

Dame Janet Primary Academy

Newington Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6QY

Inspection dates	21–22 June 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 made improvements consistently or quickly enough since the previous inspection.
- Leaders’ checks on pupils’ progress do not take enough account of their different starting points to be certain that pupils are doing as well as they could.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that current pupils are catching up quickly with others nationally. Some teachers do not build strongly on what pupils already know and can do, including the most able.
- The impact of teaching assistants on pupils’ learning is too variable.
- Not enough pupils make the rapid progress needed to achieve well.
- In some classes, too often a small minority of pupils stop listening or working. As a result, they do not learn as well as they could and sometimes disrupt others.
- Pupils do not attend regularly enough.
- Although improving, not enough pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Over time, the governing body has not challenged leaders robustly to secure a quicker rate of improvement. It has not checked rigorously whether its use of additional government funding for sports and disadvantaged pupils has worked.

The school has the following strengths

- A restructure of leadership by the trust and governing body has begun to accelerate the pace of improvement since January.
- The early years provision is good. From often low starting points, more children are catching up with age-appropriate levels by the start of Year 1.
- Leaders and staff promote pupils’ personal development and welfare well. Pupils feel safe.
- Steady improvements in teaching since the previous inspection have meant that pupils typically make at least adequate progress.
- Where teaching is better, pupils are starting to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- There are clear signs that many pupils have better attitudes to learning than they had in the past. They particularly like the variety of experiences learning in school offers them and say that learning is fun.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good or better teaching and outcomes across subjects by:
 - building on what pupils already know and can do more quickly, including the most able
 - ensuring teachers' questioning more consistently matches the best
 - keeping pupils consistently interested and engaged in their learning
 - making more effective use of teaching assistants to promote accelerated progress.
- Lift expectations at all levels to ensure that the proportion of pupils across the school that are well prepared for the next stage of their learning rapidly catches up to or exceeds national averages.
- Make better use of accurate assessments to track pupils' progress from their different starting points, for example at the beginning of each key stage, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Urgently implement plans to further improve phonics teaching to bring screening check results at least in line with the national average and ensure that pupils use these skills to read and write well.
- Ensure all leaders focus sharply and uncompromisingly on the impact of teaching on the progress of different groups of pupils when checking its quality.
- Lift pupils' overall attendance and reduce the proportion that are frequently absent so that they are at least in line with the national averages.
- Check thoroughly the impact of how additional funding is spent, including the sport and pupil premium.
- Ensure that the governing body holds leaders firmly to account for accelerating the pace of improvement required for the school to be judged good at its next inspection.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding 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

- Improvements since the previous inspection have not been consistent and quick enough to have secured a typically good quality of education for pupils. School leaders have sometimes been too satisfied with small improvements compared with the performance of other schools nationally.
- Having identified that the pace of improvement was too slow, the trust and governing body took decisive action to restructure the senior leadership under a single headteacher. There is evidence that the pace of improvement has accelerated since January this year when the new arrangement took effect. However, there is still more to do to secure consistently good teaching and outcomes for all pupils.
- Leaders' views about the quality of some current teaching are too optimistic. When determining its quality, they do not place enough emphasis on whether teaching enables different groups of pupils to make enough progress, such as the most or least able.
- Governors' and leaders' checks about how well disadvantaged pupils are doing lack rigour. Leaders are too reliant on comparing the performance of disadvantaged pupils against other pupils in school rather than other pupils nationally. This gives them a falsely positive picture.
- Leaders do not track the progress of different groups of pupils back far enough to be sure how well they are doing over time. However, their analysis shows that overall, in the current year, pupils are making at least adequate and sometimes significantly better progress.
- Support and challenge from the trust and its consultants has been useful in helping to steer leaders in the right direction. The advice given has contributed well to school leaders' improvements in the early years provision, for example. More recently, the trust has rightly increased the rigour with which it monitors the school's performance.
- Everyone that expressed a view to inspectors believed that the move to a single headteacher was a positive one. Staff report that senior leaders now give the same, consistent messages about important decisions and the direction of travel to improve the school. As one member of staff put it, 'It feels the school is finally one academy and one staff.'
- This is a friendly, welcoming school, where everyone goes out of their way to help visitors.
- The school improvement committee formed this year has meant that leaders at different levels feel that their contribution is valued and that they can make a difference. Leaders responsible for particular age groups (phases) have benefited from leadership training and know that they have senior leaders' support for holding teachers in their phases to account. Although they are unswerving in their commitment to make a difference in their phases, this has not had time to secure and sustain enough consistently good or better teaching.
- Strong and passionate leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that pupils typically get the right support.
- Leaders make regular and detailed checks on the quality of teaching. They provide teachers with accurate and helpful feedback and the quality of teaching has steadily improved over time. Leaders make sure that they consistently reinforce key messages about whole-school improvement through the next steps that they set for teachers to develop their practice. Teachers new to the profession feel well supported.
- Leaders are passionately committed to giving pupils a wide range of real-life and enriching experiences. Most pupils think that learning is fun and they like the imaginative topics they help their teachers to create, such as 'time travel'. They especially enjoy the practical elements, such as the chance to make iron coins or a Roman shield. Younger pupils were excited about going on their woodland walk as part of their 'habitats' project.
- Trips further afield to places such as Dover Castle significantly broaden pupils' sometimes limited life experiences. During the inspection, a group of most-able pupils were attending a Shakespeare event, extending their cultural experiences. The rich variety of experiences contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and helps equip them with the values, skills and qualities needed to live successfully in modern Britain.
- Recognising that many pupils lacked confidence in water, despite living in a coastal town, leaders have wisely used additional sports funding to give more pupils more access to swimming lessons. Anecdotally, this has made a big difference. However, leaders and governors have not formally measured or evaluated the impact of this spending decision.

