

Dunton Green Primary School

London Road, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2UR

Inspection dates

2–3 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not monitored teaching and learning rigorously. As a result, they have an overgenerous view of the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement.
- The progress that pupils make as they move through the year groups is uneven because the quality of teaching, although improving, is not consistently good across the school.
- Not all leaders fully contribute to school improvement.
- The governing body does not provide enough challenge to leaders.
- Pupils who have underachieved in the past are not making the rapid progress they need to in order to catch up.
- Teaching does not sufficiently meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. This slows the progress that pupils make.
- Not all teachers have high expectations of how pupils should present their work. Pupils' handwriting is often not well formed.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is ineffective.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their English and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Behaviour requires improvement because when teaching is less effective, some pupils lose interest and begin to chat.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision in the early years is good. All groups of children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school successfully promotes pupils' good personal development and welfare.
- The staff are highly supportive of the school's leadership and morale is high.
- Parents are appreciative of the welcoming approach of the new headteacher and staff. They value the improvements in communication, the care that their children receive and the extra-curricular opportunities that are now available.
- The school works well to keep pupils safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it leads to improved achievement across the school by ensuring that:
 - tasks are consistently well matched to pupils' abilities so that there is appropriate challenge and support for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the most-able pupils, and pupils with special educational needs or disability
 - teachers check pupils' understanding throughout lessons and make changes where needed
 - pupils practise and develop their mathematical and English skills in other subjects
 - the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is more effective
 - pupils develop good handwriting skills and try harder to present their work with care.

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - improving the rigour of the school's monitoring of teaching so that it is tightly linked to pupils' achievement
 - ensuring that all leaders across the school contribute well to school improvement
 - ensuring that governors are given a sufficient range of information to enable them to challenge school leaders effectively and hold them fully to account.

- An external review of the pupil premium spending should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluations of the school's performance are too generous because the monitoring of teaching lacks rigour. The checks leaders make, for example by watching lessons and looking at pupils' work in books, do not effectively evaluate the impact of teaching on the learning of pupils with different starting points and needs. As a result, the progress of pupils across the school is not consistently good.
- Several leaders, some of whom are new to their role, are not sufficiently involved in evaluating standards and so are not contributing fully to school improvement.
- The headteacher has taken resolute action to tackle inadequate teaching. The procedures for setting targets for teachers are securely linked to salary progression. Training is provided to support improvements in teachers' practice and staff appreciate the support given by senior leaders. Teachers new to the profession receive good support in their first year. As a result, teaching is improving although it is not yet consistently good.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the school. Following a period of high staff turnover, she has secured a committed and dedicated team to make sure the school continues to improve.
- A new, exciting curriculum is becoming embedded. This offers a good breadth of themes that motivate and interest pupils. There are good opportunities to make links across subjects. However, these are not always capitalised on to enable pupils to develop their English and mathematical skills across other subjects.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development well. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on current events, such as the refugee crisis. Assemblies are used well to give pupils reflection time, as well as to emphasise key messages such as the need to keep safe. Pupils have a good understanding of democracy and the rule of law. Pupils vote for their school councillors and the head boy and head girl. They learn about the role of leaders in the country, including those in the House of Lords. They discuss the important qualities evident in heroes. Leaders ensure that a culture of tolerance and respect exists across the school. In these ways, the school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The additional funding received by the school to support disadvantaged pupils is largely spent on providing additional individual and group support. However, the impact of this is not sharply evaluated and disadvantaged pupils do not make the good progress they need to in order to achieve well.
- The funding for primary physical education and the sport premium is used effectively. For example, it funds a wide range of sports clubs which have increased pupils' participation in sport. The list of clubs is impressive, with pupils having opportunities to learn, among other sports, judo, break dancing, tennis and football. The recent success in a local tag-rugby tournament is testament to the improvements made.
- The headteacher has established very positive relationships with parents. Those who responded to the online questionnaire, as well as those spoken to during the inspection, spoke highly of the improvements since the headteacher's appointment. They particularly value how happy their children are at school, the helpful information they are given about school life, the good range of after-school clubs and the welcoming, caring approach of the staff. The inspection found that these aspects are, indeed, key strengths of the school.
- The school works closely with external agencies to protect and promote pupils' emotional well-being, including running projects with a local mental health charity. Regular visits to the school by a nurse provide families with opportunities to talk to a health professional in school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has ensured that arrangements to manage the performance of staff are in place. Governors have ensured that safeguarding is effective. They understand that too many pupils are not reaching the standards expected for their age. They know where teaching is strongest in the school and that rates of pupils' progress are too variable.
 - Governors engage well with parents and staff. They have supported a free taster for parents of Reception children and have hosted 'staff surgeries', where staff can talk to governors about school life.

