

# Graveney Primary School

Seasalter Road, Graveney, Faversham, Kent ME13 9DU

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

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	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and her team have ensured that this is a school where pupils thrive. The warm family feel and wide range of opportunities help pupils to develop into confident and well-rounded learners. In this way, they are prepared well for the next stages of their education.
- The curriculum has been adapted well so that pupils develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need in an exciting and enjoyable way.
- Governors support and challenge school leaders effectively to help secure continued improvement. There are now two separate bodies of governance, which distinguish between the academy trust and governing body. However, the distinct unique nature of each requires further clarification.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported carefully and effectively. Their needs are met well and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Most teachers plan lessons which are well matched to pupils' needs. This has been further strengthened by the recent focus on developing mathematics. Despite this, some of the most able pupils in key stage 2 are not sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are given in mathematics.
- Phonics is taught effectively. This helps ensure that pupils get off to a good start with their reading and writing because they are confident in knowing and using the sounds that letters make.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes across the curriculum. This helps to ensure that pupils develop as confident and skilled writers. However, in lower key stage 2, pupils are not taking enough care with their writing.
- Pupils are well cared for. They in turn take good care of each other. Pupils work well together in their classes and enjoy playing together outside of lessons. This means that the school is a happy place. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good.
- Most parents and carers value highly the care and support provided by the school. However, some parents would like improved communication with the school.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are supported well in their learning by a stimulating environment and skilled staff. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points. In this way, they are well prepared for Year 1.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils throughout key stage 2 by:
  - planning activities and asking questions that systematically challenge the most able pupils in mathematics
  - raising expectations of writing so that pupils consistently use the correct punctuation and present their work carefully.
- Clarify the separation of aspects of governance so that different bodies can confidently discharge their different responsibilities.
- Continue to explore effective methods of communication and seek the views of parents so that any concerns can be fully understood and partnerships further strengthened.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher is passionately committed to providing the pupils of Graveney School with a stimulating and enjoyable education. Despite recent staffing turbulence, she has ensured that outcomes are improving and that pupils continue to benefit from the caring and child-centred ethos of the school.
- Leadership has been strengthened by staff working in partnership with other local schools and by effective support from the school improvement adviser. Leaders understand the importance of collaborative work at all levels and have developed new partnerships to extend this work still further.
- The English and mathematics leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and development needs of their subjects. They have introduced initiatives that have successfully raised standards. They monitor books and other information carefully to ensure that pupils are making good progress. Leaders have ensured that appropriate plans are in place to address the few remaining areas where further development is needed.
- Other curriculum leaders have a passion for their subject areas. This results in a determination to ensure that the curriculum both inspires pupils and provides them with the subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding that they need. Leaders monitor plans and look at work to ensure that pupils are making good progress. An effective system to assess attainment has been developed in science.
- The curriculum inspires pupils. They relish the learning opportunities provided by activities such as making Victorian Christmas cakes or designing bird feeders. The curriculum is extended effectively by the wide range of clubs available to pupils, particularly for sports. Parents and pupils alike value the experiences offered. A parent responding to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, typified the views of many saying, 'My child is doing table tennis and kurling. It's her first time taking part in these sports, and she's loving it!' In this way, the curriculum promotes healthy lifestyles effectively.
- The caring ethos of the school and rich curriculum ensure that fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are a consistent theme and unifying thread throughout the school. Leaders are not complacent about this, however. They ensure that opportunities are planned to celebrate difference and develop tolerance so that pupils are well prepared for life beyond their small school experience.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) has a good understanding of the needs of pupils who have SEN. She works effectively with staff, parents and other agencies to ensure that information is shared and training needs are met. As a result, pupils who have SEN flourish, grow in confidence and make good progress from their starting points.
- Staff, parents and pupils are proud of their school. Staff value the professional development opportunities provided by working in collaborative partnerships with other schools. Most parents who spoke to me, or who completed the Ofsted online

questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school and they feel that their children are safe and happy. A small number of parents are dissatisfied with the leadership and management of the school. Some parents would like to see more effective communication between school and home. Leaders are committed to working in partnership with parents and to continuing to explore effective communication methods.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities with regards to policies and safeguarding. They visit the school frequently, working alongside the headteacher and school improvement partner. Governors talk to pupils and look at work in books. In this way, they have a good understanding of the strengths and development areas of the school.
- Governors use this understanding and other sources of information about the school to hold school leaders to account effectively. They ask appropriate questions to help them understand the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives.
- Governors strengthen their work by regular collaboration with governors from other local schools. Following advice from the regional schools commissioner in 2017, they have taken steps to create two distinct and separate bodies to act as the academy trust and the governing body. However, there remains some lack of clarity about the differing roles of each body. Governors are aware that this understanding needs further development so that different responsibilities and consequent accountability are established.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All necessary checks are in place for recruitment. Records are meticulous and thorough. Staff and governors have completed all the required training and are aware of the signs to look out for and the actions to take to keep pupils safe.
- Staff and parents agree that pupils are safe at school. All the staff who completed the Ofsted survey and spoke to me feel that pupils are safe. All parents who spoke to me and 96% of parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that pupils are safe. Comments received were typified by the parent who described the school as a 'safe haven'.
- Pupils who spoke to me or completed the pupil survey told me that they feel safe at school. They are confident about being listened to if they have worries or concerns. Pupils told me, 'We look after each other. Teachers sort things out for you.' On the very rare occasions when elements of bullying behaviour are seen, things are quickly and effectively dealt with by staff. However, such incidents are few and far between because of the caring and nurturing nature of the school.
- Pupils are helped to learn about how to keep themselves safe through regular curriculum sessions, including those developing an awareness of online safety. For example, older pupils prepared presentations based on their learning about how to stay

safe online, to share their learning with younger pupils in assembly.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have good subject knowledge across the curriculum. This helps them to plan lessons which provide pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need. As a result, most pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Most teachers use questioning effectively to assess what pupils know and to extend their thinking. For example, in an effective key stage 1 mathematics lesson, a teacher working with a group of pupils looking at a graph representing birthday months invited pupils to create questions about the information. The teacher then skilfully extended these, modelling more challenging questions to stretch pupils' thinking.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants work alongside teachers and effectively support a range of pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. This helps to ensure that pupils who require additional support are included well in lessons and make good progress from their starting points.
- Phonics is taught effectively. Pupils confidently explore the range of sounds that letters make and use their knowledge in their reading and writing. For example, in an effective key stage 1 phonics lesson, pupils looked at the sounds made by the homophone 'see' and 'sea'. They then listed other ways of making the 'e' sound and extended this to write compound words such as 'sea-side'.
- Pupils read widely and accurately. They enjoy selecting books from the well-stocked library and talk confidently about their style and author preferences. Pupils who read to me demonstrated an understanding of the motivations of characters. Older pupils could discuss the authors' vocabulary choices and the impact of these on the reader.
- Opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes are developed well across the curriculum. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of the writing requirements of a wide range of genres. For example, in an effective key stage 2 writing lesson, pupils were drafting a newspaper article. They used appropriate grammatical conventions and included captions in their writing. Most pupils in later key stage 2 are careful when writing and ensure that they punctuate their work correctly. However, earlier in key stage 2, pupils do not consistently take such care and punctuation is haphazard.
- Recent work to develop mathematics across the school has developed pupils' confidence and competence when developing number skills. Pupils enjoy mathematics. Most have secure computational skills, which are further supported by a good knowledge of times tables. This means that they can solve a range of number problems accurately. Pupils' work in their books shows increased opportunities to apply these skills in investigations and problem solving. However, the most able pupils in key stage 2 sometimes spend too long working through calculations which do not challenge them effectively.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to take on responsibilities across the school, from librarians to sports leaders. In this way, pupils are well prepared for the responsibilities of the next stage of their education.
- Staff, parents and pupils all told me about the caring nature of the school. One parent encapsulated the views of many in describing the school as a 'home from home'. Care for each other threads through all layers of school life. For example, a parent described how the older pupils do up the coats of younger ones to ensure that they stay warm in the playground.
- Because of this level of care, any changes in behaviour or other indications of a pupil or their family needing a little extra help from time to time are quickly spotted. Parents described how the entire school community goes 'the extra mile' in that event. For example, a parent responding to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, commented that school is 'the best thing to happen for my children during a really difficult time for my family', and another that 'children's well-being always seems to be at the forefront'.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move around the school safely and quietly. They are courteous and considerate, both to adults and each other. In the playground, pupils enjoy a range of age-appropriate games which are active but not overly boisterous. They are supported well in their play by adults, who often help pupils to develop ideas for games.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They support each other in their learning and respond enthusiastically to their teachers. On the very few occasions when this is not the case, it is linked to teaching which is not well matched to their needs. Disruption of any kind is rare.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders monitor attendance closely to ensure that appropriate support is offered to pupils and families for whom complex medical issues or other circumstances mean that regular school attendance is challenging.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In the 2017 national assessments, a higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. The proportions of pupils attaining at higher levels were in line with or above proportions seen nationally.
- School information and work in pupils' workbooks show that current key stage 1 pupils are attaining well across the curriculum. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and

expectations are high. As a result, pupils are making good progress from their starting points.

