

Drapers Mills Primary Academy

St Peter's Footpath, Margate, Kent CT9 2SP

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
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

- This is a good and improving school. The headteacher's unswerving determination to help pupils do as well as they can is shared by all leaders and staff. The school is a bright, stimulating and safe haven for learning.
- Outstanding attention to ensuring pupils' social and emotional well-being underpins the school's ethos. All staff are completely committed to helping children succeed, often against the odds, within this extremely diverse community.
- Children make a good start in the early years, taking full advantage of the extensive indoor and outdoor resources.
- Outstanding leadership has vastly improved teaching since the last inspection. Good teaching across the school means that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the many who spend only brief periods at the school, build well on their starting points.
- Pupils' progress over recent years has typically been above average. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who arrive speaking little or no English make good and often rapid progress.
- Leaders are aware that some pupils do not have a secure grasp of basic number facts and that weak spelling limits their writing skills. Leaders and staff are starting to tackle this problem.
- The most able pupils generally rise to the challenges set for them. Occasionally tasks are not demanding enough and do not require pupils to think deeply or work at greater depth.
- The good behaviour of the pupils makes them excellent ambassadors for the school. The school is a harmonious community where pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on well together and are mutually supportive. Pupils feel safe and show high regard for each other and members of staff.
- Parents and carers are effusive in their praise for the school, including the immediate and sensitive response when families need support. They are confident that leaders and staff have their children's best interests at heart.
- Governors work closely with school leaders. They keep a sharp eye on pupils' performance and offer insightful guidance and support.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment by:
 - improving pupils' ability to recall basic number facts instantly to enable them to solve mathematical problems efficiently
 - increasing pupils' spelling skills to improve their writing
 - providing further opportunities for pupils, including those who are most able, to think deeply and apply their knowledge and skills effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, together with governors and his strong leadership team, has established a strong sense of purpose and an ethos of high expectations across the school. Staff share a vision of high levels of success. Leaders have greatly improved most aspects of the school since the last inspection, including teaching, learning and pupils' attitudes. Inclusion underpins every aspect of school life. The extremely diverse backgrounds of pupils are not used to excuse underperformance. Barriers to learning are tackled head on and with considerable success.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. School development plans demonstrate an uncompromising approach to sustaining strengths and a commitment to further improvement.
- Leaders monitor the work of teachers carefully in order to ensure that pupils make good progress. Staff regularly share ideas and explore what works best for their pupils. Teachers new to the profession are supported extremely well. They make an increasingly strong contribution to the quality of learning and are eager to take on additional responsibilities.
- Staff appreciate the many opportunities for professional development and feel valued. The outcomes of effective training are evident, for example in the way teachers structure lessons, taking account of the diverse needs of pupils and what they have learned previously.
- Senior staff and middle leaders carefully check pupils' progress throughout the year. Where gaps in pupils' learning are identified, there is an immediate response, for example through the provision of additional adult support.
- The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Subject leaders adopt an imaginative approach to interpreting curriculum requirements, in ways which spark pupils' interest. For example, themes such as the Victorian era provide good opportunities for pupils to compare life then and now. Pupils' writing reveals considerable empathy, for example with occupants of the workhouses. Through their study of art, which includes visits to the nearby Turner Gallery, pupils gain insights into different cultures.
- The curriculum is designed well to develop personal skills as well as academic achievement, in order to create well-rounded citizens for the future. Pupils gain a good understanding of how the school's values, including respect, fairness and trust, relate to British values. They are confident when speaking about equality, diversity and the rule of law. The statement on the school's website, 'British values define our nation, but the way we uphold them defines our school', reflects the commitment to this aspect of pupils' development.
- The school makes excellent use of the additional funding it receives. Pupils who are disadvantaged receive effective additional support to ensure that they make strong progress and have similar opportunities to learn as others. Additional physical education and sports funding is spent wisely on generating pupils' positive attitudes towards health and increasing their participation in physical activities.

- Pupils say that the quality of teaching and behaviour has improved as a result of strong leadership by the headteacher. Parents are also highly complimentary about the school. They feel welcomed and well informed. They have a high regard for the quality of leadership in the school. They rightly believe that their children are safe and very well looked after. Among their comments were, 'There is a different culture at Drapers. They seem to praise and encourage positively more than other schools.'
- The Kemnal Academies Trust has provided effective support for school leaders in securing improvements.

