

Thames View Primary School

Bloors Lane, Rainham, Gillingham, ME8 7DX

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Senior leaders have high aspirations for the school. They have tackled weaknesses in teaching and learning with determination. As a result, teaching is now good across the school and this has accelerated pupils' progress.
- Pupils thrive and achieve well in the school's calm and positive atmosphere. They are well motivated because teachers make lessons interesting, and value and celebrate pupils' achievements.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers plan work that builds well on what they already know and can do.
- Good provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes equips them with the skills they need in all areas of learning. The children grow in confidence and self-esteem and thoroughly enjoy learning.
- The arrangements for keeping pupils safe are exceptionally thorough. Pupils feel very safe and know how to avoid unsafe situations.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They show respect for others and are enthusiastic about all the activities provided for them.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and work closely with senior leaders to check pupils' progress throughout the year. They take prompt action to organise additional support for pupils who may be falling behind.
- Governors have rigorous procedures for checking the school's work and for ensuring that it provides a good quality education for all pupils.
- The school provides good support for pupils with additional needs. It is particularly effective in nurturing pupils who have behavioural, communication and emotional needs.
- Pupils enjoy learning because the school has developed a new, exciting curriculum which inspires and engages them.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not have enough opportunities to investigate mathematical concepts, patterns and connections in order to solve complex problems.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils respond to their marking by correcting mistakes and following the advice given in order to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all 15 classes for varying lengths of time. They also visited classes as part of a learning walk. Six observations and a learning walk were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils informally in lessons and at break times. They also met with two groups of pupils to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Together with senior leaders, the inspectors examined the work in pupils' books in Years 1 to 6. They also looked at records of children's learning in the early years, as well as work on display around the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders and with a number of middle leaders who have responsibility for aspects of the curriculum. The lead inspector met with seven members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including information about pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school improvement plan, records of governing body meetings, information about pupils' behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account the 60 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the school's most recent survey of parents' views. They also spoke to parents as they arrived at school with their children at the start of the school day. Fifty-three responses to the staff questionnaire were taken into account.

