

Allhallows Primary Academy

Avery Way, Allhallows, Rochester, ME3 9HR

Inspection dates

18–19 June 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.

- Achievement has improved. All groups of pupils make good progress from their different starting points and achieve well overall.
- Teaching is good and improving. Teachers engage pupils well in their lessons. There are very positive and trusting relationships between teachers and pupils so pupils work hard and want to do well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They behave well and are friendly, polite and caring of each other. Attendance is improving.
- Pupils feel safe in school and arrangements for keeping them safe are effective and meet all requirements.
- The early years provision is good. Children enjoy their learning and work and play together very well. They develop good levels of confidence and independence.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. Pupils know and understand the school's values and help to promote them through their good attitudes and conduct.
- The head of school and the executive headteacher provide very effective leadership for the school and have successfully improved teaching and achievement.
- Governors challenge and support the school well and hold leaders to account effectively for their work.
- The Trust supports the school very well as part of its family of schools and brings increased capacity so that the school is well placed to improve further.
- This is a friendly, welcoming and happy school. The only thing pupils said they would improve would be to 'come on Saturday and Sunday'.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching and achievement are not yet typically outstanding.
- The challenge for pupils to make even better achievement is not always high enough for all pupils, and particularly the most able.
- Sometimes, pupils are not clear about teachers' expectations and tasks are not best suited to what teachers expect pupils to learn.
- Achievement in writing is not as strong as it is in mathematics and reading. There are too few opportunities to write at length across the curriculum. Pupils are not always clear about who they are writing for.
- Expectations for the quality of handwriting and spelling are not always high enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in seven lessons, most of them together with the head of school or the executive headteacher. In addition, the inspector talked to pupils about their work, looked at pupils' work in their books, talked to some pupils about reading and listened to them read, and observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and head of school, and with other staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions took place with governors and members of the Trust, including a telephone conversation with the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust.
- 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 14 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own survey of parents, and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. The inspector also took account of 19 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the averaged-sized primary school.
- 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 supported by the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes, Years 3 and 4 in one class, and Years 5 and 6 in the other.
- Provision is made for the early years in a Nursery class which children attend in the mornings and a Reception class which children attend full time.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.
- In September 2013, the school became a sponsored academy as part of The Williamson Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching so that it is outstanding in order to raise achievement, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
 - all pupils are challenged sufficiently in their learning and particularly at the higher levels
 - expectations are clear and tasks are well matched to the learning
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects, and for different audiences
 - there are higher expectations for pupils' handwriting and spelling.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, governors and members of the Trust Board share a commitment and determination to provide the best possible learning and experiences for pupils. They have successfully established a culture of high aspiration where pupils are able to thrive. They ensure that all pupils benefit from good teaching so that they achieve well, develop positive attitudes to learning and are well prepared for the future.
- The head of school and the executive headteacher provide very effective leadership for the school. They have secured the confidence of staff and morale is high.
- Middle leaders are effective and are well supported to develop their skills. They contribute effectively to improving teaching and learning in the subjects or areas for which they are responsible.
- The Trust places a strong emphasis on developing teachers and recognising their potential as future leaders. Appropriate and effective training ensures this potential is developed.
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are well established and effective, and linked to salary progression. Teachers know they are accountable for pupils' progress. Where any weaknesses in teaching are identified, senior leaders take rapid and effective action, and improvement is expected.
- There are good training opportunities for staff so that their individual needs, as well as whole-school priorities, are fully met. All leaders and staff benefit from opportunities to share the best practice in all aspects of the school's work across the schools in the Trust. As a result, an increasing number of pupils are making rapid progress. There is not yet, however, enough teaching that is typically outstanding.
- All leaders and governors are fully committed to providing equality of opportunity and raising pupils' aspirations so that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to achieve success. They have correctly identified the need to further narrow the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is effectively spent. The pupil premium funding has been very thoughtfully used to provide, for example, a range of additional support for groups and individuals and the inclusion of all pupils in clubs and activities across the school to support personal and emotional needs. This is helping disadvantaged pupils to make similar progress to other groups.
- Relationships are very strong throughout the school. Staff foster good relations throughout the school, a caring culture and respect for all. Discrimination has no place in the academy. Pupils respect and celebrate each other's differences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. It underpins all that the school does. Through the curriculum, the school's values and the overarching philosophy of the family of schools in the Trust, pupils have respect for differences in faiths, cultures and backgrounds. Leaders ensure pupils understand British values such as democracy and understand the need for rules in school and the wider community. This helps to ensure pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and the next stage of their education.
- The school provides a broad and balanced range of subjects that effectively meet pupils' interests as well as their needs, and leaders are reviewing the curriculum to ensure this remains the case. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics and communication. Trips and extra activities including clubs add to and enrich pupils' academic and personal development and provide memorable learning experiences. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about a trip linked to their study of the Tudors where they said they learned so much. They were equally excited about performing in the Trust Talent Show.
- Additional funding to promote physical education and sports is being used effectively to have a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being. Specialist coaches help to increase the skills of teachers and pupils and provide additional sports clubs. There are increased opportunities for pupils to participate in inter-school competitions in addition to opportunities for swimming and dance activities.
- Leaders set great store in communicating and working with parents and the community to support children's learning. The small number of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed some mixed feelings. A small minority have concerns about all aspects of the school's work. In contrast to this, parents' replies to the school's own survey in March of this year, to which 58% of parents responded, were overwhelmingly positive in all areas. Parents spoken to during the inspection were also positive.
- The systems and policies for safeguarding pupils are effective and implemented by all staff. All statutory requirements are met.
- The Williamson Trust supports the school very effectively and ensures that the school benefits from the additional expertise and capacity afforded by the Trust family of schools, its Board and directors. The head of school and the executive headteacher promote the Trust Board's values of 'Aspire, Achieve and Excel'

