

Painters Ash Primary School

Masefield Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 8EL

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2017

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 school has improved since its last inspection. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have taken effective action to tackle the issues that required further development.
- The headteacher provides good leadership. All leaders and staff share her ambition and determination to provide the best possible learning experiences for pupils. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' outcomes and behaviour are now good.
- Effective teaching, learning and assessment ensure that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, generally make good progress.
- Occasionally, teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently to ensure that they achieve a greater depth in their learning and so standards are not as high as they could be.
- Pupils develop fluency in mathematics and mental arithmetic skills but have not developed good enough skills in problem-solving and reasoning mathematically.
- Expectations for standards in pupils' writing in other subjects are not always as high as they are in English work.
- Pupils are a credit to the school. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They are friendly, polite and respectful of adults and each other. They feel safe in school and trust adults to deal with any problems should they arise.
- Good leadership in the early years ensures that children get a good start to school. They make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared to continue learning in Year 1.
- Pupils' attendance remains below average despite the best efforts of leaders. Too many pupils are late for school in the morning.
- There is a strong leadership team, which has been instrumental in forging school improvement. Some middle leaders have yet to have a full impact on the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes in their subjects, particularly in tracking progression in skills and pupils' achievement.
- Governors know the school well and ensure that leaders are held to account effectively for the school's performance.
- One parent expressed the views of many with the comment, 'I would recommend this school to all parents looking for a bright, happy place for their children to learn.'

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to further raise attainment:
 - improve pupils' skills in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving
 - ensure that the expectations for the quality of writing across the curriculum are as high as they are in English
 - ensure that pupils are challenged to achieve greater depth in their learning.
- Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that their work has even more impact on the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes, particularly through tracking progression and pupils' achievement in their subjects.
- Build on the partnership with parents to improve attendance and reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent or late to school so that these pupils do not miss out on their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The effective leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteachers and other senior leaders, has ensured that the school has improved since its last inspection.
- The pace of improvement has not been as rapid as leaders would have liked since the inspection in 2013, mainly due to considerable changes in staffing. However, over the last two years the momentum of improvement has increased significantly and demonstrates the capacity for further improvement. One member of staff wrote, 'I feel the school has greatly improved over the past two years and all staff strive to make it a happy and friendly place to work.'
- There is a strong staff team who work together well. The headteacher has gained the confidence of staff and many expressed their pride in being part of the Painters Ash team.
- Teaching and learning and pupils' achievement and behaviour have all improved and are now good. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and appropriate support is provided where necessary.
- The headteacher has created a strong senior leadership team, with shared ambition and determination to provide the best for the pupils in their academic and personal achievement. Senior leaders are influential in ensuring consistency across the school, particularly in mathematics and English, together with a culture of positive support and guidance.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and provide colleagues with valuable advice and support. However, senior leaders have correctly identified that the middle leadership team needs to look more closely at pupils' progress in subjects such as history and geography.
- Leaders know what the school is doing well and what could be even better. Plans for improvement have a clear focus. Leaders are building on the strengths of the school and are developing the areas for further improvement.
- Effective checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning. If any weaknesses are identified, support is provided and improvement is expected. The management of the performance of teachers is well established, ensuring that pay rewards and promotion are appropriately linked to meeting whole-school and individual staff targets.
- Staff appreciate the range of opportunities to enhance their skills. Training for staff effectively meets individual needs, including those teachers who are at the start of their careers, as well as addressing whole-school priorities. One member of staff wrote: 'I believe that this school gives fantastic professional development opportunities and is strongly committed to developing staff, raising attainment, and having a positive impact on the progress and lives of the children.'
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Activities are planned around themes, which are carefully chosen to meet the needs as well as the interests of pupils. Topics inspire and motivate them to learn well. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors to school.