■ The governance of the school

- The governing body has not rigorously held leaders to account for securing a faster rate of improvement since the previous inspection. Governors have accepted leaders' claims that the school is now good, despite having some misgivings that available performance information does not fully support this view.
- That said, governance has improved. Governors routinely ask leaders challenging and sometimes searching questions about how well the school is improving. However, at times they accept leaders' assertions too readily, without hard evidence about pupils' performance to back it up.
- Individual governors bring a considerable and varied range of skills to the governing body, including financial, school and wider education experience. This vital contribution is helping to lift the quality of the governing body's work.
- The governing body has wisely carried out a detailed and self-critical review of its own effectiveness. Through this process, governors have identified a number of key areas to improve. Rightly, one of these is to carry out a thorough and rigorous evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding, for example to increase adult to pupil ratios.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Systems for making the appropriate checks on all adults are rigorous and efficient. Staff are very clear about what to look out for and what to do if they have any concerns. They seek guidance readily, including from other agencies and professionals, not leaving it to chance if they have any worries. Leaders keep procedures under review and learn from how well systems work when tested, taking prompt and effective action to tighten them where necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable to ensure that enough pupils are catching up quickly enough with other pupils nationally.
- Teaching does not build consistently well on what pupils already know and can do, including for most-able pupils. While teachers take care to recap and make links with previous learning, some teachers do not challenge pupils to make better progress by moving on to new learning more quickly.
- The generous allocation of teaching assistants does not consistently enhance pupils' learning. At times, this is because the support itself is not the most appropriate. At other times, it is because teachers do not make best use of the support available.
- Adults' questioning skills are not consistently well developed. Too often, questions only demand a single-word answer. At other times, questioning does not challenge pupils to think hard enough, especially most-able pupils, or is not skilful enough to really check pupils' understanding.
- Where questioning is particularly strong, teachers and teaching assistants use a range of skills and techniques for different purposes. This often relates to strong subject knowledge, for example focusing on the technical aspects of writing or asking pupils to explain their mathematical thinking. At other times adults skilfully ask the right questions to systematically check pupils' understanding, identifying and addressing important misconceptions.
- Learning environments and classrooms are mostly tidy, well organised and positive places to be. Pupils make use of a range of helpful visual prompts that also support those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are proud of their attractively displayed work and achievements.
- In some classes, teaching assistants are very well deployed and alert to where they can make a difference. For example, they may pick up that a pupil has not understood or has a misconception, and intervene to tackle it. They also provide additional visual or practical guidance to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to help them solve a challenge or problem.
- Pupils report that adults help them well when they are stuck. Teachers are also alert to pupils that have been absent, making sure that they have the extra support they need to cover what they have missed.
- Pupils understand the marking and feedback system, which is applied consistently across the school. There are good examples of where pupils have used this advice and guidance well, helping them to move on in their learning or deepen their understanding.

