal of The Village Academy.
- The inspector 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.
- The inspector looked at 26 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to some parents at a parent council meeting. The inspector also took into account eight questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- In September 2013 the school became part of The Village Academy, a group of six schools. A principal and deputy principal oversee the work of all the schools and each school has its own head of school. A Board of Directors and Trustees govern the schools. The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- 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 below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after. In 2014 there were no disadvantaged pupils in Year 6.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Provision is made for the early years in a Reception class, which the children attend full time.
- The school provides a daily breakfast and after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - there are more opportunities for pupils to be resourceful, work things out for themselves and organise and manage their own work
 - the whole-school policy for marking and feedback is consistently implemented
 - teachers' expectations for attainment are consistently high, particularly for writing.
- Ensure that directors hold senior leaders to account even more stringently to build on the improvements in the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since joining The Village Academy, the school has made rapid improvements to ensure that pupils receive a good education. The principal and deputy principal of the academy, the directors and the school's senior leaders provide clear direction and share a positive ambition and determination for improvement.
- The new leadership was fully aware, through accurate checks on the school's performance, that much needed to be done to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. Senior leaders have been relentless in their work and have successfully created a hardworking school where good teaching and good behaviour are expected and pupils' achievement has rapidly improved.
- The head of school provides very effective leadership and ensures that the morale of staff is high. Accurate data on pupils' progress and checks on the quality of teaching inform senior leaders' detailed plans for future improvement. Work with other schools in the academy ensures that assessments are rigorous and accurate. The progress of each individual pupil and different groups is analysed very carefully.
- Middle leaders are very effective. They have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses through a range of monitoring activities, and provide skills and expertise in their subjects or areas of responsibility.
- All staff benefit from opportunities to share best practice within the academy and professional development to enhance their skills. There is good support for staff who are at different stages in their careers.
- There are appropriate and very effective arrangements to manage teachers' performance. Where any weaknesses are identified, leaders ensure effective support is provided and improvement is expected. Staff know they are accountable for the progress pupils make, and pay and promotion are linked to successfully meeting targets. The head of school is held to account through regular challenge meetings with the principal, deputy principal and directors.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to ensure that all eligible pupils achieve well and ensures that the gap is narrowed between their attainment and that of other pupils. Their progress is tracked carefully and support is given to help them catch up if they are risk of falling behind.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding is used well to improve pupils' health and well-being. The support of specialist coaches for swimming and sports contributes to pupils' good achievement in physical education and increasing teachers' subject knowledge. A good number of pupils participate in a range of sports clubs.
- Leaders and staff are committed to, and ensure that, all pupils have the same opportunities to succeed and make good progress. They ensure pupils learn without any discrimination and foster good relations with staff, pupils and parents.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through all that the school does. Staff are good role models. The school's values promote pupils' tolerance and respect and pupils learn about differences in faiths, cultures, backgrounds and democratic values. Pupils understand and appreciate the need for rules in the school community and beyond. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and linked to topics that pupils find interesting and motivating. Trips and extra activities, including clubs, add to pupils' experiences and enrich their learning.
- The head of school has established good links with parents. All parents who completed Parent View agree that children are happy at school and that the school is well led and managed. The parent council expressed every confidence in the school and its leadership and appreciate the opportunity to give their views and have their voice heard.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and are effective. Procedures are well established and implemented by all staff to ensure the safety and care of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Board of Directors has a clear view of the strengths of the school and the areas for further improvement. Directors know how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally. They have made sure that they have an effective range of skills to carry out their role.
 - Directors are well informed about all aspects of the school's work by the head of school and their own monitoring visits. They have a good understanding of data about the performance of all groups of pupils. As a result, they provide good levels of challenge and support and hold the school to account for its performance.
 - Directors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. They understand how pay rises and promotions are linked to good

performance.

