

Drapers Mills Primary Academy

St Peter's Footpath, Margate, Kent CT9 2SP

Inspection dates	19–20 January 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have ensured that the academy is much improved from when it was previously inspected. They have improved teaching considerably.
- Better teaching has meant that the wide gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are closing. However, pupils still need to catch up with other pupils nationally in all subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils historically fell behind their classmates and are still not catching up quickly enough in Key Stage 2.
- Many pupils do not make strong enough progress in reading. This limits their ability to learn quickly in other subjects.
- Leaders have rightly focused on raising standards in writing and mathematics. The rest of the curriculum lacks effective structure or coherence.
- The academy is quick to adopt any initiative that might contribute to improving learning. It does not critically and systematically evaluate each one so that they know what works best.
- Not all staff are employed effectively. Some teaching assistants wait for direct instruction before acting to support pupils' learning.
- Improving subject leadership has not yet had sufficient time to cause the speeding up of progress necessary, particularly in reading, in Key Stage 2.
- The attendance of pupils is weak. Too many miss too much time despite the considerable efforts of senior leaders and the family liaison team.
- Pupils behave well around the academy. They are smart and proud of their uniform. Their conduct in lessons has generally improved but some still lose concentration at times.
- Local governance of the academy is still not stable. The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) ensures that overall leadership is in place and leaders are held to account for the progress of the academy.

The school has the following strengths

- Increasingly strong leadership and an effective strategy for enabling teachers to develop successfully into management roles.
- A cohesive community where pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on well together. This has been created over time by the academy's leaders.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the early years. The good practice in that key stage is spreading upwards through the academy.
- An absolute commitment to the pastoral care and well-being of all pupils.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the academy no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen leadership at all levels by:
 - consolidating local governance arrangements
 - ensuring subject leaders are trained fully to check the quality of all teachers' and teaching assistants' work so that it has maximum impact on pupils' outcomes, especially reading
 - pursuing only those initiatives proven to be effective in improving the academy so far.
- Ensure that all teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good or better, especially in Key Stage 2, by:
 - checking regularly that all teachers, teaching assistants, pupils and parents understand the robust new system for monitoring pupils' progress
 - reviewing the work of all teaching assistants, and providing training, where necessary, to enable all to make a consistently positive contribution to the pupils they are supporting
 - reviewing the curriculum so that it more clearly widens and deepens pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, and provides even more opportunities for them to practise applying numeracy skills and writing well at length.
- Ensure that even more pupils attend school regularly by:
 - focusing relentlessly on the activities that have reduced absence so far
 - working even more closely with families whose children have low attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher has created a strong team in the academy that has changed it significantly. The headteacher exercises his duties with care and a great sense of responsibility. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has flourished in the role and is now leading the academy's important assessment work.
- Over time, leaders have worked to create an ethos of success and promise. This has overturned the previous culture of underachievement and excuses. There has been a noticeable lift in morale at the academy and it is now a happy and enabling place to be that is definitely on the way up. This is commendable. Leaders are not complacent, however, about the size of the challenges that remain.
- Senior leaders act well as a team. They are becoming more able to spot aspects of work that require improvement quickly and intervene straight away. They regularly hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. Senior leaders are also quick to find training opportunities for teachers who need to develop their skills or improve other aspects of their practice.
- Senior leaders continue to receive good support from TKAT's central Thanet team. TKAT also provide effective support for administrative functions like accounting and personnel work. TKAT's executive keeps a very close watch on the progress and development of the academy. Kent County Council maintains links with the academy. Its officers hold a termly review with the academy's leaders.
- Subject leaders are increasingly prominent across the key stages. They are increasingly responsible for improvements to practice and pupils' outcomes. They are coached for this work by experienced personnel who share some of the functions. They are beginning to extend their work to include regular checking of the quality of teachers' work in their subject. Year leaders are extending their influence into more aspects of the academy's work. They lead the planning of teaching so that each class has equal opportunities in the year group.
- In September, leaders introduced a new robust system for checking pupils' progress. Consequently, teachers can see the wide gaps in some pupils' knowledge and skills. Inspectors saw much more detailed work aimed at closing these gaps than previously. Overall, therefore, progress is accelerating, gaps are closing and results are set to improve. Leaders agree that the next step is to ensure that everyone in the community understands the system and uses it to keep track of how well each pupil is doing.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) provides careful and compassionate support for a wide and diverse range of pupils. Her knowledge of the strategies most likely to support individual pupils' strengths or challenges is exemplary. The SENCO has helped to direct teaching assistants' work and is now working to ensure that they are appropriately skilled to deliver it.
- Leaders ensure that good use is made of the academy's funds. Money is spent well so that the academy is clean, bright and well maintained. Everything has smartened up. The pupil premium (additional funding from the government for children looked after by a local authority or those eligible for free school meals) has been used well generally over time to improve outcomes for this large group of pupils. There is more to be done so that the impact of the funding is seen more clearly. The physical education and sports premium has been used very effectively to ensure pupils have access to games coaches and other activities that promote healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders have rightly focused on developing the curriculum so that it enables all pupils to meet important age-expected outcomes at the end of Year 6. There is a strong focus on English and mathematics. This led, in 2015, to increasingly strong outcomes in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) check, teacher-assessed outcomes in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 and improving results in mathematics. However, work in other important parts of the curriculum is limited. Pupils' work is largely contained in one book. This shows frequent changes of topic or theme with little connection between them. There is no over-arching curriculum plan which ties it all together. As a result, work in art, history, science and religious education appears disconnected and disjointed. Inspectors observed physical education lessons and the teaching of music in assembly in addition to these subjects.
- The curriculum does, however, support pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain. It helps them to adopt healthy lifestyles and understand the importance of being an active citizen. Pupils are increasingly well prepared for life in secondary school. Leaders recognise the need to bring further coherence to the curriculum so that it achieves these goals even more successfully.