Governance of the school

- Members of the local governing body, which jointly governs five schools, liaise closely with the school governing committee. Governors are perceptive, well informed and have a secure grasp of the school's performance. They ask insightful questions and make increasingly valuable contributions to the school's development.
- Governors have a clear picture of pupils' achievement across the school. They seek assurance that pupil premium funding has a positive impact on improving the experiences for disadvantaged pupils. They share leaders' ambition to meet the wide-ranging needs of the pupils and allocate funds to enable bilingual and specialist staff to support children and their families.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Leaders are helping other schools in this regard with training and support. Leaders take appropriate action to identify pupils who may be at risk. Comprehensive records are maintained, and issues are followed through diligently by the designated safeguarding lead. Child protection plans are reviewed regularly.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe. They understand how to look after themselves in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils also care for each other. They trust the adults in the school. This is evident, not least as pupils attend the 'Place to Be', which provides therapeutic support and opportunities for them to discuss their worries.
- The inclusion manager, pastoral team and designated safeguarding leader work closely and highly effectively together. Risk assessments are undertaken routinely to explore and eliminate potential hazards during school visits.
- Parents responding to the inspection survey were entirely positive about the school's attention to ensuring that their children are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils are making good progress, because teachers typically plan work with an appropriate level of challenge. Teachers' questioning makes pupils think. For example, pupils in Year 3 responded enthusiastically as the teacher asked them to identify as

many ways as possible of subtracting two numbers to end up with the same answer.

- Pupils rise to teachers' high expectations. This is evident, for example, from the progress in pupils' writing books, where the teachers' insistence that pupils of all abilities edit their own work is contributing to their good progress. In mathematics, pupils make sure that their work is neatly presented, which helps them to be accurate when setting out complex mathematical calculations.
- Teachers check pupils' progress carefully and identify any gaps in learning. They use this information skilfully to devise lessons that precisely focus on what pupils need to learn next. Work is generally pitched at appropriate levels that enable pupils to be successful and, at the same time, to build on their existing knowledge and understanding and hone their skills.
- Pupils say that they know how to improve their work. Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning and develop a sense of personal responsibility.
- Behaviour management is mostly seamless, because pupils are fully occupied and sustain their attention. Occasionally, the most able pupils, although responding positively to demanding tasks, have limited opportunities to explore ideas at an even greater depth.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers. Their shared understanding of how individual pupils are getting on enables them to make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. For the most part, tasks are generally matched precisely to pupils' needs.
- Phonics teaching has improved and this has led to more pupils reaching the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Younger pupils are successfully guided in using their phonics knowledge to good effect when reading unfamiliar words. However, across the school, teachers sometimes do not encourage pupils to apply their phonics skills in order to spell correctly as they write.
- Staff support reading well. They ensure that pupils who do not read regularly at home read to an adult every day. Older pupils learn how to identify and analyse how authors use various strategies to engage the reader. Teachers promote strong comprehension skills and pupils' accuracy and fluency when reading aloud.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are extremely well supported. Their needs are assessed accurately and extra help, both during lessons and in withdrawal groups, helps them to make good progress from their starting points.
- As new pupils arrive, staff go to great lengths to identify their learning needs. Teachers and support staff have developed considerable expertise in this regard, which means new pupils make a prompt start to their learning.
- Skilled support for pupils who do not speak English at home enables them to make good and often rapid progress. Those who arrive speaking no English, including pupils from Latvia, Poland, Lithuania and Russia, benefit from a six-week programme of daily 'survival' sessions which equip them with enough English to start communicating with adults and their peers. In most cases, it is not long before these pupils are happily learning alongside their classmates.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- School leaders know pupils' families exceptionally well. They understand the difficulties many families face as they join the local community. Leaders go to great lengths to support parents in ensuring that their children attend school regularly. For example, minibuses provided by the school and the Salvation Army make two return journeys every day. The school offers well-attended breakfast and after-school care to all pupils.
- Vulnerable pupils and those with highly complex needs are looked after with great care and attention. The inclusion manager, safeguarding lead and pastoral staff work exceptionally well together. They liaise with external agencies, ensuring that the most appropriate support reaches families in a timely manner.
- Parents were fulsome in their appreciation of the school's attention to their children's development and welfare. Their comments included, 'I couldn't praise the school highly enough ... we were very well supported when we had family problems', 'Staff are always there for you', and 'Our children have both settled really well and there is a feeling of calm and general positivity in and around the school'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They all wear their uniform with pride, try hard to present their work neatly and try their best to please their teachers. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly around the school. They play together happily during breaktimes, are polite and treat one another with respect.
- During lessons, pupils' behaviour is typically good. Pupils listen attentively, ask interesting questions and show great respect for their teachers and peers. They value the rewards they are given for good behaviour and hard work. Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to their learning are significant factors in the improved progress that they are now making.
- Leaders give pupils' attendance a high priority. They have implemented a range of successful initiatives to encourage pupils to attend regularly. As a result, pupils' attendance overall has improved and is currently in line with recent national figures. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen. Leaders and staff are working determinedly to ensure that these improvements continue.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- As children start school in the early years or join at other than the usual times, their attainment is typically low for their age. Overall, pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 2 has been below the national average, but measures of progress tell a different story.
- In the last two years, the end of key stage results in reading, writing and mathematics

