

Edenbridge Primary School

High Street, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5AB

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Until very recently, senior leaders and governors had an inaccurate view of the school's strengths, which left them unaware of the many weaknesses that exist.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent, rigorous approach to dealing with concerns about pupils' well-being.
- Some staff are complacent and not alert to potential risks for pupils, including for children in the early years.
- Senior leaders do not have systems in place to track pupils' progress and monitor the quality of teaching and learning accurately.
- Many pupils currently in the school are making inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in key stage 2.

- In the last three years, pupils' rates of progress by the end of key stage 2 have been in the lowest 10% nationally in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Pupils' written work is often poorly presented and careless.
- Teachers do not use accurate assessments of pupils' achievement when planning learning. Work is too hard for some pupils and lacks challenge for others.
- Behaviour in some classes is disruptive and prevents other pupils from learning.
- Rates of absence are too high for all pupils, but especially for pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Governors have not been tenacious enough in holding school leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the acting headteacher took over in November 2017, leaders have a clearer view of the school.
- Physical education (PE) and sports premium funding is used effectively. Pupils enjoy a range of sporting activities.
- Children in the early years make good progress, because teachers use accurate assessments to plan exciting and purposeful activities for them.
- Pupils' work in the wider curriculum is often of a good quality, including in art and science.



Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - improving the quality of self-evaluation, so leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - establishing robust systems that accurately monitor the quality of teaching and learning, assess pupils' achievement and track the progress of different groups.
- Quickly improve safeguarding practice, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - all records and paperwork for safeguarding and child protection are kept fully up to date
 - the system for recording concerns about pupils is strengthened and followed consistently by all who work in the school
 - all staff are fully aware of the signs that indicate that a pupil might be at risk
 - systems are established so that governors can check regularly that safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers use accurate assessments when planning learning, so that teaching meets the needs of all pupils
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - eliminating disruptive behaviour in classrooms
 - rapidly improving rates of attendance for all groups of pupils, especially the disadvantaged and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that staff have a united approach to recognising, tackling and recording incidents of bullying in the school.
- Accelerate the rates of progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in key stage 2, so that attainment is at least in line with national figures.

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

Inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Senior leaders and governors have an unduly positive view of the school. Only in very recent weeks have the acting headteacher and senior colleagues fully recognised and understood the many areas of significant weakness in the school.
- At the time of the inspection there was no school improvement plan in place. The previous one had been discarded. Senior leaders judged it as being not fit for purpose.
- A consultant headteacher, provided by the local authority, conducted an audit of the school's effectiveness very recently. The acting headteacher and senior leaders are writing a rapid improvement plan to address the many areas of weakness that they have identified. This plan was not completed in time for the inspection.
- Senior leaders do not have a reliable way of tracking pupils' progress because they have not ensured that teachers are able to make accurate assessments of pupils' achievement. Senior leaders have accepted teachers' assessment without checking that they are correct. As a result, predictions made by leaders for outcomes at the end of Year 6 in 2017 were overgenerous, especially in reading and mathematics. Leaders' judgements about progress in all subjects across the school are equally unreliable.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is ineffective because leaders lack any credible system for doing so. This has allowed weak teaching to be overlooked and has prevented improvements from being implemented. Performance management has not been used effectively to drive improvements in teaching and learning.
- Most middle leaders are enthusiastic and have good intentions. However, they lack a clear strategic view of their areas of responsibility. As a result, their plans to improve performance in their areas are too broad and not based on an accurate understanding of pupils' outcomes.
- Leadership of the early years is stronger because the leader sought advice from outside the school and has acted on it. This has brought about significant improvements in children's achievement.
- Until the acting headteacher took up post very recently, senior leaders had not responded well to external support and advice. When help has been offered, some leaders have been reluctant to take it, even when some significant weaknesses were pointed out by the local authority.
- The acting headteacher, senior leaders and governors are now acutely aware that they need considerable external support to achieve the necessary pace of improvement. In her very short time in the school, the consultant headteacher has strengthened the current senior leadership team's understanding that the school needs to improve rapidly.
- The local authority has not been rigorous enough in ensuring that the issues that were identified have been tackled and the necessary improvements made.
- Additional funding via the pupil premium is not used well. Leaders do not evaluate the impact of the spending, partly because they lack systems for tracking pupils' progress. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve much less well than other pupils nationally by



the end of Year 6. Their attainment is slightly stronger at the end of key stage 1.