■ The governance of the academy

- The governance is effective. TKAT centrally ensures that governance functions are carried out

appropriately and effectively, even though the local governing body continues to change regularly. A new Chair of Governors was appointed during the inspection but was not available to meet with inspectors.

- TKAT ensures that senior leaders are held to account rigorously for the performance of the academy. Every six weeks leaders are interviewed about the progress of the pupils and other improvements. The performance of teachers is now tightly checked and controlled, with support from TKAT's central human resources department, so that only those who meet their targets are awarded a pay rise.
- TKAT's senior leaders have a very clear understanding of how well the academy is doing. They are fully aware of the remaining challenges if the academy is to become good eventually. They are rightly challenging leaders on pupils' attendance, the performance of disadvantaged pupils and the learning of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There has been a marked improvement in this aspect of the academy's work in 18 months. Better records of incidents are taken. All incidents are followed up appropriately. The family liaison team's work is impressive. For example, they provide many social care services to families facing challenges and work well with statutory and non-statutory bodies to ensure that appropriate early interventions are made when necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The significant improvements to teaching seen over the past 18 months have not yet had time to impact fully on outcomes for pupils. As a result, though getting better, the performance of pupils still lags behind that of similar pupils in other schools nationally.
- Leaders have developed a strong system for checking how well each pupil is doing. This provides teachers with really clear information about what the pupils know, understand and can do. However, it shows wide variation between pupils and across subjects. Teachers are now working to close gaps in pupils' knowledge caused by very weak teaching over time. This is especially the case for pupils who have been in the academy since Nursery.
- Teaching assistants make a variable contribution to learning. Many work closely and well with pupils who have specific learning difficulties. Some translate for those who speak English as an additional language. Many have become proficient in passing on important messages from teachers using signs and gestures. Others provide good teaching in small groups to support pupils' learning of phonics or development of literacy skills. A few keep a close watch on pupils whose behaviour can be difficult. Too many do not actively involve themselves with learning, particularly while the teacher is leading learning for the whole class.
- The academy is committed to supporting the development of pupils' reading. There are several schemes in place to help this. However, progress in reading is not strong enough yet. Leaders have not yet reviewed which scheme works best or why. Each class has a well-decorated reading corner. Not all pupils make good use of the one designed for them.
- Teachers are supported well now by year group leaders. This has strengthened planning so that the vast majority of lessons are purposeful. They are increasingly matched well to pupils' specific learning needs. Teaching is strong in the early years and Key Stage 1 and this good practice is spreading upwards through the academy.
- Over time, teachers have become more skilled in providing good feedback to pupils. Many use questioning well to check for understanding in lessons and gains in pupils' knowledge. Most follow the academy's policy on written feedback well so that standards of work in books have improved considerably. Some pupils were writing very little in response to tasks at the beginning of the year. They are occasionally writing at much greater length and are now showing, in creative writing, a broader imagination.
- In most lessons teaching is delivered well and is rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. Considerable thought has been given to the arrangements for teaching so that pupils are taught more frequently in groups suited to their ability. Although this means that pupils move between classrooms at various times during the day, they generally make faster progress.
- Teachers are providing more regular opportunities for pupils to practise numeracy skills in a range of subjects. In personal, social, health and economic education, in Year 4, pupils were also applying some of their science learning in understanding what makes a balanced diet. Teachers are now consistently using the correct mathematical terms to help embed pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils' use of number and calculation skills is improving.
- Teachers make good use of resources such as aids to counting, books, ICT, creative materials and an artist