for those pupils who have been at the school before starting Year 3 have exceeded national figures. In 2017, pupils who had joined during Years 3 to 6 made significantly greater progress than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Over twice as many pupils reached the expected standard in Year 6 than did so when they were in Year 2. This cohort included a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils, many of whom had SEN and/or disabilities. Their progress was higher than the national average for this group, reflecting an upward trend on previous years. Across the school, disadvantaged pupils are generally making good progress.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language tend to make better progress than their peers. This is a consequence of highly skilled teaching, the use of appropriate resources and an environment where diversity is celebrated.
- Pupils' workbooks show that pupils are building well on their starting points. A good range of books and stimulating reading areas in each classroom contribute to pupils' enjoyment of literature and their improving reading skills. Pupils in Year 6 made insightful comments about their reading preferences and discussed how reading helped their writing. Pupils' punctuation and grammar improve at a good rate as they move through the school. They adopt appropriate styles when writing for different purposes, although some weak spelling is still evident.
- Pupils' mathematics books indicate that they respond well when asked to justify their solutions to problems. They are becoming increasingly confident in explaining their reasoning. Pupils competently use traditional and other methods when calculating, although they sometimes get stuck on the simpler aspects or when weaker recall of basic number facts leads to mistakes.

Early years provision

Good

- Each morning, children enter the Nursery and the Reception classes eager to learn. Adults develop warm relationships with children and promote their personal, social and emotional development successfully. This means that children feel safe and develop a strong sense of security in their surroundings.
- The learning environment is calm and productive. Indoors, children have a wealth of activities. The outdoor area is full of interesting equipment for the children to play with. It is vivid and engaging.
- Children in the Nursery thrive in the calm, settled environment. They show growing skills of listening and concentration as they follow instructions and persevere to finish a creative activity. Well-thought-out planning enables all staff to promote learning. Children are confident to play with one another without adult support. For example, during the inspection, children were observed cooperating well when sorting bears, dinosaurs and shapes according to their colour.
- Effective phonics teaching means that children make a good start in developing early reading and writing skills. During the inspection, inspired by 'The Bog Baby' by Jeanne Willis, children were highly engaged and made good attempts to write, accurately spelling short words and making plausible attempts at others. 'We're writing about how the baby changed,' said one child proudly.
- Children show an interest in numbers. Frequent opportunities to sort, order and count

reinforce their mathematical understanding. Some children are able to create simple bar charts and answer questions about them.

- Adults often question children effectively to encourage them to think. Occasionally, adults miss chances to extend children's learning through their engagement and questioning. On these occasions, children do not make the progress they should.
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the provision by the early years leader have led to improvements. Opportunities for children to talk and play together in the Nursery are being increased in order to develop their vocabulary. In addition, leaders are wisely focusing more closely on promoting children's personal development, to ensure that they are better prepared for Reception.
- Early years staff establish positive partnerships with parents. Parents appreciate the 'open-door' policy and are very happy with their children's progress.
- In recent years, the proportion of children reaching the early learning goals by the end of Reception has increased, although very few have exceeded expectations. Nevertheless, there are clear indications that children's current progress is continuing to accelerate and that standards are improving, with more children working above expectations. This means that children are being well prepared for learning in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	139021
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10040917

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	504
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Silk
Headteacher	Joe Manclark
Telephone number	01843 223989
Website	www.drapersmillsprimary.co.uk/
Email address	jmanclark@dmpa-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	19–20 January 2016

Information about this school

- Drapers Mills Primary Academy is a much-larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school serves a community with high levels of deprivation.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- Just under half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. A quarter are from other White backgrounds and a quarter have a White Roma heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. Many of these pupils are at a very early stage of learning English as they join the school.
- A much-higher-than-average proportion of pupils leave the school during each school year. In the last academic year, around 100 pupils left the school and there was a similar number of new entrants.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school is part of The Kennal Academies Trust.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed activities in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and had a discussion with the regional executive director of the trust.
- Meetings were also held with pupils to discuss their views on their learning and well-being, and with parents to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors met pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 to discuss their reading. They talked to pupils at breaktimes, in lessons and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documents, including information on pupils' performance across the school, school improvement plans, the school's evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment, the governing body's minutes, and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' books to see what progress had been made in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the Ofsted parent survey Parent View. In addition, inspectors evaluated 14 returns to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Chisnell	Ofsted Inspector

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