The school provides a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, including various opportunities for sports, gardening, cookery, dance, craft, guitar and taking part in the eco club. These are well attended and provide pupils with opportunities to learn new skills and extend their learning and personal skills.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values are promoted well through the curriculum, the school's values and the culture within the school. Pupils develop a good awareness of aspects that affect society as a whole. Pupils in Year 5, for example, explore issues of equality and democracy through their history study on myths and legends. They learn about ancient civilizations and can relate their information to modern attitudes and understanding.
- Respect and tolerance are fostered effectively. Pupils learn about and celebrate different religions and cultures. They demonstrated pride in the fact that, 'As a community we speak 27 languages.' Pupils understand the need for rules within the school and the wider society.
- The school has an inclusive ethos and focuses on pupils' personal as well as their academic development. Leaders ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and take part in all that the school offers. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The pupil premium is spent well to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. There is an effective action plan for the use of the current year's allocation, with clear actions to ensure the progress of individual pupils. Senior leaders carefully check any differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, and other pupils nationally. This ensures that action is taken to provide a range of effective additional support, appropriate to the needs of the pupils, to reduce any barriers to learning.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used effectively. It is spent in a range of ways to enhance the existing good provision. This includes working with sports specialists to enhance the skills of pupils and teachers, leading to improved outcomes for pupils.
- Additional special educational needs funding is used effectively to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Any specific needs are identified at an early stage and the range of effective interventions and specialist provision fully meets their needs.
- Parents are positive about the school. They expressed confidence in both the leadership and the staff. One parent expressed the views of many with the comment: 'The school improves all the time, in the last couple of years particularly. As a parent I am more than satisfied and I feel that there is a brilliant team working hard to give an all-round successful and happy school.'

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where it can improve further.
- Governors are well informed by the headteacher and other leaders as well as from their own monitoring visits. They provide a good balance of challenge and support to leaders and hold them to account effectively for the school's performance.

- Governors have a good awareness of the information about pupils' achievement. This enables them to question the progress and attainment of different groups. They check that the pupil premium funding and the primary physical education and sport funding are used effectively to determine that they are making a difference for pupils.
- Governors have a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning. They fully support the headteacher in ensuring that any weaknesses in teaching are eradicated and the performance of staff is managed to reward effective practice.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that there is a culture of safeguarding in the school.
- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school keeps their children safe.
- The headteacher and two other senior leaders are trained as designated safeguarding leaders. This ensures that there is always an effective safeguarding leader available to staff, should any concerns arise.
- Effective systems and procedures to keep pupils safe are in place and are fit for purpose. Staff spoken to during the inspection knew what procedures to follow if they had any concerns.
- Appropriate procedures and care plans are in place to ensure the well-being of pupils with specific medical conditions.
- All staff are aware of their responsibility to keep pupils safe. The site is checked for any risks on a daily basis. All visitors to the school are checked in and wear badges so that pupils can identify them. Leaders check that everybody who works with pupils is suitable to do so.
- Leaders ensure that any referrals to external agencies are acted upon rapidly and efficiently. Parents are involved as appropriate to ensure that pupils receive timely and effective support to ensure their safeguarding and protection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

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.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy all that they do, work hard and want to do well. Their good behaviour supports their learning well.
- Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in some subjects such as art. A specialist teaching assistant works in small groups or on a one-to-one basis with pupils who are new to learning English, to ensure that they make good progress.
- Pupils are mostly very attentive in class. They listen to their teachers and each other and consider the views of others even if they do not necessarily agree with them.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are good role models for pupils and promote respectful, caring relationships. Pupils are generally confident to take risks in their

learning because they know their opinions are listened to and valued by adults.