- There is a clear understanding of how the pupil premium and sports funding are spent and the impact they have on pupils' achievement.
- The budget is managed well and contributes to driving achievement higher.
- Directors undertake training to enhance their skills and understanding. As with other leaders, there is no complacency. Directors have correctly identified the need to review their effectiveness in holding senior leaders to account and provide even more stringent challenge, in order to sustain rapid improvements in the school's performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground and when working with other adults outside of the classroom. Their good behaviour has a positive impact on their learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work hard. They enjoy all their experiences at school and participate with enthusiasm and determination in all that they do. Attendance is average.
- The friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the school is mirrored in the pupils' conduct. They are polite and courteous to each other, their teachers and visitors to the school.
- Pupils work well together. Year 6 pupils demonstrated strong teamwork in their project to design and build an eco car. They worked together with a good level of collaboration, respecting and listening to other views and opinions.
- Pupils appreciate the small school community. As one explained, 'We know everyone and we're all friends and take care of each other.' They also, however, appreciate the benefits of belonging to the wider community of the academy and working with other pupils from other schools.
- Pupils take pride in their work and in the school environment. A group of pupils thoroughly enjoyed weeding and planting the plots in the playground and agreed that 'we want it to look nice and grow food to eat.' Pupils enjoy all the responsibilities they are given, such as being a member of the school council, running a healthy tuck shop or being a buddy to a younger child. They said they would like to do more and have more say and responsibility in school.
- Almost all parents agree that behaviour is good and that pupils enjoy school. One parent commented, 'My children come out of school with smiles on their faces every day.'
- On a very few occasions, when teaching does not fully engage them, pupils can become distracted and lose their focus on learning. This is why behaviour is not yet outstanding.
- The breakfast and after-school club provide an enjoyable, healthy and safe start and end to the school day for those who attend.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that adults look after them well.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in school. They have a good awareness, however, that bullying can take different forms, including physical, emotional, cyber-based and prejudiced-based bullying. They are confident to turn to staff if any incidents should arise, as they know they will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Pupils are prepared well for keeping safe outside of school and when using the internet and other social media.
- All parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after.

The quality of teaching is good

- Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils mean that pupils work hard and want to do well. This is evident in the calm, busy and orderly classrooms. Pupils are confident to ask questions and tell teachers if they do not understand in lessons. A group of pupils agreed with one who said, 'Our teachers make learning fun and they always help you out if you're stuck.'

- Marking and feedback, particularly in writing, are thorough in many cases and give pupils useful pointers about how to improve their work. However, these strengths in marking are not always of the same quality in all classes and all subjects.
- Teachers plan well to ensure that work is at the right level for different-aged pupils in the mixed-year group classes. They make good use of accurate assessments of pupils' progress so work is challenging for pupils of all ages and abilities. This means that all groups make good progress.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well to provide teaching to help these pupils do well. Leaders regularly check and review the effectiveness of specific activities to ensure that they are effective.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well met, enabling them to make similar good progress to others.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They bring skilled support to pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the most able. They are well trained and informed and strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that additional help supports learning well and promotes good progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants challenge pupils to think more deeply and extend their learning through skilful questioning. This enables them to spot any misconceptions and deal with them straight away.
- Teaching usually encourages pupils to be resourceful and creative in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 chose their own way of recording their investigation on probability in a mathematics lesson. This helped them apply their knowledge and make rapid progress. On a few occasions, however, pupils, particularly the most able, do not have enough opportunities to work things out for themselves or make decisions on how to organise their own work. This limits opportunities for them to deepen and enrich their learning.
- Teachers and pupils use technology and displays of work in classes and around the school to good effect to support learning effectively. 'Working walls' provide effective prompts and reminders to pupils when they are working on their own.
- The teaching of literacy is good overall. Effective teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) from the Reception class onwards contributes to pupils' success. Reading for enjoyment is promoted well. All pupils, and particularly boys, enjoy and are motivated by the online reading programme which they use in school and at home.
- Writing has been, and continues to be, a focus for the school. Writing skills are now taught systematically and through a consistent approach across the school. The impact of this focus is evident in pupils' increased enjoyment of writing and their improved progress. Many agreed with the comment that, 'We have time to talk and think about it, get good ideas from each other and plan what we're going to do.' However, teachers are not always taking into account pupils' potential to make outstanding progress when setting targets.
- The quality of teaching of mathematics is good. Leaders have developed a clear policy for teaching calculation skills. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and how they solve problems, which develops skills of reasoning and contributes to secure learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- When the school became an academy, the new leadership team quickly identified a legacy of underachievement. Leaders took rapid action to ensure that pupils made faster progress, to help them catch up with their learning.
- As a result, pupils are making good progress from their starting points and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- In this school, caution needs to be taken when interpreting published results on pupils' attainment because of the small and fluctuating numbers in the Year 2 and Year 6 groups. For example, in 2014, one pupil in Year 2 represented around 7% of the group and in Year 6, one pupil represented around 6% of the group. In the current Year 6, one pupil represents 9%.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils who made the progress normally expected, or better progress, by Year 6 was below average. This was because this group had gaps in their knowledge as they had not benefitted from the current good teaching in the school.
- Inspection evidence, pupils' work and the school's check on progress show that pupils currently are making better progress. The proportions of pupils making expected progress, or even better progress, have improved rapidly and are close to national figures. Leaders are correctly aware, however, that these