extremely well.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body challenges school leaders very well to strive for excellence because it has high aspirations. Members understand the school's performance information and know how well the school compares to others nationally. They have a high level of expertise and offer skills in a range of areas which are acknowledged within and beyond the Trust. As a result, they are able to provide good levels of challenge and support, and effectively hold the school to account for its performance. They are well informed about all aspects of the school's work by senior leaders, and their own visits to school and analysis of data. They know that performance management and a robust training programme are helping to improve the quality of teaching and standards, and that pay progression is linked to pupils' good progress. They fully support the school's leaders in expecting nothing less than good or better teaching and how they tackle any underperformance. Governors have a very clear understanding of how additional funding is spent and the impact on pupils' achievement. Governors foster and very effectively promote the strategic, collaborative approach between their work, the Trust Board and school leaders.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons, around the school and at playtimes. Pupils are polite and friendly, and get on well together.
- They have positive attitudes to learning and work hard, which helps them make good progress.
- They enjoy school. One pupil described how she 'wakes up every morning with a big smile on my face because I love coming to school'.
- Pupils appreciate the benefits of a small school and have a great sense of belonging. A group agreed with one pupil who said that, 'Everyone is included and you have friends of all ages; we are like a big family.'
- The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that pupils are well behaved. Almost all were positive about behaviour in the school's own survey and all felt that their children are happy at school.
- Responsibilities, such as school councillors and monitors, are taken very seriously and enjoyed.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because there are a few occasions when teaching does not fully engage some pupils, and so they are not focused on their learning, and this slows their progress.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View, and all of those who replied to the school's survey, think their children feel safe in school and are well looked after.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that the school helps them to keep safe out of school by being aware of potential dangers, including on the internet and on the road. .
- Pupils say they are not aware of any bullying in school and think that pupils are kind and caring. They know, however, that bullying can take different forms, such as name-calling, physical and cyber- bullying. Pupils are confident to turn to staff should any issues arise and know they will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Procedures and policies for safeguarding and child protection are robust and effective.
- Leaders are vigilant and determined in their work to encourage pupils to attend regularly. Attendance has improved and is closer to the national average. The number of pupils who have extended absences has reduced and punctuality has improved.
- The breakfast club provides a safe and social start to the school day.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils learn well and make good progress because teaching is good. Pupils say they enjoy learning and teachers make their lessons fun. They work hard and want to do well. There are very positive and trusting relationships between pupils and adults in all classes. This supports pupils in taking risks with their

learning and ensures they are prepared to have-a-go because they know their views, opinions and efforts will be valued.

