

Tiger Primary School

Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9QF

Inspection dates	13–14 January 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Achievement is good. From their different starting points, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and consequently all groups achieve highly, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan lessons that build on pupils' prior to knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud of being part of Tiger Primary School. They quickly develop into confident young people.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good and they participate very well in lessons. They are taught to be respectful and to understand what is right and wrong.
- The Principal has instigated and secured significant improvement across the school because she has ensured that parents and staff share in her vision.
- Children make a good start to their education because they are well cared for and staff ensure that they build skills rapidly across all areas of learning.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable and skilled. They hold leaders to account for the high expectations they have for pupils at the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is a strength of the school. Pupils say that they feel safe at all times and this view is strongly supported by parents and staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Middle leaders have not yet had an impact on the vision and strategic direction of the school.
- School leaders do not evaluate the impact of additional funding sufficiently well to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- The early years environment, especially outdoors, does not provide a learning experience that is sufficiently inspirational or motivating for children.
- Pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and some do not always understand learning when classes are taught in very large groups.
- Pupils' work does not show that they develop a deep understanding in mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure that pupils are supported to understand how to improve their own learning
 - ensuring that pupils' learning is sufficiently challenging when they are taught in large groups and that all pupils understand what they have been taught
 - ensuring that pupils develop a deep understanding in mathematics, thereby raising attainment to the highest levels
 - developing the early years provision so that all children's learning experiences are highly motivating and there is greater consistency between the indoor and outdoor environment.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management towards outstanding by:
 - improving the skills of middle leaders to enable them to impact fully on the vision and strategic direction of the school
 - ensuring that additional government funds, especially the sports premium, are precisely targeted to secure the highest outcomes for pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The Principal and governors have created a transparent, honest and open culture which parents in particular value. The Principal is determined to drive forward improvements and has faced transition and challenges with determination and resilience because she puts the needs of pupils first.
- There is a shared vision across the learning community of high expectations which are communicated and understood. Pupils also know that they are expected to work hard. Staff share a hunger and sense of urgency to improve the school continually. They say that the Principal welcomes ideas from staff, which makes them feel valued. This is having a positive impact on raising standards and improving teaching.
- The vast majority of parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the impact the Principal has made on improving the school. She has lost no time in addressing the school's weaknesses and making the changes needed.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and are clear about what needs to be done. They evaluate the effectiveness of new strategies adopted to help improve the school, and if they do not work they explore and implement others that do.
- Many middle leaders are new to the school and because of this have not fully begun to contribute to school improvement and the strategic direction of the school. They are supported to comprehend quickly the school's priorities and encouraged to investigate new ways to support the school's aims. However, there is insufficient evidence to date to measure the effect of these initiatives, as many are too new.
- Leaders have implemented a new assessment procedure to track the curriculum, which has allowed staff to plan learning and accurately identify next steps. There is a weekly opportunity for staff to reflect on pupils' learning and identify what pupils need to do to move forward. This has not yet translated into pupils knowing precisely how to improve their own learning.
- The Principal and other leaders have established a sense of ownership among staff to improve teaching and learning across the school. Staff value the training and support they receive and use these to improve their own practice. Thus, teaching is improving rapidly and having an increased impact on outcomes of pupils.
- The performance management of staff, including the Principal, is exacting and robust. Staff are held to account and, as a result, are clear about what is expected of them with regard to their own development and that of the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain and for the next phase of their education. For example, strong links with the neighbouring secondary school enable pupils to experience first-hand what their school experience will be like when they are older. Elements of British values are being taught across the school; mutual respect and tolerance are particularly strong.
- The school develops pupils' moral, social and cultural awareness very well and is now focusing more on the spiritual awareness of pupils. Assemblies have recently focused on what it means to be British and on developing pupils' understanding of cultures, including their own. Pupils are encouraged to think about others. They raised over £2,000 for Children in Need last year. In response to this aspect of the school's work, one parent observed, 'We have been very impressed with the life skills our child has gained, through presentations, mentoring, sharing and partnerships'.
- Governors and leaders have the highest expectations for disadvantaged pupils currently at the school. Leaders ensure that the pupil premium grant is targeted effectively to support these pupils through a range of initiatives. However, the impact of this work is not evaluated thoroughly enough to ensure that the funds are precisely targeted on helping pupils to achieve the highest possible outcomes.
- Leaders have used sports premium funding to secure specialist teachers who provide a wide range of sport within the curriculum and have improved the skills of adults in the school. However, the funding has not led to increased pupil participation and competitiveness in sport beyond the school day. In addition, there is little analysis of the impact of this additional funding on pupils' development and progress.
- The Principal and governors are outward looking, and keen to share practice and learn from others. Leaders are receptive to external support and the Principal has engaged fully with the local authority and Department for Education. She has also formed partnerships with local schools to support improvement and validate the work of the school. This work has strengthened the school's ability to improve.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors add to the effectiveness of leadership and management and offer a wealth of experience and skills to the trust and individual schools. They are clear about their strategic role and delegated function, which are underpinned by the structure of local and overall governance.
- Governors challenge leaders and each other to drill down on priorities for the school. The performance management of leaders is very thorough and robust, and has resulted in many priority areas being addressed rapidly. Governors have helped to secure improvement because they seek out evidence for themselves and are not solely reliant on information given to them. Consequently, they impact positively on pupils' lives.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective. The handover of pupils between parents and the school at the beginning and end of breakfast- and after-school clubs is particularly secure. Staff are clear about their responsibilities, and safe practices feature strongly throughout the school. Pupils and parents are very supportive of this view. Some parents say that the care shown to their children is often extended to them as parents. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including procedures linked to staff recruitment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- All adults share high hopes for pupils' lives and the focus on improving and embedding pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding is a key priority throughout the school.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong across the curriculum and consistent in all year groups. This provides pupils with equality of opportunity as they progress through the school and helps the vast majority of pupils to sustain concentration in lessons.
- Adults commonly correct pupils' misconceptions during lessons and adapt their teaching in response to feedback to improve pupils' learning. For example, a teacher leading a mathematics lesson capitalised on feedback from a pupil who knew what odd numbers were and could name them when the whole class was learning to count in twos. Pupils are regularly given the opportunity to explain and share their knowledge with their peers, which helps them to deepen and consolidate their understanding.
- Staff know the needs of the pupils well, and tasks are accurately targeted to meet their varying abilities and challenge their thinking. Pupils who fall behind are well supported to make progress and quickly catch up with their peers. Additional staff help pupils to learn in a variety of ways and do it well. However, when pupils are taught together in very large groups, learning is not always sufficiently challenging and not all pupils understand what they have been taught.
- Pupils are quick to grasp new skills in mathematics and can talk assuredly about the strategies they use to work out calculations and solve problems. The school's drive to improve the quality of mathematics is paying dividends. Pupils' work clearly evidences that they are making good progress. There is less evidence, however, that pupils are given enough opportunity to develop a deep understanding in mathematics, known as mastery, thereby raising attainment to the highest levels.
- Teaching of early reading skills, including the sounds that letters make (known as phonics), uses a range of engaging activities to motivate and meet the needs of all pupils. Adults guide pupils through phonics at pace and subsequently these important skills are embedded at an early age. Daily guided reading sessions concentrate on the acquisition of reading skills such as inference, retrieval, comprehension and prediction. Adults provide a gamut of stimulating opportunities in these sessions and pupils enjoy reading as a result.
- Teaching is impacting strongly on pupils' writing skills. Pupils' work is testimony to this. When describing a jellyfish, a Year 1 pupil wrote, 'The jellyfish are sometimes colourful and feel gloopy. They may not look stingy, but they are'. Pupils quickly develop secure spelling, punctuation and grammatical skills and can apply these to a range of genres. In a piece of creative writing, a Year 4 pupil wrote, 'Ivan clapped a hand to his mouth, stifling a cry'.
- Pupils are able to work collaboratively and debate enthusiastically because opportunities are given to them to talk about and think about their learning. These skills are modelled well by staff. Pupils are encouraged to contribute, to explain the approaches they have adopted, and to validate their opinions. There is a culture of risk-taking because relationships are strong and pupils are inspired to 'have a go'. Pupils can talk eloquently about what they have learned in class, but they are not confident to explain what they need to do to improve their own learning.