- Teachers provide motivating, inspiring learning experiences. They make good use of displays in classrooms to support teaching and learning. There is a purposeful, calm and strong work ethic in the school, which promotes learning well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They build well on pupils' strengths and prior knowledge and tackle any misconceptions sensitively to support any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Generally, teachers question pupils well and skilfully although on occasion they miss opportunities to probe further into pupils' responses to help deepen pupils' learning.
- The teaching of reading has been a focus for the school. There is a consistent approach to developing reading skills. For example, pupils discuss authors' choices of vocabulary and structure to develop their comprehension, inference and retrieval skills.
- Reading for enjoyment is promoted well and teachers effectively plan a range of work across the curriculum based on motivating and inspiring texts. Pupils enjoy and are stimulated by the opportunities to develop and test their reading skills through various internet-based programmes, and enjoy the challenges presented to them through these approaches.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) skills are taught well and used effectively by most pupils to help them read unfamiliar words. These skills get them off to a good start in the early years and key stage 1. One pupil, for example, explained that a trigraph has three letters but only one sound and gave accurate examples to support his knowledge.
- Pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are taught effectively so that pupils know that their knowledge in these areas can enhance and improve the quality of their writing. Teachers often provide good models of writing so that pupils can see the features that contribute to successful writing. There is scope for pupils to use their knowledge of how authors make writing more interesting and powerful to improve their own writing. Pupils' books demonstrate that the good quality of their writing in English is not always replicated in their writing in other subjects.
- In mathematics, teachers have focused on developing fluency in arithmetic and mental mathematics. Leaders have, however, correctly identified the need to focus on developing pupils' mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills, and to provide greater challenges for pupils to learn with a deeper level of understanding, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Within the overall good quality of teaching and learning, there are occasions where the usually successful strategies used to broaden the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils of all abilities are not consistently evident across all classes. As a result, pupils sometimes do not learn as well as they could to reach the higher standards.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils thrive in a happy, caring environment. They develop as well-rounded individuals who are confident and self-assured learners. They are proud of their school and their achievements, enjoy all that they do and promote the school values well.
- Pupils are exceptionally well mannered and respectful of adults and each other. Inspectors were impressed with pupils' friendly greetings each morning and during the day, and their courtesy in holding open doors and asking if they could help us.
- Leaders provide good support for pupils' emotional and social development as well as their academic achievement. Staff protect and nurture pupils' well-being, and support pupils and their families who may be vulnerable.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and in a range of situations in and out of school.
- Most pupils say they are not aware of any bullying in school. They know that bullying can take different forms and are confident that if any problems should arise, teachers would listen to them and help them. A group of pupils agreed that, 'Everyone who works here will help us if we need help.' Pupils know that any language or actions that may cause offence would not be tolerated.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast or after-school club receive a safe, sociable and healthy start or end to the school day.
- Almost all parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are happy at school and well looked after.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in the playground, at lunchtimes and around the school. Behaviour in lessons is mostly good and this supports pupils' good progress in their learning. They are attentive, concentrate well and work hard. On a very few occasions, some pupils become distracted when their lessons do not fully engage them and they lose their focus on learning.
- A new behaviour policy was recently introduced. It is implemented consistently by all staff, and pupils are very clear about the expectations. Good behaviour is recognised and rewarded. The positive impact on pupils' behaviour is evident. The number of behaviour incidents has reduced considerably since the new policy was introduced.
- Almost all parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. However, despite some improvement as a result of leaders' determined efforts, attendance remains below the national average. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. Leaders work hard with families and

external agencies where attendance issues persist and keep careful records to track the attendance of individuals and groups. Too many pupils are also late for school on a regular basis.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, progress between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 was particularly strong in writing and mathematics. It was not as strong in reading, although not significantly different from that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standards for their age by the end of Year 2 in 2016 was above that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion reaching a greater depth of understanding was above national averages in writing and mathematics but below in reading.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2016, the proportion that reached the expected standards for their age was above that found nationally in writing and mathematics, but below the national average in reading. Too few pupils achieved the highest standards in reading or writing.
- The school's information, together with pupils' work in their books, shows that most pupils currently in the school in all year groups are making at least the progress expected by the school. Some are making much more rapid progress.
- In mathematics, pupils effectively develop fluency and good mental-arithmetic skills. Pupils' skills in problem-solving and reasoning mathematically are not as well developed and this is holding them back, both from making the best possible progress, and from achieving higher standards.
- The impact on pupils' achievement in reading, which has been a focus for the school, is evident. Pupils develop a range of strategies to help them read with confidence, understanding and expression. They use inference and empathy to develop good comprehension skills. They talk with confidence and enthusiasm about the books they are reading and can predict what might happen next. There is scope for pupils' improved reading skills to have an even greater impact on their writing as they have a growing sense of what will keep a reader engaged and motivated.
- Pupils' books show that they also make steady progress in a range of other subjects, although leaders do not yet have assessment systems in place to track this in all subjects.
- The progress of different groups is carefully tracked in reading, writing and mathematics and appropriate support helps to reduce any barriers to learning. Disadvantaged pupils are achieving increasingly well as a result. Differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others from their starting points. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make similar good progress to others. The provision for all of these groups is well led and pupils' needs are accurately identified.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of phonics, which helps them read unfamiliar words. Over the past three years the proportion of pupils that reached the expected standard

in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above average.