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 attitudes to learning of the vast majority of pupils have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are motivated by the rich topics, activities and variety of learning experiences. Pupils and parents particularly commented that learning at Dame Janet is 'fun'. This contributes well to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as the better progress they are making academically than they have in the past.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' well-being through both systems and staffing, including the very recent appointment of a well-being manager. The work of behaviour mentors has helped to reduce the number and severity of behaviour incidents. There is a strong focus on supporting pupils' social and emotional needs, with systems in place to assess these precisely so that pupils receive the right support.
- Pupils feel safe and learn about ways to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, they understand the risks they may face when using the internet and how they can avoid them.
- Pupils report that they mostly get on well together. Observations during the inspection confirmed this view. Pupils are confident that if they are worried about anything, they know an adult in school that they can tell and something will be done. They like the better experiences they have now when playing outside because there is a lot for them to do, such as football, skipping and the activity trail.
- The vast majority of parents and pupils think that adults deal with any infrequent issues of bullying well. School records and the range of inspection evidence reflect this view that leaders deal with bullying effectively. A minority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, did not agree, although the much larger sample that responded to the school's own survey expressed more positive views.
- A large number of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make use of the school's breakfast club. This gives pupils a positive and enjoyable start to the day and a healthy breakfast. As a result, pupils who attend are punctual and prepared to start learning when lessons start.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When pupils are not sufficiently interested or challenged in lessons, they stop working or concentrating and make less progress. At times, this also disrupts the learning of others in the classroom. Although overall attitudes to learning have improved, the low-level distracting behaviour of a minority of pupils persists too often.
- Pupils' levels of attendance are below the national average. Current figures show a steady improvement as a result of robust action, including working with other schools locally to purchase specialist support. Staff track pupils' individual attendance carefully. They try to work closely with parents, anticipating and reacting quickly in an effort to prevent absence issues before they become too serious.
- Where teaching is stronger, the behaviour of pupils in lessons is typically good.
- Some pupils demonstrate particularly positive collaborative behaviour which supports their learning well. For example, a useful mathematical discussion between two girls when tackling a problem together helped them to get the decimal point in the right place. In another class, a pupil was observed using the 'working wall' to explain the properties of shape to another child.
- Staff work hard and successfully to support pupils who present particularly challenging behaviour. Personalised behaviour plans tackle the areas that are most pertinent for each individual and lead to improvements over time.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Not enough pupils sustain the accelerated progress needed to catch up with other pupils nationally or do as well as they could. As a result, fewer pupils than seen nationally are well prepared for the next stage of education.
- In some classes, the quality of work and learning in pupils' books is too variable across a range of subjects. A strong focus on opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills such as writing in other

subjects is paying off, but learning in other subjects such as science or geography is sometimes too sporadic.

- Gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils in school and other pupils nationally are not closing consistently or quickly enough.
- The most able pupils make similar progress to their peers. The proportions that exceed age-related expectations by the end of each key stage remain below the national average.
- Pupils scored better in the Year 1 phonics screening check this year, but overall the proportion that met the expected standard was still lower than last year's national figures. Last year, the number of pupils that had reached the expected standard by the end of Year 2 matched the national average, but this has dropped again with current pupils. Leaders have plans in place to change the approach to teaching phonics next year. While the existing approach has brought improvements over the last three years, it has not lifted standards as high as leaders want.
- The pitch and expectation in mathematics is mostly appropriate for pupils' ages. However, as a result of previously weaker teaching, older pupils still have gaps in their learning, such as rapid mental calculation skills and knowledge of times tables.
- Whereas in the past pupils' progress has sometimes been slow, overall pupils typically now make at least adequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In writing in particular, current pupils are making better progress than recent leavers did. For example, in Year 2, pupils use the techniques that they learn to make their writing more interesting in subsequent work, such as the occasional use of very short sentences. In some classes, especially further up the school, pupils are given a rich range of opportunities for writing in a variety of subjects.
- Pupils' English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are improving in key stage 2 as a result of a strong focus on these areas.
- Where teaching is stronger, pupils are catching up more quickly. Current Year 6 work shows plentiful examples of age-appropriate skills in pupils' writing. The writing of most-able pupils is more sophisticated, employing some adventurous vocabulary in some accurate and complex sentences.
- The proportions of pupils that make expected progress in reading have compared favourably with national figures over time. Younger pupils often use their phonics skills more successfully to read than they do to spell. In some guided reading sessions, probing questions make pupils think about things such as the purpose of the texts they read or who the intended audience is.
- The work in the books of disadvantaged pupils reflects mostly positive attitudes to learning and similar progress to their peers in school.
- Accurate assessment of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities means that any support provided is personalised to meet their needs. Strong leadership of this provision and training for staff contribute well to steadily rising trends in outcomes for these pupils. They typically make at least similar progress compared with their peers and sometimes better.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, who often arrive during the course of the year or key stage, mostly settle quickly. Effective support helps them start to catch up with others in school.