- The school teaches in large open spaces called plazas, which are bright, clean and welcoming. Displays are well looked after and celebrate pupils' learning. They provide prompts that help pupils to work on their own.
- The school works hard to provide parents with information about their child's learning and how well they are doing, and to ensure that homework is appropriate. Leaders are currently seeking ways to improve this further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Parents, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about how well adults throughout the school care for pupils. There is a high degree of trust that pupils' well-being is integral to the school's ethos. One parent commented, 'We are impressed with the teaching and support staff on every level. We feel that the well-being of the children is at the heart of everything they do'.
- The vast majority of pupils are motivated and engage positively in their learning because, pupils say, 'Teachers make lessons fun!'. They enjoy access to an enriched curriculum that enhances their learning experience. Pupils have an intrinsic motivation to do well. When asked by inspectors whether pupils are rewarded for reading every night at home, a pupil answered, 'Yes, we go up a level!'.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and relish the responsibilities that they have earned. They are proud to be elected by staff and peers to leadership positions such as house captain and school councillor. A parent described their child's love of coming to the school by stating, 'Every morning he jumps up, puts his uniform on and goes to school beaming and bursting with happiness'.
- Pupils communicate eloquently and support their opinions well. This is because their opinions are valued and encouraged.
- Pupils happily share what they know with each other and are generous with ideas and resources. The school is well looked after and resources are cared for by pupils. They are smart and proud of the uniform they wear.
- Pupils who are new to the school say that they make friends quickly and rapidly gain confidence to participate in lessons. A younger pupil who recently started at the school stood in front of the whole class and showed peers how to count in twos using socks hanging on a washing line.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the impact of some pupils' behaviour on their child's ability to learn and concentrate. During this inspection, pupils were typically seen behaving very well in lessons and being thoughtful towards each other. However, low-level disruption was observed on rare occasions and by a very small number of older pupils. When this occurred, it was quickly addressed by staff and consequently the impact on other pupils was minimised.
- Behaviour management processes are clear and all staff have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils who find it hard to manage their own behaviour are supported well and this impacts positively on their ability to focus on their learning and make progress.
- Incidents of bullying and use of derogatory language are exceptionally rare. Any issues are tackled by leaders, so that pupils are able to understand what is right and wrong. Pupils are helped to think about contemporary news items to learn important virtues such as understanding, respect and tolerance towards others. Pupils are adamant that incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are rare.
- Attendance is getting better and is now slightly below the national average. Leaders use a range of strategies, supported by external agencies, to promote better attendance. Good attendance is expected as part of the school's ethos.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Leaders and all adults understand performance information well and use this to prioritise actions that improve pupils' attainment. Current assessment systems, introduced by school leaders, are rigorous. Information about how well pupils are doing is checked frequently to ensure that pupils at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and support is put in place.
- Each cohort of pupils has started at the school with variable skills and capabilities. The school is currently growing and so the profile of pupils attending the school has changed each year. Therefore, there is no typical level of entry to the school at the moment.
- Pupils make considerable progress from their various starting points and by the end of Reception Year, pupils' attainment is much higher than the national average. This is because assessment information is carefully analysed to ensure that the needs of individual children are met.
- Pupils learn phonics (the sounds that letters make) well. Results in the phonics screening test have improved significantly over the last two years. In 2015, results were just below the national average. Linking sounds to letters is modelled effectively by all staff and a range of interesting and engaging activities is used to instil a love of reading at a young age. Phonics skills are built on in pupils' writing, which is demonstrable through their good spelling strategies throughout the school.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels of attainment in mathematics and reading is also above the national average.
- A high proportion of current pupils are already working at expected levels for pupils of their age. Some pupils are exceeding these levels. This is because all adults have high expectations of what pupils can achieve across the curriculum, and pupils know they are expected to work hard to achieve.
- So far this year, pupils are making progress that is at least expected in reading, writing and mathematics, and many are exceeding this. However, progress is not consistently high across all year groups and across all subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and are making good progress. This is because of the effective support they receive as individuals in class. In 2015, they exceeded the accomplishment of their peers in early years and in the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1. A high proportion reached expected levels at Key Stage 1 and leaders are rightly focused on increasing the proportions reaching the highest level of attainment.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils in the school compares favourably with other pupils nationally, and gaps between the attainment of this group and their peers in school are closing.
- Parents know that the school has high expectations of their children and believe that adults are ambitious for them. Some believe that these high standards have helped their children to achieve more highly than they thought they could.
- Support for disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs has a significant impact and these pupils are making progress that is line with their peers. Each pupil's achievement and progress are examined by leaders to ensure that they are receiving the best possible support. Numbers are too small to make any meaningful statistical comparisons regarding trends over time. Because of the high level of extra help they receive, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported to make effective transitions as they move through the school.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years leader is effective and has a clear focus on areas for development. She has built a strong team whose members share a common vision. Children are safe and content because their well-being and safety are priorities. All safeguarding procedures are robust, as they are throughout the school.
- Leaders help children to make a smooth transition into Reception by visiting the majority of the 17 feeder Nursery providers. They assess the skills and abilities of children in the first four weeks of school. This information is used to target learning precisely through planned activities to address gaps and help children to make progress across all areas of learning. Predicted outcomes are ambitious for the current group of Reception-aged children.
- Children start in Reception Year with a range of skills and knowledge because the school is growing and a typical intake has not been established. However, children begin school with reading, writing and mathematical skills that are typically below expected levels for children of their age.