- The most able pupils currently in the school, including those who are disadvantaged, are often challenged to achieve well. Leaders have correctly identified, however, that expectations should be higher to ensure that this group, as well as others, consistently achieves greater depth and high standards in their learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that vary from year to year but are often below those typical for their age, particularly in aspects of their communication and language, reading and writing, and physical development skills. Children make good progress in the Reception Year and are well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above that found nationally. However, leaders correctly identified that disadvantaged children had particularly low starting points and did less well. Effective action has been taken, and disadvantaged children in the current Reception classes are making similar rapid progress to others to help them catch up in their learning.
- Teaching and learning are good. The early years classrooms and the outdoor area are vibrant, stimulating and exciting learning environments. Activities are organised well to promote learning in all areas and capture the interest and imagination of children.
- There is a successful focus on children's early reading and writing skills. Children quickly develop good phonics skills and a love of stories. Children respond enthusiastically to stories shared with them, and good-quality texts are used as a basis for a wide range of their learning. Children were motivated to engage in a range of activities in reading, writing and numbers based on the book 'Bedtime for monster'. The story stimulated their imagination and enthusiasm. Staff ask good questions to help extend children's vocabulary, for example, getting them to think of alternative words for 'scared'.
- Children are provided with purposeful reasons to write, for example describing their monsters or writing instructions for planting seeds and bulbs. There is, however, a continuing focus on developing early writing skills as leaders have correctly identified that children's achievement in writing is relatively weaker compared to their achievement in reading.
- The teachers and other Reception staff know the children very well. They find out the children's strengths, interests and abilities when they start, and carefully monitor progress in their learning and their personal development. They effectively plan the next steps for individual children.
- Staff provide a happy, friendly and nurturing atmosphere in the early years. There are good links with parents to make the transition into school run as smoothly as possible. One parent wrote: 'The Reception class team go above and beyond to induct our children into school life. They are warm, welcoming, engaging and make the children feel safe and secure.'
- Children's independence and confidence are promoted well. One parent commented:

'My child started the school [in] September 2016 and has gone from a shy hesitant child, to one that is confident and outgoing. His reading, writing and maths have vastly improved and I couldn't be happier with the progress he has made in such a short time.'

- Children settle happily into the familiar routines of the day. They feel safe, behave well and share and cooperate well with each other, taking turns and listening to other children. Children are caring and thoughtful. One child spotted a picture of a scooter drawn by another and said, 'That's a good scooter, well done.'
- Leadership of the early years is very effective. The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths in the provision and good knowledge and understanding of the development of children in the Reception Year. She has correctly identified that there is scope to further develop the opportunities for learning at a higher level through quality play experiences in all areas of learning. The leader's expertise in assessing children's achievements and identifying next steps in learning has been recognised by the local authority.
- Staff work very well together as a strong team. They are skilled and encouraged to enhance their expertise to meet the specific needs of the children, through their professional development. For example, several children have speech, language and communication needs, and a teaching assistant has received specific training to support them appropriately.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Children's safety and well-being are paramount and children are well cared for. All the necessary actions are taken to support any children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, and to reduce any barriers to learning.
- Parents are very pleased with their children's start to school. Several commented on how much progress their children make and how well the school keeps them informed of their children's achievements. One parent summed up the views of several with the comment: 'Reading, writing and numerical skills far surpass my expectations at this stage of his education. I put this down to the learning environment being fun, engaging and stimulating. I can't praise the school enough.'

School details

Unique reference number	118491
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10024532

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Russell
Headteacher	Georgina Salter
Telephone number	01474 568 991
Website	www.painters-ash.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@painters-ash.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2015

Information about this school

- Painters Ash is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group.
- There is provision for the early years in two Reception classes which children attend full time.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The next largest groups are from Indian or Eastern European backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. Currently, only a few of this group are new to English or at the early stage of English language acquisition.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is above

average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club and after-school club.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or an assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and examined work in pupils' books. Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime and asked them for their views on the school. They also talked to pupils about reading and listened to some pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, senior leaders and other staff with key leadership responsibilities. Meetings were held with governors and an adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents including: leaders' checks on the school's performance and the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 46 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 11 written responses, and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of 24 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Francois Walker	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Tait	Ofsted Inspector

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