improvements in achievement needs to be sustained, along with high expectations, to ensure that standards continue to rise rapidly.

- The most able pupils across the school achieve increasingly well. Provision is made to meet their needs well; for example, groups attend writing workshops at other schools. The impact is shown in the increased proportion of pupils who are attaining higher levels than expected for their age.
- Pupils learn to read well, for pleasure and for research purposes. They read with fluency and understanding. In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national figure. Pupils use their phonic skills well to help them read unfamiliar words.
- The focus on improving writing has had a positive impact and progress in writing has accelerated considerably. Leaders have correctly identified. However, despite significant improvement, writing remains the weaker subject when compared with reading or mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because they are given effective support. Their numbers are too few to make a meaningful comparison of their progress as a group against other pupils in the school and elsewhere.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well met, enabling them to make similar good progress to others. Good leadership ensures that pupils' needs are identified accurately and effective support is given from within the school or external agencies when appropriate.
- Music and the arts have a high profile in the school and pupils have many opportunities to achieve well in these areas. For example, most pupils learn to play at least two instruments during their time at the school. Pupils benefit from and enjoy working with other pupils in the academy, for example, participating in a choir with pupils from different schools.

The early years provision

is good

- Children's skills and knowledge when they start in the Reception year vary from year to year but they are broadly typical for their age. Children currently in Reception are weaker in moving and handling, reading and number, and stronger in managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships.
- In 2014, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception year was below the national average. Leaders are vigilant in ensuring that children who did not achieve as expected have received additional support in Year 1 and have made fast progress to catch up.
- Children currently in the early years are making good progress and the proportion on track to reach a good level of development by the end of the year has increased considerably. Children of all abilities are making rapid progress because of the good provision and leadership. They are well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- Staff establish good relationships with children and their families before they start at school so they know the children well and have a good knowledge of any gaps in their learning.
- Teaching is good. The two teachers plan well together to ensure children learn well through exciting activities that stimulate their curiosity. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed talking about the changes they observed as their caterpillars developed.
- Phonics skills are taught well and support the good progress many children make in early reading and writing. Children are constantly encouraged to develop their language skills. Adults question children carefully so they can develop their understanding and learn to express themselves well.
- Children quickly develop a love of books and story and understand that they can communicate and express their ideas in writing. This was demonstrated when children were writing about fruit, having made a fruit salad, writing their own versions of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* or writing to a zoo to ask if they could send them some animals after reading *Dear Zoo*.
- Children behave well. They understand the routines and expectations. They play and learn together well and enjoy learning in the classroom and outside.
- Assessments of achievements in learning are used well to help plan the next steps. Staff ensure that children learn in a safe and stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors.

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	139810
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	450236

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Petra Bensted
Headteacher	Mary Haney (head of school)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01227 700260
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