- Children are given an excellent start to school and make rapid progress, including those who are eligible for pupil premium funding. In 2015, the achievement of this group of children exceeded that of their peers.
- Teaching is strong because it is highly focused on moving individuals forward in their learning. The school uses performance information to hone in on reasons why children are not progressing and because of this, they are quickly helped to move forward.
- Teachers make learning enjoyable. In one lesson, children noticed something emerging from an egg in their classroom. Children discussed the event enthusiastically, saying, 'Spiders lay eggs. It might be a giant spider'. Another exclaimed, 'No! Spiders don't lay eggs!' The teacher then skilfully engaged the children in finding out the answer using research online. When they found out that spiders lay many eggs, they gasped in wonder and excitement.
- All staff have high expectations of children's achievement to give them the best possible start to their school lives. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is well above the national average, ensuring that they are well prepared to start in Year 1.
- Children are able to work on their own and sustain interest because the range of activities provided for them across the learning areas are engaging. The learning environment is well structured indoors, but does not provide children with experiences that are highly motivating and inspirational to forge a real sense of anticipation in them. The outdoor area in particular needs further development.
- Children enjoy their learning and demonstrate that they can quickly acquire new knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. This is particularly true for phonics and writing, where children are prepared well for transition into Year 1.
- Children happily and articulately communicate with adults who challenge them to think and ask them to talk about what they are learning and doing.
- Children behave well and interact positively with one another. They follow instructions quickly because of strong relationships between adults and children. Children are happy and parents are very positive about their child's experience in early years. School leaders have worked hard to develop a positive rapport with parents and to communicate effectively about the progress their children are making.