- The funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is put to better use. Pupils mostly receive the right level of support and make steady progress towards achieving personalised targets.
- Some aspects of the curriculum are well catered for. Pupils achieve well in science and enjoy art, music and PE. Art work on display around the school is of high quality. In music, pupils have recorded their singing and enjoy singing in assemblies.
- The curriculum in key stage 2 is broader and more balanced than in key stage 1, where there is a very tight focus on reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for, but this is not having enough of an impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils learn about different faiths and festivals, for example Holi. However, their understanding is often muddled because they are not taught ideas, beliefs and concepts clearly enough.
- The curriculum is supplemented by clubs and activities outside of the school day. Pupils enjoy these and speak enthusiastically about them.
- Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values and understand how they are related to their lives. Leaders ensure that pupils are encountering these values regularly in assemblies and lessons.
- The PE and sports premium is used well and its impact evaluated accurately. More pupils take part in sporting activities outside of the school day than in the past. Greater numbers of pupils than previously also compete in competitions in a variety of sports including rugby, cross-country running and swimming.

Governance of the school

- Governance is ineffective. Governors rely too much on information provided by leaders without checking carefully that what they are told is accurate.
- Governors have tried to challenge the school and hold leaders to account. They ask the right questions but are hampered in their efforts because they are given inaccurate, overly positive information. Governors have not been tenacious enough in their challenge of senior leaders.
- Reports of visits by the local authority alerted leaders and governors to serious weaknesses in the school. Published information about the school's performance provides clear evidence of significant underperformance over several years. Governors did not take enough notice of this evidence to hold the headteacher and senior leaders stringently to account.
- Until very recently, governors have not been aware of the extent of the disorderly behaviour and bullying in the school. Leaders had not told them about concerns that parents and carers had expressed about bullying. Governors are starting to visit the school more so that they can gain an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses for themselves.
- Governors undertake some important safeguarding checks, such as ensuring that only suitable people can work in the school. However, they do not have a clear, strategic view of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in the school.



Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not made the well-being of pupils their prime concern. They have not ensured that there is strong culture of safeguarding in the school, including in the early years. Systems are not effective in ensuring that vulnerable pupils have their well-being secured. There is inconsistency and complacency in the application of safeguarding policies and procedures.
- A significant number of parents were concerned that children are not safe in school. They do not have confidence in staff to look after their children. Several feel that the unruly behaviour of some pupils compromises their child's safety. A notable minority of staff feel that pupils' behaviour presents a threat to adults' safety as well as pupils.
- There is a lack of rigour and clarity in identifying and protecting pupils in need. At times, staff are too slow to notice pupils who are alone or hurt. Staff do not embrace a shared responsibility for keeping pupils safe. While some are alert and report their concerns promptly, others are much less vigilant. Some staff are too quick to believe what they are told where there are concerns about the welfare of a child.
- Senior leaders provide regular training for staff, and ensure that adults read the latest guidance on child protection. However, staff do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the signs that might indicate that a pupil is at risk, because training is not sharp enough.
- The single central record of checks on adults who work in the school meets statutory requirements. Other aspects of safeguarding and child protection record-keeping are ineffective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not use accurate assessments to inform their planning. This results in work that does not meet pupils' needs and is, therefore, too hard for some pupils and much too easy for others.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers understand clearly how to enable pupils to make strong progress. Teaching typically focuses more on setting tasks for pupils than on advancing their learning. Teachers assess pupils' success more on whether pupils complete their work rather than how well they acquire new skills or develop their understanding. This teaching does not move learning forwards. Pupils are not clear about how to improve their work, because staff do not explain this to them.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Teachers' individual lesson plans drive the expectations rather than a clear understanding of what pupils should be achieving at each age and stage of their education.
- Presentation of work in books is too variable and often messy because teachers do not regularly insist on high standards from each pupil.
- Teachers' monitoring of learning during lessons is not incisive or timely enough. They do not check regularly on pupils' understanding or focus on how pupils can improve their work. Teachers do not typically notice when pupils are ready to move onto the



next level of challenge.