- Although governors have become more skilled at analysing data, they lack detailed knowledge about how well the school is performing and do not ask the probing questions needed in order to provide effective challenge. For example, they know how the pupil premium funding is spent but have not evaluated its impact.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Appropriate training has taken place and staff are clear about their responsibilities. Appropriate checks are made on new staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Teaching is not good enough to ensure that pupils who fall behind catch up quickly and achieve well.
- Teachers do not make sure that activities are provided that consistently meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Tasks are often too easy for the most-able pupils and this slows their progress. Less able pupils are not supported sufficiently through carefully planned tasks to make sure that they catch up rapidly enough.
- Teachers do not check pupils' understanding throughout the lesson. This means that sometimes the most-able pupils listen to what they already know and misconceptions of other pupils are left unaddressed.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) requires improvement. Too often, teachers do not check pupils' understanding throughout the lesson or do not give pupils clear enough teaching about how the different sounds are made or written. Opportunities during lessons in other subjects to reinforce spellings and phonics are sometimes lost.
- Handwriting is not taught consistently well across the school. As a result, too many pupils do not know how to form letters correctly.
- Teachers have worked hard to make their classrooms bright and welcoming. Displays around the school are up to date and celebrate pupils' work.
- Teachers follow the school's policy on providing pupils with feedback. Pupils understand how the use of the green and pink pens helps their learning. Pupils enjoy giving feedback to their partners and this helps them to identify good aspects of their own work and those that they could improve.
- Where teaching is effective, pupils work hard and want to produce good work. This was observed in a lesson where pupils were motivated to plan their story and used 'word mats' and dictionaries to support their writing. In another, pupils were keen to learn how to describe the movement of shapes, using coordinates.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **requires improvement**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has done a great deal to support pupils' physical and emotional well-being. The importance of keeping healthy is emphasised through a termly newsletter, *Grapevine*, which gives help and advice to parents and children about how to live a healthy lifestyle. The Pets As Therapy programme gives pupils opportunities to learn about how animals can support emotional well-being in people. As one pupil said, 'I like her [the dog] because I can read to her'. Pupils develop self-awareness and self-confidence through, for example, writing poems about themselves and creating self-portraits which are displayed to celebrate the uniqueness of each child.
- While a small minority of pupils who responded to the online questionnaire felt that bullying does not happen in school, a large majority thought that when it does happen, staff are really good at resolving it. School records show that, although rare, bullying is dealt with appropriately.
- Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep safe, for example when using technology. Themed weeks, such as the recent 'e-safety' week help to promote this understanding.
- The breakfast club provides a safe, calm environment where pupils can enjoy playing and chatting to their friends before school starts.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because there are too many occasions in lessons when pupils lose interest in their learning and then disrupt the learning of others. Pupils do not consistently present their work with care.
- Pupils usually behave well around the school. They are polite to adults.
- Attendance rates are good.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Lesson observations, the school's own data and pupils' books show that a significant proportion of pupils currently in the school are working at a lower level than that expected for their age, especially in writing. They are not catching up quickly enough because teaching is not consistently good. This is particularly the case for the current Year 3 pupils, whose attainment at the end of Year 2 was significantly below the national average.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is not consistently good. This is because, too often, they are not given activities that challenge them to think and work hard.
- In 2015, the proportions of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 who made expected or more than expected progress in writing and mathematics were below the national averages. The inspection found that disadvantaged pupils currently in school do not make good progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability do not make good progress.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has varied considerably from year to year. It improved in 2015, but remained below the national average.
- In 2015, the proportions of Year 6 pupils who reached the expected standard in the national assessments for reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling were similar to the national averages and slightly lower in mathematics. As a result, pupils were adequately prepared for their secondary school.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children start Reception with levels of skills that are broadly typical of those expected for their age. Provision in the early years is better than elsewhere in the school because teaching is stronger. As a result of the good teaching, all groups of children in the early years make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Good links are made with local Nursery schools and all parents are offered a home visit. These, together with clear routines and good relationships, help children to feel secure so that they settle quickly. Frequent communication through the 'parent communication book' helps parents to support their children's learning at home and encourages strong links between home and school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are given a high priority so that children are safe and happy.
- Adults are caring. They know the children very well. They give good support to individuals but encourage children to be independent where possible. Adults plan lessons, both inside and outside, which are fun and which interest and excite the children. Adults use questioning and prompting well to support children's learning, for example, when using coins to count to 20.
- Children behave well and make good progress in developing social skills. They learn to share and take turns, for example when 'shopping' in the role-play area.
- Basic skills are usually taught well. However, opportunities are occasionally lost for children to develop a good understanding of phonics when adults do not encourage them to 'sound out' words when trying to write them.
- Accurate assessments are made of children's learning and recorded thoroughly in children's learning journeys. Notes describe each child's learning and identify their next steps. Any additional funding is used well to support children who need extra help.
- Leadership of the early years provision is good. The early years leader is new to her role but has already improved the provision since her arrival following the previous inspection. She is committed to improving the provision still further.

School details

Unique reference number	118272
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10002359

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Cotman
Headteacher	Laura Masson
Telephone number	01732 462221
Website	www.dunton-green.kent.sch.uk
Email address	office@dunton-green.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- The children in the Reception Year attend full time.
- There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2014. The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2015. All teachers, except for two, joined the school after the last inspection.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children, is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is slightly below that found nationally.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 18 lessons across all classes. Six of these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Pupils' books were scrutinised, sometimes alongside the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and their views about the school. Pupils were heard reading and an inspector attended a school assembly. Pupils were observed at playtime and during lunch.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, several governors and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors took account of 65 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and met with parents at the start of the school day. The inspectors took account of the 13 responses from the staff survey and 16 responses from the pupil survey. The school's own surveys of the views of pupils, parents and staff were also taken into account.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school's checks on the quality of teaching, the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, the school development plan, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- A review of safeguarding records and procedures was also carried out.

Inspection team

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