Early years provision

is good

- The effective early years provision gets children off to a good start. From starting points that for many are considerably below those expected for their age, the proportion that have closed this gap by the time they start Year 1 is rising.
- In the Nursery, skilled and passionate staff make learning engaging and fun. Children take part confidently and enthusiastically in the good range of activities provided. They are keen to share and explain what they have been doing, such as making birds' nests or birthday cakes from pasta shells.
- The Reception Year builds on this positive start well. Both the children who join in Reception and those who have been through the Nursery make good and sometimes better progress.
- As in the rest of the school, the use of pupil premium funding has helped increase levels of available adult support. Adults across the early years provision know each individual child very well. Their positive interactions with children focus strongly on promoting good language development, but also reinforce other areas of learning such as shape or number.
- Children make good progress towards securing the range of knowledge and skills needed at the end of early years to be successful when faced with the Year 1 curriculum (a good level of development). The

proportion of boys reaching a good level of development rose markedly in 2015 from a very low baseline. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils doing the same has shown a steadily improving trend so the gap with the national average is closing slowly.

- The most able children are stretched beyond the early learning goals once they have met them. For example, adults' questioning prompts them to solve problems or extend their vocabulary.
- Children's social skills develop well. Their busy, enthusiastic and cooperative behaviour indicates that they feel safe and secure.
- The spacious outdoor environment provides well for children's physical development and learning about the world around them, for example through growing and caring for plants.
- Good care is taken not to reinforce gender stereotypes. A boy and a girl played together happily in the role-play florist, making the most of the opportunities to write signs for the flowers for sale or give each other change from the till. One boy explained carefully how the real flowers included in the shop needed to be handled more gently than the plastic ones. Another two boys made flowers out of Lego, explaining that they were so tall because they were supposed to represent sunflowers.
- Previously, pupils' progress in writing from very low starting points has been a key factor in more children not reaching a good level of development. There are plentiful opportunities now, particularly indoors, for children to engage in writing activities. Children often select these activities for themselves, but are successfully encouraged or guided by an adult where necessary.
- Consistent, effective phonics teaching by well-trained staff has contributed effectively to rising standards. Adults model sounds accurately. Accurate assessment of children's skills means that sessions meet their needs effectively. Reception children also get into good learning habits in these slightly more formal sessions which is important preparation for Year 1.
- Staff identify early the particular needs of children who speak English as an additional language or who might have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use this to plan carefully how to meet their needs and decide what extra support they need either individually or in small groups. Leaders seek advice from other professionals such as the speech and language therapy team where necessary and act on their guidance accordingly.
- Parents that spoke with inspectors rightly were very happy with the start that their children are making. As one parent commented on Parent View: '... he is coming on leaps and bounds since he has been there.'
- Although the majority of children reach a good level of development, the overall proportion remains below the national average. Consequently, a significant minority of pupils have not developed the full range of knowledge and skills to prepare them thoroughly for Year 1. Leaders have correctly identified that there is potential to provide a greater variety of learning opportunities outdoors.

School details

Unique reference number	138972
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10009199

This inspection 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	609
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Gardner
Headteacher	Sam Atkinson
Telephone number	01843 591807
Website	www.damejanet-tkat.org
Email address	office@djpa-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	25–26 February 2014

Information about this school

- This school has more than twice the number of pupils on roll than the average-sized primary school.
- Over half of all pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care. The proportion at this school is much higher than in most other schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion that speaks English as an additional language is low but rising.
- The proportion of pupils identified who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive support from the school is much higher than average, accounting for more than one out of every five pupils. The proportion that has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly average.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2015, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school offers a breakfast club.
- In January 2016, the previous arrangement with two joint headteachers came to an end and the senior leadership team was restructured under a single headteacher. There is also a deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to all classes to gather a range of evidence about what teaching and learning is typically like. They observed what was happening at the time, but also paid particular attention to pupils' previous work in their books and on display and discussions with pupils about their learning.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with pupils, staff, leaders, governors and representatives from the academy trust.
- The team took account of 32 responses to the online survey Parent View. They considered all of the written comments made alongside other inspection evidence, looked at the school's own wider surveys of parents' views and spoke informally with a small number of parents.
- No pupils or staff completed an inspection questionnaire, but inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils and staff during the inspection and took account of the school's own recent surveys.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school throughout the day and sampled a range of documentation, including records of safeguarding checks and leaders' own evaluations of the school's performance.

Inspection team

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Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector
Joanne Garlick	Ofsted Inspector
Anthony Linnett	Ofsted Inspector

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