Inspection team

Carole Skinner, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Teresa Davies	Additional Inspector
Danvir Visvanathan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thames View is a larger-than-average sized primary school, which opened in 2012 following the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools on the same site. It has two classes in each year group, as well as part-time Nursery provision for up to 60 children, who attend either in the morning or the afternoon.
- Reception children attend full time. About two thirds of Reception children have attended the school's Nursery, while the rest come from a range of other providers.
- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club, pre-school provision and a holiday club. These are run by an external provider and are subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. This includes pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties. The number of pupils with additional needs is increasing, especially those who transfer from other schools during the course of their primary school education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards even further in mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to investigate and explore mathematical concepts, connections and patterns when solving problems.
- Make sure that teachers' marking has greater impact by:
 - ensuring that pupils have enough time to correct errors and respond to teachers' comments
 - checking that they fully understand what to do to improve in the future.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and assistant headteachers are exceptionally ambitious for the school and uncompromising in their belief that every child should achieve as well as they can. Since the last inspection they have put in place effective systems and initiatives to improve teaching, learning and behaviour. These have mostly been embedded throughout the school and their impact can be seen in the quality of pupils' work and the progress they are making.
- Staff and governors share the senior leaders' vision for the school. Morale is high and there is a strong sense of teamwork, both at leadership level and within key stages and year groups. All are well aware of where further improvement is needed, such as tackling inconsistencies in marking, and clear plans are in place to address this.
- Senior leaders keep a close check on the quality of teaching by observing lessons, analysing progress data and examining pupils' work at regular intervals. Teachers benefit from training, coaching and mentoring that is tailored to their individual needs, including opportunities to observe good and outstanding practice.
- The roles of middle leaders are well developed. Those with responsibility for different subjects play a key role in ensuring consistency of approaches across the school and in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.
- Rigorous termly checks on the progress of groups of pupils, including those with a range of additional needs, enable leaders and class teachers to work closely together to spot any who are not doing as well as they should be. This leads to prompt action to provide additional support wherever it is needed.
- The school has made effective use of the pupil premium funding this school year to provide additional tuition as well as emotional and personal support for those who need it. This, along with good teaching, has helped to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Productive relationships with parents and outside agencies enable the school to take the 'whole child' into account, tackling all aspects of a pupil's personal, social, emotional and academic development that may have contributed to underachievement. As a result, teachers and leaders know their pupils well. They make every effort to ensure that there is no discrimination and that all pupils enjoy the same opportunities to succeed.
- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet all requirements and are highly effective in protecting pupils from harm. The school makes rigorous checks on pupils who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances. The governing body is very well trained in safeguarding procedures and is meticulous in checking that the school is meeting its obligations.
- Innovative planning of the new National Curriculum has enabled teachers to use their skills to the full in devising programmes of study that fascinate pupils and make meaningful links between different subjects. Teachers, who plan in year group teams, capitalise on every opportunity to incorporate literacy and numeracy into termly topics and themes. They are aware of the need to seek opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills more widely than is currently the case.
- There is a strong emphasis on British values and equipping pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils recently discussed their cultural identity and what it means to be British, as well as producing a piece of artwork that depicts 'What being British means to me'. Pupils take part in elections for the school council, learn about many aspects of British history and study world cultures through regular themed days. Tolerance and respect for diversity are promoted through every aspect of school life.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The wide range of enrichment activities, from learning to drum or play the double bass to taking part in residential trips and performances, expands pupils' horizons and equips them with many life skills.
- The school makes effective use of additional funding for physical education and sport. It has forged a successful partnership with The Howard, a local secondary school, which provides a sports coach who works alongside teachers to improve their skills. It has also increased the number and variety of sports that pupils are able to take part in, including tag rugby, hockey, badminton and tri-golf. As a result, the number of pupils who participate in sports clubs has more than doubled in the past year.
- The school makes every effort to engage with parents and involve them in their children's learning. Most parents who responded to the Parent View survey expressed their satisfaction with the school and said they would recommend it to others.
- The local authority has supported the school well since the last inspection and has provided valuable additional expertise to help improve teaching and raise standards. This strong working relationship continues as the authority supports the school on its journey to become outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors use their considerable expertise well to support the school while also providing challenge to senior leaders. They have high expectations for all pupils and make termly checks on the progress data for all classes and groups of pupils. This helps them to develop a good understanding of how well the school is performing. They receive information regularly about the quality of teaching throughout the school. Regular visits and discussions with staff also enhance their knowledge of the school's performance.
- Governors make rigorous checks on the use of additional funding and pay careful attention to information that shows the impact of this. They are well aware that teachers' performance is evaluated in terms of its impact on pupils' achievement, especially that of vulnerable groups. They also know that salary decisions are dependent on the outcomes for pupils in each class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy coming to school and are well motivated to learn and participate in the wide variety of activities the school provides.
- Most pupils concentrate well in lessons and show great enthusiasm when answering questions, discussing ideas with each other and tackling new work. This helps them to make good progress.
- Occasionally, a few pupils become distracted when the teaching does not engage them fully. Occasionally, teachers do not notice or deal with this off-task behaviour quickly enough. Nevertheless, the number of reported incidents of poor behaviour has greatly reduced this year.
- Pupils move around school in an orderly manner and behave sensibly, showing care and respect for others. Older pupils look after younger ones and enjoy taking on responsibilities such as play leaders, peer mediators and school councillors.
- Pupils are courteous, often holding doors open for adults and offering help to others. They treat the school environment and equipment with care and respect.
- The school successfully promotes good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults. This contributes greatly to the calm, working atmosphere in classrooms.
- Playtimes are typically trouble-free and well managed. Pupils have plenty of activities and resources to keep them amused and they play amicably together.
- It is rare for the school to exclude a pupil due to poor behaviour because staff are well trained to help pupils deal with any incidents that may occur. The school has successfully reduced the number of persistent absentees through well-conceived initiatives and good support for families.
- Parents are almost unanimous in agreeing that behaviour is good and that their children are well cared for and happy.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Senior leaders and governors are extremely vigilant about ensuring the safety of the large site. They have rigorous systems for ensuring the suitability of any adults who come into contact with the pupils.
- The arrangements for protecting children who may be at risk of harm are exceptionally thorough. The school keeps meticulous records of safeguarding concerns and maintains very productive links with professionals from the local authority and other agencies.
- The 'Place to Be' and 'Place to Talk' allow pupils space to reflect on and talk about their worries and concerns to experienced counsellors. This helps pupils to overcome the barriers to learning that might otherwise hinder their progress.
- Pupils are very well informed about the different types of bullying they might encounter. For example, they talk knowledgeably about how to keep safe when using mobile phones and the internet. Racist incidents are almost unheard of. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and have total confidence that staff would deal with even the slightest hint of bullying. As one pupil put it, 'Staff would nip it in the bud right away'.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. This is evident across the school in the quality of pupils' work.
- A particular strength of the teaching is the way teachers interweave different subjects to make learning purposeful and meaningful to the pupils. They plan and deliver lessons that interest and motivate pupils, and often inspire them to produce high quality work, especially in writing.
- Teachers and assistants are skilled at asking questions that challenge pupils to think and work things out for themselves. They check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, moving them on to more difficult work as soon as they are ready.
- Assessment is rigorous and accurate and informs teachers' planning. Teachers know individual pupils' needs well and ensure these are met in lessons, using assessment information to plan work that builds on their previous learning.
- Teachers give pupils helpful feedback on their work, both verbally and through marking. Their written comments explain clearly what pupils have done well and how they should improve. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils correct errors or respond to their advice.
- The teaching of reading is good. The recently amended arrangements for teaching phonics (the sounds letters make) have already led to a marked improvement in pupils' ability to work out unfamiliar words. Pupils have many opportunities to read in school and, by the time they leave, they have experienced a wide and varied diet of literature, both fiction and non-fiction. They show a genuine love of reading.
- Until recently, the school had not placed enough emphasis on teaching spelling and grammar. Pupils' work now shows the impact of the improvements in teaching these aspects over the current year.
- The teaching of mathematics has also improved. Teachers develop pupils' skills in both mental and written mathematics to a good level. They extend pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary and expect them to use the correct terminology when explaining their methods or answering questions.
- Pupils have a good deal of experience in solving mathematical problems that are expressed in words. However, they do not have enough opportunities to explore and investigate problems that demand a higher level of reasoning or the ability to interpret and identify patterns or make connections.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014, pupils made great headway in writing, making good progress to reach above average standards in Year 6. Standards in reading and writing were broadly average. Work in pupils' books confirms that these high standards have been maintained, not only in English lessons but also in pupils' work in other subjects. Pupils write with fluency and confidence, drawing on a wide range of vocabulary and using interesting literary techniques to engage the reader.
- Recent marked improvements in the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation are evident throughout the school. This had been a weakness in the Year 6 national tests in the last two years.
- In the current academic year, progress in reading and mathematics has also accelerated as teaching strategies have become more firmly embedded across all year groups. As a result, pupils are now achieving well and standards are rising.
- Pupils enjoy reading and many speak with enthusiasm of the books they have read. Teachers use a wide variety of texts effectively to generate enthusiasm and provide models of excellence in writing which pupils emulate. For example, Year 6 pupils discussed perceptively the vocabulary and imagery in Tennyson's poem, 'The Brook', which extended their appreciation of metaphor and poetic language.
- Despite having to overcome some past underachievement in aspects of mathematics, pupils are now making good progress and standards are rising at a good rate as a result of more consistent teaching methods. Pupils have a good understanding of key mathematical concepts because teachers ensure they have fully understood them before moving them on to new ideas.
- High quality artwork around the school reflects the school's imaginative planning of themes and topics. For example, Year 5 pupils produced some excellent pictures in the style of Georgia O'Keeffe linked to their science work on plants. Pupils make good progress across all subjects, because the school promotes all aspects of learning with equal enthusiasm.
- The most-able pupils achieve well in all subjects because teachers give them work that challenges them and extends their thinking. In mathematics, the highest attaining pupils are taught by a mathematics specialist from the adjacent grammar school. They are making rapid progress. The most able readers and writers produce work of a very high standard.
- Good provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has accelerated their progress