in residence. This member of staff admirably stretches the pupils to use their imagination. This is beginning to have a significant impact on the quality of written work produced.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The pastoral care of pupils is effective. Great care is shown to pupils facing challenges and many benefit from impressive support. Pupils' emotional and physical needs are attended to well. This reduces the number of barriers to learning faced by some pupils.
- The academy has developed robust systems for checking the well-being of pupils. This means that appropriate interventions can be made to reduce any impact on learning. The SENCO has extensive knowledge of the pupils. She coordinates well the work of other agencies as necessary. Every meeting and action taken by the academy to support pupils is recorded.
- Leaders are working closely with Place2Be, a children's mental health charity, to extend existing arrangements. They are currently creating an on-site facility which will help to further reduce the impact of such issues on pupils' learning. This is one example of the many ways in which the academy is promoting pupils' welfare.
- Leaders take seriously their duty to safeguard pupils. They ensure that staff are trained carefully to detect signs of pupils at risk. They also ensure that pupils receive teaching which helps them to know how to stay safe in a range of situations, including online. They check carefully all adults working in the academy. Pupils receive strong messages about British values which reduce the likelihood of them becoming radicalised or falling into extremism.
- Over time, leaders have been effective in building a more cohesive community where each pupil is respected for who they are. Teachers provide ample opportunities for pupils to develop appropriate values. Pupils develop a good sense of right and wrong. They respect each other's beliefs and different cultures.
- As a result of focused work over time, pupils' self-assurance has grown noticeably. Pupils speak confidently to adults and greet visitors warmly and politely. Pupils are happy at the academy and the vast majority stay safe at all times. During the inspection, pupils participated enthusiastically in a joyful singing assembly. This contributed well to their spiritual development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. However, despite persistent and coordinated action, the attendance of pupils remains low. Leaders have taken every step possible to reduce absence and the proportion of pupils who persistently miss learning time. This has resulted in a gradual improvement in the percentage of sessions missed but has not yet brought these in line with national averages.
- Leaders have employed a strong team of family support workers. Their work has been highly effective with some families and includes practical support, such as transport and help with school uniform, so that some children are enabled to attend school more regularly. The attendance of pupils from some of these families has improved markedly.
- There have been significant improvements in pupils' conduct around the academy. It is now a calm, orderly place where the vast majority of pupils cooperate well with adults. Good routines have been established for movement around the building and these are observed by all. Simple systems for encouraging good behaviour are present in each class.
- Play- and lunchtimes are supervised well. Teaching assistants play games with pupils. Sports coaches also organise ball games which include many pupils. In the dining hall, pupils sit and eat in cohesive groups. There is a pleasant, chatty atmosphere. All display good table manners.
- The number of incidents of poor conduct has reduced dramatically in the past 18 months. This is down to better systems for reporting and quicker action on the part of staff to 'nip in the bud' any behaviour likely to escalate. Leaders are intolerant of racist, homophobic or derogatory language and deal with it appropriately when it occurs. Leaders are determined that, at Drapers Mills, all pupils will be treated with respect by each other and staff alike.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Pupils' attainment remains low. Published information for 2015 shows that standards in mathematics,

reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 2 are below age-expected levels for a large majority of pupils.