- Teachers sometimes carry out checks of pupils' understanding and knowledge before they teach a topic in mathematics. However, even when pupils have clearly shown that they have already mastered a concept, teachers still ask them to repeat work. This results in a lack of challenge and weak progress, especially for the most able pupils.
- Too many lessons are blighted by the poor behaviour of a few pupils who disrupt lessons and divert teachers from the key role of helping pupils to make good progress. One pupil said: 'We stop and start too often. We don't get enough time to do the work in lessons.' Inspectors' findings echoed this view.
- Some teachers' subject knowledge is poor. At times, they offer pupils muddled and confusing explanations of concepts in mathematics and English grammar. This leaves pupils struggling to learn new ideas and acquire new skills confidently. Questioning tends to focus on pupils recalling pieces of information rather than thinking carefully for themselves.
- The teaching of reading is weak, especially in key stage 2. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their reading skills and develop higher-order skills such as inference and deduction. Nevertheless, most pupils enjoy reading.
- The teaching of phonics is improving but its quality is still too variable from class to class.
- Pupils learn well in science because teachers are clear about what is expected of them. Planning is focused on what pupils will learn. Teachers provide pupils with interesting opportunities to experiment, investigate and find things out for themselves.
- In some classes teaching is more effective, including in Year 6, where most pupils' books are neat and carefully presented. Relationships are positive and productive, and pupils take much pride in their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils are not confident that staff are there to look after them. Pupils understand that staff are there to supervise them, but not necessarily to care for them. For example, some staff on the playground do not notice quickly enough when a pupil needs help or has been injured.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that there is a consistent approach to recognising and dealing with bullying in the school. Pupils say that some adults are more effective than others at dealing with these issues. Senior leaders do not keep any records of bullying behaviour so are unable to evaluate their actions to improve things.
- Sometimes pupils are asked to move to another area or playground to be safe from bullying behaviour. This fails to tackle the underlying issues behind the bullying behaviour and leaves some pupils feeling isolated and unsafe.
- A few pupils do not show respect to others. There have been several racist incidents already this academic year. The school does not systematically teach about racism, but



addresses the issue as and when it arises.

- Pupils learn to keep safe in a range of situations. Older pupils have lessons about avoiding some of the risks that young people face, such as substance abuse and gangs. Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values and how these apply to them in their daily lives.
- When learning engages their interest, pupils behave well and enjoy learning. For example, an inspector observed an assembly where children sang with great enjoyment and enthusiasm. Pupils have recently recorded a CD of themselves singing together. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to take part in clubs and sporting activities.
- Most pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming. They are keen to do well, willing to work hard and eager to show the work that they have done. They thrive on encouragement and praise and would like more of it. However, some pupils say that they are not sure what they need to do to receive this positive recognition from adults.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Until very recently, senior leaders have been ineffective in addressing poor behaviour and have not had the confidence of most staff. Less than half of the staff who completed their questionnaire agreed that senior leaders support staff well in managing behaviour. A low proportion of staff consider that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Systems for improving behaviour are not rigorous, effective or applied consistently. Currently, systems place an undue emphasis on management of the pupils' behaviour when it is unacceptable, rather than implementing strategies to encourage positive behaviour.
- Parents also have concerns about the behaviour of pupils in the school and the way that it negatively affects the learning of others. Some parents feel that the unruly behaviour of some pupils presents a risk to the safety and well-being of others. This view was echoed by some staff members. Pupils and parents both say that their concerns about behaviour are often not addressed, taken seriously or responded to.
- Pupils feel that staff are not always fair in their dealings with behaviour issues. They say that, at times, pupils who misbehave are rewarded more often than those who behave well all the time.
- In recent years, rates of attendance have been in the lowest 10% of those seen nationally. This academic year, attendance has continued to decline, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, who, on average, are absent for one day every two weeks.
- There is no shared understanding of the importance of ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. Systems for monitoring absence rest too much on the shoulders of too few people.
- Levels of exclusions this academic year are very high and have increased since last year, when they were also well above levels seen nationally. This has been a deliberate policy recently decided by senior leaders and governors to stamp out disorderly



behaviour.

■ Behaviour on the playground is variable. Rough play leaves some pupils feeling unsafe. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 mentioned this particularly. Almost everyone agrees that in the last few weeks behaviour has improved notably. The acting headteacher and senior leaders are starting to take decisive action to improve behaviour. One parent said, 'We have seen a huge change in how behaviour, good and bad, is managed, with very positive outcomes at this school.'

