

Wrotham Road Primary School

Wrotham Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0QF

Inspection dates	6–7 July 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

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors provide strong leadership for the school. As a result of their work, significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection.
- Teaching and learning have improved and are now good. Overall, pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is broadly in line with national expectations.
- Gaps between the achievements of different groups are beginning to narrow. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as others by the end of Year 6.
- Children get a good start to school in the early years. Their behaviour is outstanding. Children make good progress, develop confidence and independence and are ready to make a positive start to their learning in Year 1.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. They have good, trusting relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, in the playgrounds and around the school. They are polite and friendly and show respect towards each other and adults.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are well looked after. Pupils' well-being has a high priority and staff often 'go the extra mile' to support pupils and their families who may be vulnerable.
- Parents are supportive of the school. Inspectors agree with a parent who reflected the views of several with the comment: 'The school has made significant progress in the last couple of years. The teaching and leadership is really positive, with our children making good progress in each year.'
- There is a shared ambition and determination to build on the improvements already made.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching and learning is not yet outstanding. This means that not enough pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable. They are not always challenged sufficiently, particularly the most able pupils.
- Although improving, boys' achievement in writing lags behind that of girls.
- Pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics are not yet good enough.
- When senior and middle leaders check the quality of teaching and learning, they do not always systematically challenge the few remaining inconsistencies to help lift pupils' achievement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning to outstanding, so that more pupils make better than expected progress by:
 - ensuring that boys' achievement in writing improves further to narrow the gap between their achievement and that of girls
 - providing pupils, especially the most able, with more challenge in their learning to encourage a deeper level of skill, knowledge and understanding
 - improving pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that monitoring by senior and middle leaders systematically challenges the quality of teaching and learning to eradicate inconsistencies and lift pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides strong and motivating leadership for the school. The senior leadership team has brought about significant improvements since the previous inspection. As a result, teaching and learning and pupils' achievement are now good.
 - Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for their school and have high expectations for all. The headteacher has gained the confidence of staff. Morale is high. Staff share leaders' determination for further improvement and for providing the best possible learning opportunities for pupils.
 - Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's performance. There are clear plans in place to ensure that the school continues to improve. The school improvement plan drives forward the work of the school and staff training links clearly to actions identified for further development. Leaders take into account a range of activities to evaluate the school's effectiveness, including regular meetings with teachers to look at progress, scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and frequent informal walks around the school. They provide verbal and written feedback to teachers and support those who need additional help to improve their skills. However, they do not always challenge the few remaining inconsistencies in teaching to help lift pupils' achievement. Teachers who are at the beginning of their career are supported well.
 - Governors and the headteacher have increased the leadership capacity at the senior level, which has helped to forge the improvements made since the previous inspection. The role of subject leaders in English, mathematics and science has been enhanced. These leaders have benefited from additional training and working with other schools. As a result, they have developed effective leadership skills and subject knowledge.
 - The curriculum is well planned with a suitable emphasis on English and mathematics. Topics engage pupils' interest, spark their enthusiasm and link learning across different subjects. A range of clubs, special events and educational visits enrich the curriculum. These activities enhance pupils' learning and help them to learn new skills. They make a significant contribution to their personal as well as their academic development. Year 6 pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about their recent residential trip to a centre promoting outdoor learning and adventurous activities. They said they learned many new skills and also how to work well together as part of a team.
 - There is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils appreciate and value differences. Tolerance and respect are fostered successfully through the school's values and the subjects taught. The school encourages pupils' understanding of fundamental British values effectively so that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
 - Pupils have a strong sense of community and understand the need for rules within the school and the wider community. Staff are committed to equal opportunities, which is shown in senior leaders' work to continue to narrow the achievement gaps between different groups. They ensure that pupils learn without fear of discrimination of any kind.
 - The school works productively in partnership with other schools to share good practice. It helps to ensure that there are high expectations for pupils and to verify that senior leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievements are accurate.
 - The local authority has provided effective support for the school, although there has been a lack of continuity in the advisers who have worked with it. The current adviser recognises the improvements made at the school and that it is now good.
 - The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively for disadvantaged pupils. Since the previous inspection, there has been an external review of how the additional funding is spent and the difference it is making for these pupils. Leaders acted swiftly on its recommendations. The funding is used to provide a wide range of additional academic, social and emotional support, as appropriate to the needs of the pupils. In addition, the funding helps to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are included in the full life of the school.
 - The school makes good use of the primary physical education and sport funding. It is used to provide additional opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of activities, including competitive sports. A specialist coach enhances the skills of pupils and teachers, and therefore, improves outcomes for pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
- The governing body shares the ambitions and aspirations of the headteacher and senior leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve.
 - Governors provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to leaders and hold them to

account effectively for the school's performance. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses as they are well informed by the headteacher and other leaders. Their own monitoring visits are linked to school improvement priorities.

- Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. They oversee the performance management process and ensure that only good teaching is rewarded. They fully support the headteacher in expecting nothing less than good or better teaching, and in the actions that have been taken to tackle underperformance.
- Governors are knowledgeable about pupils' performance information. This enables them to understand the performance of different groups in the school and ask searching questions.
- The governing body understands how additional funding is spent and asks questions to ensure that it is making a difference for pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are very effective. Senior leaders ensure that all necessary training for staff is completed and that all staff know the procedures to follow if they have any safeguarding concerns. The procedures and policies relating to safeguarding are well established and kept up to date to ensure that pupils are kept safe. The assistant headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead, keeps detailed, timely and clear records of any issues that arise. She is persistent and resolute in making contact with appropriate external support agencies to ensure that pupils are protected from harm.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. As a result, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and are also good.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and, consequently, pupils work hard, are willing to take risks and want to do well. Pupils are confident to ask if they do not understand, as they know staff will help them. Pupils persevere and show determination to succeed. Year 6 pupils who were involved in a special day of problem-solving activities during the inspection said, 'It's fun, it's hard but we like the challenge and keep on going until we crack it.'
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in a culture of mutual support and strong teamwork. Teaching assistants generally provide effective support for pupils' learning. Sometimes they work with the most able pupils, but mostly support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are new to learning English. This helps all groups to make good progress.
- Teachers question pupils well to check how much pupils have learned, encourage pupils to think and deepen their understanding. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to challenge and probe pupils' thinking more deeply, particularly, but not exclusively, for the most able pupils. As a result, although progress is good overall, pupils do not always make the more rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers are aware of the gap between boys' and girls' achievements in writing and plan activities to motivate boys without losing the interest of girls. Although a gap remains, it is narrowing. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to discuss their ideas in preparation for writing and pupils work together well. Year 6 pupils, for example, were enthusiastic about their work in small groups to research and plan a story for an audience of Year 1 pupils. Having a clear sense of purpose and audience for their writing motivated all pupils, and boys in particular. Pupils made good progress in meeting the learning objectives in writing. Pupils in Year 3 were very keen to engage in a story writing session. All groups were effectively supported to make progress. Boys in particular appreciated the opportunity to write imaginatively and creatively and said that their teacher really helped them to enjoy writing.
- Teachers promote an interest and enjoyment of books as soon as children join the school. They ensure that pupils are introduced to a range of quality texts and authors. Phonics teaching has strengthened, which has led to improvements in pupils' outcomes in phonics. As a result, more pupils than the national average reach the standard expected in phonics by the end of Year 1.
- Senior leaders are correctly aware that despite improvements in mathematics outcomes, more work needs to be done. This is to ensure that the quality and range of opportunities to promote pupils' depth of learning and reasoning skills are consistently high across all classes.
- Teachers plan activities that generally motivate and engage pupils, and increasingly link learning across different subjects as part of topic work. Pupils enjoy the practical activities, as observed during the inspection when Year 5 pupils were engaged in a science day.
- Teachers make effective use of the assessment system and have regular meetings with senior leaders to discuss the progress of individual pupils and groups. This helps teachers to plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils. Although there are still some gaps in the achievement of different groups, they are

narrowing. Pupils who speak English as an additional language in particular achieve as well as others by the end of Year 6. A higher proportion of pupils who are learning English make expected progress than those who speak English as their first language.