School details

Unique reference number	138232
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10009206

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	Future Schools Trust
Chair	Marilyn Hodges
Principal	Charlotte Scott
Telephone number	01622 745166
Website	www.futureschoolstrust.com/Tiger-Primary-School
Email address	tigerprimary@futureschoolstrust.com
Date of previous inspection	18–19 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2012 as a free school. Pupils joined the school into Reception and Year 1 classes.
- The school is now an average-sized primary school. The number on roll has grown by an additional 60 pupils each year and will continue to grow by this number until 2018.
- The school moved into a new building in April 2015 after previously sharing premises with a local secondary academy. The new building is now on the same site and pupils are able to access facilities in the secondary academy, such as the sports hall and dance studio.
- Pupils are taught as whole-year groups in large open areas known as plazas. There is one class in Year 4, and two classes from Reception to Year 3.
- There is a higher proportion of boys than girls at the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by the school is well below average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well below average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and pupils with parents in the armed services.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a range of minority ethnic groups represented in the school. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed all classes. The Principal joined the inspectors to observe two of the lessons.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at their work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils on the playground and while they were in the lunch hall. They met with a group of pupils more formally to gather their views.
- Meetings were held with: the Principal, who is also the safeguarding lead; the Chief Executive Officer of the trust; the special educational needs coordinator; middle leaders; members of staff; three members of the trust's governing body; and four members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors also met with a group of parents. They also considered the views expressed in 85 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and to the 54 comments made by parents in the free-text box, also available online. Inspectors met formally with a group of parents and considered two responses received in writing.
- Responses to the staff questionnaire were also analysed.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents. Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.

Inspection team

Abigail Birch, lead inspector

Judith Askey Brown

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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