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils currently in school make inadequate progress in most classes and their attainment is too low. Levels of expectations are not high enough. Until very recently there has been no sense of urgency to improve.
- Senior leaders judge that pupils are currently making better progress than previously as judged by teachers' assessments. However, they have little faith in the reliability of the assessments on which these judgements were made. Senior leaders who were present in school for the inspection agreed that the evidence in pupils' books shows inconsistent, inadequate rates of progress in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress across key stage 2 has been too slow for the past three years. Progress rates in reading and mathematics have been consistently in the lowest 10% nationally. Progress has also been slow in writing, although it improved in 2017.
- In 2016 and 2017, proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 were well below the national average. Pupils with average starting points achieved much less well than similar pupils nationally. Proportions of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard were no better than their classmates. This legacy of low achievement has left too many pupils without the skills needed to succeed in secondary school.
- Too few pupils achieved a high score in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in the last two years. No pupils who are disadvantaged achieved this higher standard.
- Outcomes in phonics at the end of Year 1 dipped sharply in 2017 to well below national figures. Proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 2 have also been below national figures for the past two years.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing. There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills independently. Teachers do not offer pupils enough clear advice on how to improve and move their learning forwards.
- Levels of attainment at the end of key stage 1 were below the national average for writing, and especially mathematics, in 2017. Proportions of pupils achieving the greater depth standard in mathematics were well below national figures. However, levels of attainment in reading were above those seen nationally, including proportions of pupils who achieve the greater depth standard.
- Proportions of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 2 were in line with other pupils nationally in 2017. Proportions achieving the greater depth standard were in line with other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved greater depth in



reading in 2017 was higher than other pupils nationally.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are mostly making similar rates of progress to other pupils with the same starting points. Some of these pupils are making slightly stronger progress in writing.
- Evidence in pupils' books shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are taking great pride in their work and making slightly better progress than pupils in other year groups.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Safeguarding in the early years is ineffective because staff do not regularly or accurately report concerns about children's welfare. This leaves some children in potentially vulnerable situations. Staff sometimes do not notice when children are on their own or unoccupied for quite long periods of time.
- Children learn well in the early years and make good progress, often from low starting points. In 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception was above that seen nationally. As a result, children are ready to move on to key stage 1.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of children's abilities and interests. Staff use this information to plan suitable activities to engage children's interest and stimulate their curiosity. Teachers use questioning skilfully to make children think carefully and encourage investigation. Staff intervene well in children's play to develop their language and move their learning on.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision. Since she sought help to improve a year ago, the quality of education enjoyed by children has improved significantly.
- Children acquire the early skills of phonics because staff model sounds carefully, check on pupils' understanding, show good subject knowledge and use well-judged tasks to advance children's learning.
- Children enjoy learning and the many opportunities staff provide for them. Children are lively and engaged learners, who are kind, and who share and cooperate well together.
- Relationships are nurturing and positive. Staff understand how to build children's selfesteem and confidence using praise and encouragement. They are also skilled at diverting children from disruption or upset using positive strategies.
- Children learn how to use resources safely and sensibly and keep themselves safe while in school.
- Most parents are positive about the strong start that their children receive in the early years. They feel involved in their children's learning because staff encourage parents to contribute to the online learning journal and share their children's many achievements in school. One wrote: 'Staff do a wonderful job, both academically and in promoting good behaviour and values. Communication is excellent through the online learning journal, the book log and verbally.' Other parents echoed this view.



School details

Unique reference number 118554

Local authority Kent

Inspection number 10037827

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

Type of school Primary

School category Maintained

Age range of pupils 3 to 11

Gender of pupils Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll 415

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair Mr Clive Cain

Headteacher Mrs Valerie Viret

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Date of previous inspection 22–23 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 and of details of the school's curriculum on its website.
- Edenbridge Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school. There are 17 classes, including one in the nursery.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to that seen in other schools across the country.
- Most pupils are White British. Proportions of pupils from ethnic minority groups are below the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below that seen nationally.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2017, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics



by the end of Year 6.



Information about this inspection

- The headteacher was not in school during this inspection as she was on extended sick leave. During her absence, the deputy headteacher has taken up the role of acting headteacher. He and senior leaders are currently supported by a consultant headteacher provided by the local authority.
- Inspectors had several meetings with the acting headteacher and senior leaders about various aspect of the school's performance, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Most of these observations were undertaken jointly with the acting headteacher or deputy headteacher. The lead inspector observed an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a range of English, mathematics and science books with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors and two governors.
- The lead inspector spoke to two representatives of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors met with several senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for mathematics, English, the early years and special educational needs provision. Conversations were had with a number of staff members throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 72 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and the 42 written comments that were submitted. Responses from 35 staff were also considered.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of both days. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with a parent.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those recording the work of the governors and the single central record of checks on people who work at the school. They examined information on pupils' current progress and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to a group of them about school life. They also met pupils on the playground and observed behaviour at free times around the school.

Inspection team

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