- In 2017, pupils at the end of key stage 2 had made sufficient progress from their starting points in reading, so that proportions of pupils attaining expected levels in the national assessments were above those seen nationally. Proportions of pupils attaining at higher levels were in line with those seen nationally.
- Pupils consistently attain well in the national phonics screening in Year 1. More pupils attain the expected standard than proportions seen nationally. This is because phonics teaching is systematic and effective.
- Pupils attain high levels of skill across the curriculum, particularly in the arts, physical education and science. This is because the rich and stimulating curriculum, both during and after school, provides them with a myriad of opportunities to explore their interests and refine their skills. These skills are celebrated in regular arts weeks and shared in performances to parents.
- At the end of key stage 2 national assessments in 2017, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected and higher levels in writing were in line with proportions seen nationally. Most current pupils are making good progress and attaining well in both reading and writing, although standards in writing are more variable in Years 3 and 4.
- Leaders were disappointed with attainment levels in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 national assessments in 2017. Initiatives to raise standards in mathematics in key stage 2 have been effective. School information and work in pupils' workbooks show that most current pupils are producing work that is in line with age-related expectations. However, leaders acknowledge that there is further work to be done to ensure that the most able mathematicians are consistently challenged sufficiently to help them attain at the highest levels.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children typically start the Reception Year with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress so that by the end of the year proportions of children reaching a good level of development are higher than those seen nationally. In this way, they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Stimulating learning environments, both inside and outside the classroom, ensure that there is always something interesting for children to explore. During the inspection, children were enjoying role-play areas set up as animal pens and investigating bugs. Opportunities to develop early literacy skills were ever present, with children drawing and labelling farm animals and recording what they knew about sheep.
- The teaching of phonics is systematic and effective. Children are confident in their knowledge of individual sounds and blends. They use this to help with their early reading and writing. This, too, is extended by play. For example, during the inspection, a child was discovering letters in the water tray and gleefully making the letter sounds. This was then skilfully extended by the adult who reversed the 'b' into a 'd' and challenged the child to extend the exploration into words.
- Relationships are warm and supportive both between children and adults and among

the children. Children are generally kind to each other. They work and play happily together. As a result, children are confident and keen to explore.

- Children's learning is supplemented effectively by a wide range of visits and visitors. For example, a beekeeper had recently visited and left some parts of a hive for the children to explore. This had developed into an exploration of the hexagonal shapes on the frames. In this way, experiences are linked into learning well.
- Transitions both into Reception Year and then onto Year 1 are well supported by a range of visits and shared experiences, often involving parents. This helps children to settle quickly into school. As a result, children enjoy their learning and play.
- Parents appreciate the way that their experiences at home are included in their child's school experience through the learning journals. These show a wide range of activities which children are keen to share in school. In this way, the partnerships between home and school are strong and support children well in their learning.
- Learning records contain a wide range of observations. While these are extensive, records of experiences do not always provide sufficient clarity to inform the next steps that children need in their learning.



## School details

Unique reference number	137871
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10040712

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Russell Kitto
Headteacher	Alison Blackwell
Telephone number	01795 532005
Website	<a href="http://www.graveneyprimary.com">www.graveneyprimary.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@graveney.kent.sch.uk">headteacher@graveney.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school and serves the village of Graveney and the surrounding area.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN are lower than proportions of pupils seen nationally. Most pupils are White British.
- The school converted to become a stand-alone academy school on 1 February 2012.
- The school has experienced some staffing turbulence in key stage 2. A new teacher

has recently been recruited for Years 3 and 4 and will start after Easter.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with staff, governors, parents and leaders. She had a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation including development plans, minutes of meetings and progress information.
- The inspector observed pupils around the school and in their classes. In the classes, she observed teaching, looked at books and spoke to pupils about their work.
- The inspector met with pupils to gain their views of the school and to hear them read. She considered 55 pupil survey responses. She took account of parents' views at the school gate and considered 53 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 53 free-text responses.
- The inspector also considered nine responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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