- Most teachers consistently implement the school's policy for marking and feedback, particularly in pupils' 'Big Writing' books. Pupils say that teachers' comments help them know how to improve their work.
- Senior leaders are fully aware of strengths in teaching and learning where pupils are making better than expected progress to raise their attainment. They know that sometimes there are too few demands made of some pupils to promote a greater depth of learning, knowledge and understanding. Therefore, some pupils do not make the accelerated progress of which they are capable to lift their attainment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are happy to talk about their school and their learning. They enjoy school, say teachers usually make learning fun and help them if they do not understand.
- Pupils are caring and considerate of others and respectful of adults and each other. They say they are proud to have friends who speak a range of different languages. A group of pupils agreed with one who said that, 'It's good that we have friends who are different from us. We can learn lots from each other.'
- Pupils participate in a number of fundraising events for charities of their choice. Consequently they are aware of, and show respect for, those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given and take them seriously, such as being members of the school council, eco warriors and house captains. They said they would like to do more. Pupils know that their views and opinions are listened to and valued.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are reassured by the fact that any visitor has to be signed in at the office and that the site is secure. Pupils know how to stay safe in a range of situations in and out of school and when using the internet and social media. All staff are confident that pupils are safe in school and most parents agree that their children feel safe in school. One parent wrote, 'I feel that Wrotham Road provides a safe, nurturing environment for my child.' The atmosphere and ethos of the school is calm, which helps to foster a sense of well-being and care.
- Pupils say bullying is rare. They understand that bullying can take different forms and are confident that if any issues should arise they can turn to staff who will help them.
- Staff often 'go the extra mile' to ensure that the welfare, social and emotional needs of pupils are met. An assistant headteacher is the leader for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the leader for safeguarding. She works closely and very effectively with the family liaison officer and the learning mentor to support the welfare, emotional, social and medical needs of pupils and families. This helps to reduce barriers to learning. Members of staff speak many of the languages that children or their families speak at home, which helps communication and in building partnerships.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast and after-school clubs receive a sociable, safe and healthy start or end to the school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are courteous and polite. Inspectors were impressed with pupils' good manners and how they helped the inspectors find their way around the school.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in the playgrounds, at lunchtimes and around the school. They are effectively supported by adults to solve any minor disagreements for themselves.
- Most teachers have high expectations for behaviour and adherence to school routines, and pupils respond well to praise and teachers' reinforcement of positive behaviour. Pupils are usually attentive and respond promptly to teachers' instructions. On occasion, when pupils are not fully engaged in learning or not given sufficient challenge, they are less attentive and do not listen as well as they should.
- School records show that behaviour is good over time and that a few pupils with specific behavioural difficulties are supported well and their behaviour improves as a result.
- Most parents agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. Staff work effectively with parents and outside agencies to encourage pupils' regular attendance. Pupils are keen to be awarded certificates to acknowledge good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Leaders have relentlessly tackled previous underachievement and this has led to better outcomes and progress for all pupils. The school's own performance information and work seen in pupils' books show that a large proportion of pupils currently in the school are on track to attain at least age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement in English is stronger than it is in mathematics. Overall, pupils throughout the school are making good progress in their learning from their different starting points.
- In 2015, attainment by the end of Year 6 was broadly in line with the national average and pupils made expected progress. Attainment was a little stronger in reading and writing than it was in mathematics. This was a considerable improvement on the previous year where attainment was significantly below average.
- In 2015, attainment by the end of Year 2 dipped from the previous year and was below the national average. The proportion achieving the expected level was close to the national figure. However, too few pupils reached the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This is mainly attributed to staffing difficulties in Year 2 and the particular needs of the year group. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils currently in Year 3 have received additional support where appropriate to catch up with any gaps in their learning.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2015, the proportion of the most able pupils who reached the higher level in reading and writing was broadly average. In mathematics, while the proportion reaching the higher level 5 was below average, the proportion reaching the highest level 6 was above average. This was a result of specific intervention during the year. The most able pupils currently in the school are generally challenged to achieve well. Sometimes, pupils are not challenged well enough to make the better than expected progress of which they are capable and to develop a greater depth of learning, knowledge and understanding.
- Over the past three years there has been a rising trend in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check (linking sounds and letters). This is now above average for pupils in the current Year 1 classes. Younger pupils who read to inspectors could confidently use their phonic skills to work out unfamiliar words. Older pupils' reading is fluent and comprehension is appropriate to their age. Pupils enjoy reading and could talk with confidence about their favourite authors and styles of writing.
- All groups, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to others in the school. This means that it has improved and is good overall across almost all classes.
- In 2015, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, other pupils nationally and others in the school narrowed. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is, as with other pupils, a little uneven across classes and subjects. Not all disadvantaged pupils are making the rapid progress they are capable of.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making similar progress to others. Progress is uneven across the school but improving as a result of strong leadership and good provision that meets pupils' needs well.

Early years provision

is good

- Children often start in the Nursery with skills well below those typical for their age, especially in their communication and language and literacy skills, because many are new to learning English. The children who transfer from the Nursery to the Reception classes have made good progress, although their communication and language skills remain below those typical for their age. There are strengths in their personal, social and emotional development.
- In 2015, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was below that found nationally and had dipped from the previous year. There were considerable gaps between the achievement of boys and girls in reading and writing, with girls doing much better than boys. Children currently in the early years make good progress from their starting points. There is a strong, well-trained team of staff. They are determined to provide the best learning experiences for the children and, as a consequence, children are able to make a positive start to their learning in Year 1. One parent wrote: 'My child has settled extremely well during her first academic year at the school. Her learning and development since starting Reception have been really positive.'