and enabled many to catch up with their peers by the time they leave Year 6. The same holds true for the few pupils who join the school speaking little or no English.

- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make good progress as they move through the school. This is helping to reduce the gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils. Many of these pupils have underachieved in the past, but good provision is now accelerating their progress and they are making up lost ground.
- In 2014, compared to other pupils in the school, pupils eligible for free school meals lagged behind by just over a year in mathematics and by four terms in reading. In writing, the gap was narrower at just over two terms. In comparison with other pupils nationally, they were just under four terms behind in mathematics and four terms behind in reading. In writing they made good headway and narrowed the gap to around a term. There is reliable evidence to show that gaps are continuing to be reduced through effective strategies to support pupils' all-round development.

The early years provision

is good

- The majority of children start school with the skills and knowledge typical for their age, but about a third do not, especially in communication, literacy and mathematics. Overall, children achieve well in the early years as a result of good teaching. Most are well prepared for more challenging learning in Year 1.
- Effective teaching of phonics and early reading skills begins in the Nursery and continues throughout Reception. Pupils are taught by skilled staff in small groups according to their stage of development. This ensures that the most able are challenged to make rapid progress, while the least able receive plenty of reinforcement and repetition to make sure they fully understand each stage before moving on.
- Teachers focus well on transferring these skills into writing, combining this with opportunities to develop children's pencil grip and accurate letter formation. They capture children's interest in books through expressive story-telling and harness this enthusiasm well to encourage imaginative writing.
- Children develop a good understanding of number, shape, space and measures through a wide range of practical activities, often linked to a topic or theme. For example, some Reception children were learning to 'share' a number of spots equally between two halves of a ladybird.
- The school has done much to improve the quality of outdoor learning in the early years but is still undertaking improvements to one area in order to bring it up to the good standard seen in the rest of the provision.
- Children enjoy learning and select activities with enthusiasm. Adults interact with them effectively, asking questions that lead children on to the next steps in learning while skilfully checking their understanding.
- Behaviour is good. Children show respect for adults and each other and develop confidence and independence. All adults are vigilant about ensuring children's safety and teach them to take great care when handling resources and exploring outside.
- Effective leadership ensures that improving early years provision remains high on the school's agenda. Senior leaders oversee the work of the recently appointed early years leader who works closely with other early years colleagues to ensure consistent approaches across the provision.

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	118528
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	462392

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Croucher
Headteacher	Pauline Milton
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 June 2013
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