- Classrooms are vibrant and interesting. Teachers and pupils make very good use of displays and work in progress (working walls) to support teaching and learning.
- Teachers plan well to ensure that work is at the right level for different-aged pupils in the mixed-year group classes. They ensure purposeful and interesting lessons.
- Teachers' marking and feedback gives pupils good guidance on how to improve their work and pupils have time to respond to comments and suggestions.
- Teachers are good role models for pupils. There is a strong work ethic and a calm, purposeful learning atmosphere in all classrooms.
- There is a strong focus on talk, drama and discussion, which successfully helps pupils develop their language, thinking and learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 thoroughly enjoyed reconstructing the favourite part of the story 'The Twits' through role play. This helped them make good progress and develop a depth of understanding of the characters.
- Teachers question pupils skilfully to check their understanding and to help them extend their thoughts and ideas.
- Strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that additional help given to disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs supports learning well and promotes good progress.
- Reading is taught effectively. Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is now taught well because it enables pupils to learn effectively from their various starting points. Reading for enjoyment and research is promoted well.
- The teaching of writing is improving but some inconsistencies remain. Leaders have correctly identified that pupils do not always have enough opportunities to write extended pieces across the curriculum, they are not always clear about who they are writing for, and expectations for spelling and handwriting are not always high enough.
- Mathematics is taught well because teachers plan lessons based on meaningful activities. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress in understanding how to read timetables and were able to apply their skills effectively.
- On occasion, teaching does not sufficiently challenge pupils of all abilities, and especially the most able. Expectations are generally high, but as pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved, teachers sometimes have not increased their expectations accordingly. Sometimes, expectations are not communicated effectively to pupils, and on a few occasions, the tasks teachers set do not best meet the intended outcomes for pupils' learning. As a result, pupils do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable. These aspects are why teaching is not yet outstanding.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress from their different starting points.
- Children start in the Nursery or Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their ages, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and stronger in technology. They make good progress in the early years because of good provision and clear leadership.
- Pupils' current work and the school's information about the progress pupils are making show that pupils are making good progress and standards by the end of Year 6 are on track to improve considerably from 2014. This is confirmed by inspection evidence. However, attainment in writing, although improving, is weaker than in reading or mathematics.
- In 2014, standards overall were broadly average by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6. Too few pupils reached the higher levels. Pupils across the school are now achieving improved standards of attainment because they are making good progress.
- Currently, across the school, the most-able pupils make good progress. An increased proportion of the most-able pupils are on track to reach the higher level of attainment at the end of Year 6, particularly in reading. On occasion, however, challenges are not demanding enough to promote outstanding progress.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics check was below the national figure. Leaders looked carefully at this and have made sure that the teaching of phonics is now well matched to the ability of pupils across Key Stage 1. As a result, the proportion of pupils on track to reach the most recent national figure is much closer to average than previously. Pupils pick up the skills

to sound out new and unfamiliar words rapidly but some struggle to understand exactly what they are reading.

- Older pupils read widely and many read with fluency, expression and a depth of understanding. Reading for enjoyment is promoted well across the school and pupils are introduced to a wide range of good quality texts and authors. As a consequence, they can express their preferences for different authors and styles of writing, and give thoughtful reasons for their opinions.
- Increased opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in a range of real-life situations, and to articulate their thinking, support their good achievement in mathematics.
- In writing, opportunities for pupils to talk about and rehearse their thoughts before writing their ideas down has helped to improve their achievement. The quality of handwriting and spelling is inconsistent. Too many spellings are inaccurate and errors are often repeated over time. On occasion, pupils have too few opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects. Often, they are not sure who will read their writing and so do not have opportunities to write with a particular audience in mind.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils by the end of Year 6 compared to other pupils nationally was around 20 months behind in reading and around 12 months behind in mathematics and writing. Compared to other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils were around six months behind in mathematics, 10 months behind in writing and over 18 months behind in reading. Disadvantaged pupils receive effective support across the school and the gap in their achievement is narrowing because they are making faster progress than other pupils nationally.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well met, enabling them to make similar good progress to others. Their needs are identified early so that appropriate support can be given to help them make good progress from their various starting points.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in the early years are given a good start to school. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development is above the national average. As a result, children are well prepared to continue their education in Year 1.
- There are well-organised links with parents before children start at school, which enables children to settle quickly into school life.
- The school has recently extended its early years provision to include three-year-olds. This provision is very much welcomed by parents who appreciate the smooth transition into Reception.
- For much of the day, the Nursery and Reception children work and play together. This benefits the younger and older children exceptionally well.
- Teaching is good. Children are given rich, stimulating experiences so they are motivated, and develop curious and enquiring minds, and a love of learning.
- Activities are planned well to engage all pupils, and boys, in particular. For example, children, as pirates on rafts, explored the treasure chest to help them understand number and sharing as they decided how the four pirates could share two crackers. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the concept of half.
- Children behave well and are eager to learn. They are given many opportunities to be creative and work things out for themselves, and as a consequence, develop independence and resilience when things do not work as planned first time.
- Children are encouraged to develop a love of books and stories, and use their increasing phonic skills to help them read and write.
- Staff work very well as a team that has a good understanding of the needs of young children.
- Good leadership of the early years ensures that welfare requirements are met well. Assessments of achievements in learning are used well to help plan the next steps. Children are kept safe and secure both indoors and outdoors at all times.
- The school has plans in place to more fully engage with parents by sharing information to help them support children's learning and providing parents with more opportunities to share their views and opinions.

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	139939
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	450174

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Cottle
Headteacher	Linda Stubbing (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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