- Teachers plan learning that interests children. Children develop good number and early reading skills. Gaps remain between boys and girls, particularly in writing, but they are closing. Children are given a good grounding in phonics. There is a determined and successful focus on children's writing, phonics and reading skills and children have made good progress in these areas.
- Children in the Reception classes, for example, were extremely enthusiastic to write about their story of the moment, 'Rosie's Walk', and enjoyed making their own books. They have lots of opportunities to write, either guided by staff or for their own reasons, for example, writing letters to each other or to their parents.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding and they learn to share and cooperate with each other exceptionally well. In the Nursery, one child went to help another carry a crate during tidy-up time without any prompting from adults saying, 'That's heavy, I'll help.' Clear routines are established and children respond quickly and quietly to instructions. Children develop confidence and listen well to adults and each other. One parent commented: 'My child is in a Reception class and enjoys school very much. The teachers and other support staff have been amazing as they have helped my child grow in confidence over the past year.'
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Activities capture the interest and imagination of the children, so they quickly develop very good attitudes to learning. They are proud of their achievements. In a Reception class, a boy was really excited to share his learning. Children had been using scales and weighing various objects. He said: 'Come and see what I know. Look, if I put this in here, this side will go down because this (object) is heavier than that (object). I learned that today.' Children chose the work they are most proud of to go in their learning journey books. All staff in the early years play a part in assessing children's achievements and planning the next steps in learning. They use technology effectively, using tablets to record their assessments, which can be shared with all staff.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide good levels of challenge. They ask questions to encourage children to think and explain their answers. This helps to deepen their knowledge and understanding as well as extending their speaking and vocabulary. Children are familiar with and use mathematical language accurately, such as 'heavy' and 'light', 'scale' and 'balanced'. Children have lots of opportunities to talk to each other to share their opinions.
- Adults know the children very well and relationships are very positive and trusting. Adults are good role models for children and encourage good manners, friendly attitudes and respect for all. Children learn to be independent and make their own choices, for example, selecting resources they would like to use.
- Some children join the Reception classes from the Nursery and others come from a wide range of settings. There are good procedures to get to know the children and their families before they start, to ensure that the transition is smooth for all children, and ongoing good relationships with parents.
- Parents are positive about their children's experiences in the early years. One parent wrote: 'I am looking forward to my son making the transition from Nursery into Reception in September. He has been learning a lot in the Nursery and enjoys it very much. With lots of encouragement from Nursery staff, he now has the confidence to ride a bike.'
- The outdoor areas provide a good range of opportunities in all areas of learning. However, they are not used as frequently as they might be, particularly to provide rich and varied opportunities for reading and writing.
- Children learn and play in safe and secure environments. They are happy and well looked after. All the safeguarding and welfare requirements appropriate to these age groups are met. All the necessary actions are taken to support any child whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Additional funding is used effectively to narrow the gaps between disadvantaged children and others.
- The early years is led very effectively and the leader is part of the school's senior leadership team. She ensures that all early years staff have appropriate training and are held to account for the children's achievements.

School details

Unique reference number	118577
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10012229

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Walker
Headteacher	Sarah Green
Telephone number	01474 534540
Website	www.wrotham-road.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@wrotham-road.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 April 2014

Information about this school

- Wrotham Road is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than the national figure. Just under one third of the pupils are of White British heritage and a similar proportion are from Indian backgrounds. There are smaller numbers from a wide range of ethnic groups. The largest of these are pupils from other White backgrounds.
- Over half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- Children in the two Reception classes attend full time. Children in the Nursery class attend for a morning or afternoon session. There are two classes in all other year groups.
- 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 meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school provides a daily breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons, many of which were joint observations with the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at work in pupils' books. They observed pupils at break and lunchtime and asked them for their views on the school. Inspectors also talked to pupils about reading and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, other staff with key leadership responsibilities, governors and the local authority improvement adviser.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; improvement plans; information on pupils' attainment and progress and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at the 27 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, that also included 22 written comments, and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. In addition, inspectors looked at the responses to the governing body's parental survey conducted earlier this year.
- Inspectors took account of 26 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Frances Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Chisnell	Ofsted Inspector

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