- In 2014, results were higher in mathematics and reading; however, the amount of progress made by pupils was much lower. In 2015, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading reduced while the proportions for mathematics and writing went up. This shows gradual though inconsistent rises in performance across Key Stage 2.
- In Key Stage 1, both progress and attainment in reading and writing were much stronger in 2015, compared with 2014 overall. Also, the proportion of pupils succeeding in the Year 1 phonics check was more than four times higher than the previous year. Standards in mathematics dropped back but are improving steadily again in the current year as the new curriculum challenges pupils to learn more.
- In the early years, in 2015, there was a dramatic improvement in the proportions of children ending the foundation stage having achieved a good level of development.
- Disadvantaged pupils generally attain less well than their classmates but the gap between them is quite narrow. However, the gaps between them and other pupils nationally in every subject are wide and are only closing slowly in Key Stage 2. The gaps between disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 1 and other pupils are much narrower. This reflects the much stronger teaching consistently from the early years and into Years 1 and 2.
- The performance of pupils who speak English as an additional language varies. Some are bilingual and switch between languages easily. Others are at an early stage of learning English and do well with the very focused support given in the shooting stars room. At the end of Year 6 in 2015, those pupils who had been at the academy in Year 2 made much better progress that was significantly above the national average for this group. Most of the pupils with English as an additional language are not, therefore, prevented from learning. Their performance is better than the White British pupils in the academy.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well in the academy. However, their performance is similar to other pupils. It does not compare well with similar pupils in other schools or all pupils nationally. For example, in Year 6 in 2015, such pupils were as much as 18 months behind where they should be.
- There is only a tiny cohort of most-able pupils in this academy. Their progress cannot be evaluated meaningfully.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years is a strength of the academy. Children make a good start to their learning and time in school.
- In both the Nursery and Year R, children benefit from a high-quality learning space. The team make constant improvements to the environment and the range of activities available to support learning.
- The early years is well led. The team is supported professionally and effectively by a senior member of TKAT's central Thanet team. She has contributed considerable experience and expertise over time. Staff have developed quickly with high-quality coaching. Her influence has extended into quality monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Reading is taught systematically and well through focused sessions in phonics. All adults support this operation so that children benefit from teaching in groups closely matched to their current ability level.
- Adults make increasingly good use of information about what children can do already. Much of this information comes from their own accurate assessments of the children at play. Adults record key evidence to support their judgements of each child's level. Parents contribute informally to this process. Plans are under way to extend this partnership working so that parents are more systematically involved in an early assessment of each child as they join the academy.
- Children enter the academy with varying levels of ability. Much of this depends on the type and quality of pre-school experiences they have had.
- Disadvantaged children are supported well in the early years. They have equal opportunities to thrive in the setting. There are no published outcomes for the 2015 cohort, but in 2014 these children did as well as their peers.
- Children who speak English as an additional language do as well as their peers as a result of close support. Children eligible for free school meals are supported well and make equally good progress. Children with early identified special educational needs benefit from carefully targeted support and also make good progress.
- Children currently in the early years are making faster progress than previous groups. They are accelerating their learning of number. Progress in speaking lags behind this. Adults are increasingly giving

good examples of speaking clearly so that children have good models to follow.

- Children behave well in the early years. They are set clear boundaries. They take turns and cooperate well with each other. They play happily together for the most part. Children have their mealtimes adjusted to the rest of the academy. This means that they are able to eat as a group in a well-supervised canteen.
- Leaders ensure that children in the setting are safeguarded at all times. Entry controls are robust. Strong relationships exist with most parents so that those collecting children are known to key workers.
- All staff are trained appropriately to check that children are thriving. They work closely with the family support team to highlight anywhere that an early intervention might be helpful.

School details

Unique reference number	139021
Local authority	Kent County Council
Inspection number	10009297

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	533
Appropriate authority	The proprietor
Chair	Dick Brown (acting)
Headteacher	Sheila Todd (Executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01843 223989
Website	www.drapersmillsprimary.co.uk
Email address	sheila.todd@tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	11–12 June 2014

Information about this school

- Drapers Mills Primary Academy is a much larger than average-sized primary academy.
- The academy serves a community with above-average levels of deprivation.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for those looked after by the local authority or eligible for free school meals), is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils from Black and minority ethnic households is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is also well above average. It is nearly half of the school population.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils leave the academy during each school year. Vacant places are quickly taken up by new arrivals to the area or the United Kingdom.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- There are an average number of pupils with statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- The academy is part of The Kemnal Academies Trust's Thanet division. It benefits from local expertise in that consortium. The executive headteacher and the headteacher are currently supporting another TKAT school in Kent.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection began as the fourth special measures monitoring visit under section 8 of the Education Act, 2005. The visit was converted to a full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act, 2005.
- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups and most classes. They observed learning in a range of subjects. Senior leaders jointly observed learning in lower Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1. One of the team conducted an extensive learning walk of the academy with the executive headteacher.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of the academy's documentation, including records of pupils' performance, logs of behaviour incidents, checks on teachers' performance and notes of visits from external supporters.
- Inspectors met regularly with senior leaders. They also met subject leaders, the leaders of the early years provision, the SENCO and the pastoral care staff.
- A meeting was held with three representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with parents informally and observed the parents forum. Twenty-nine responses to Ofsted's confidential, online parent survey, Parent View, were also considered.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked with them in meetings, around the academy and in the playgrounds.

Inspection team

Dr Simon Hughes, lead inspector
Anne Allen

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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