

King's Farm Primary School

Cedar Avenue, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5JT

Inspection dates

22–23 May 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- All leaders, including governors, are uncompromising in their high aspirations for every pupil. They are relentlessly driving improvement and accept nothing but the best.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school model the high standards expected. An exceedingly positive and respectful ethos permeates the school.
- Staff and pupils benefit from the expertise and shared opportunities available as part of The Cedar Federation.
- Governance is effective. Governors carefully evaluate the school's development and are well informed about pupils' progress. They hold leaders firmly to account.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching has greatly improved. As a result of strong teaching, most pupils are making good progress in all subjects and developing as successful learners.
- Published outcomes for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6, although not at national figures, show significant improvement across all areas since the last inspection. Work in the books of current pupils similarly shows improvement.
- Pupils experience an interesting range of topics and themes. The school's curriculum is further enriched by a variety of extra-curricular clubs and exciting trips.
- The school provides effective support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders have an accurate understanding of pupils' needs and are highly diligent in ensuring that these are met.
- Parents and carers are very happy with the education and experiences that the school provides for their children.
- Children make a good start in the early years and settle into school quickly and happily.
- The school's unremitting and innovative work to ensure that pupils attend school regularly has led to improved attendance for all groups of pupils. Despite this, overall attendance remains below the national average.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. High expectations, linked to the school's own values, ensure that pupils are polite and respectful.
- Increasing challenge is evident for most-able pupils. However, teachers' questioning does not consistently challenge pupils to think more deeply.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Staff keep pupils safe and teach them to look after themselves effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning in order to improve outcomes for pupils, by:
 - making sure that teachers challenge pupils, particularly the most able pupils, to think deeply in order to consolidate their learning.
- Ensure that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher and head of school, supported well by the senior team, provide highly effective and inspirational leadership. As a result, the school is improving rapidly.
- All senior leaders, staff and governors share the ambition, aspiration and determination to provide the best possible learning and personal experiences for the pupils. This clear vision means that staff work as a strong and buoyant team where everyone strives to adhere to the school's motto, 'Being the best we can be'. As one member of staff wrote: 'Not only does our school support the pupils, parents and wider community, we also support each other.'
- Senior leaders hold teachers firmly to account for pupils' progress. Any weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning are picked up quickly through leaders' rigorous checks on pupils' progress. Leaders give appropriate support to staff when needed, action points are followed up, and rapid improvement is expected from staff to meet leaders' high expectations.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training, which is closely aligned to raising standards for pupils. For example, class teachers and teaching assistants receive intensive and effective training in teaching phonics.
- Leaders keep a careful check on the progress of every pupil in the school. They are aware that pupils working in upper key stage 2 have gaps in their previous learning and are determined that these pupils are offered every opportunity to catch up. A varied and impressive array of effective interventions and additional opportunities for learning take place. For example, the school provides booster groups at the weekend, intensive coaching for Year 6 pupils during the Easter holidays, 'challenge' sessions for the most able pupils as well as high-quality support for learning in classes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils show a good understanding of Christianity as well as the major world religions and other cultures. Leaders seek to reinforce and celebrate the many different nationalities in the school through displays, assemblies and events. As a result, pupils are highly tolerant of each other and accepting of their differences. The school's values of aspiration, courage, creativity, honesty, kindness, responsibility and respect are deeply embedded. These are reflected in pupils' attitudes to their learning, to each other and to the staff.
- Pupils have many interesting opportunities to work together with pupils from other schools, in particular on the Goldsmiths' Company-funded four-year mathematics programme with two other schools. The close proximity of Ifield School enables many useful opportunities for collaboration, for example the joint nursery provision and visits to Ifield School's woodland.
- Leaders pay close attention to the quality of the curriculum. They empower teachers to adapt it to meet the interests and needs of their pupils. As a result, the curriculum captures pupils' imagination and they are eager to find out more. For example, a project on mini-beasts in Year 5 resulted in pupils learning about how to care for animals as well as promoting scientific enquiry.

- Leaders ensure that pupils have a suitable range of rich experiences. These include, for example, engaging in sports and debating competitions, as well as participating in Shakespeare productions, dance activities and residential trips. An impressive number of pupils take part in extra-curricular clubs before or after school. These activities combine to make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and academic achievement.
- The school uses additional funding for disadvantaged pupils very effectively to support them academically and pastorally. Provision for these pupils is tracked rigorously to ensure that they receive exactly the support they need.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective support. Many arrive at the school with very little understanding of English. Leaders ensure that swift assessment identifies any needs they may have and appropriate targeted support is put in place.
- The use of additional sports funding is used well. Pupils' participation in sporting and physical activities has increased as a result of investment in equipment and specialist coaching. Pupils take part in competitive sports and tournaments with other schools and are enthusiastic about the increased range of sports activities. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils were enjoying archery, many for the first time. Leaders' priority to raise the profile of health and fitness extends beyond the school, for example the school's family challenge based around healthy eating and exercise.
- The school's values and curriculum prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils gain an understanding of democracy and law through projects they undertake and the work of the school council. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds show respect and tolerance for pupils of different faiths and cultures.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are very happy with the education and care their children receive. They appreciate the many opportunities available for them to be involved in their children's learning. Typical comments from parents include: 'They (the school) do everything humanly possible to introduce different workshops for the parents and carers to assist their children even at home' and 'The school supports, encourages and genuinely cares about my son's education and him as a growing individual.'
- The local authority has an insightful and accurate understanding of the school. The school improvement partner has worked productively with leaders and staff to offer appropriate support and challenge. The school prudently commissioned further support from the local authority where they identified needs, particularly around English as an additional language, SEN provision and the early years.

Governance of the school

- Governors are ambitious for the school. They have a deeply held belief that 'the school can get better', and have worked effectively to achieve this goal.
- Governors have a deep understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They have set up a strategic group to bring a further sharp focus to the school's improvement.
- Governors discharge their statutory duties well. Minutes from governing body meetings

show that governors ask perceptive questions. They strike the right balance between supporting leaders and being appropriately challenging.

- Governors regularly visit the school to see for themselves how staff are implementing changes. Their inquiring and questioning approach to leaders' assertions is illustrated well by the comment of one governor, 'Don't tell me, show me.'
- Governors work effectively as a team. Their professional experience and expertise is a particular strength of the governing body. Governors actively participate in training to enhance their skills and knowledge further. Their good practice is shared more widely, and governors from other schools visit to observe and learn from their well-managed meetings.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that recruitment checks are thorough before adults, including volunteers and any contractors, can start working in the school.
- Leaders show an impressive knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of vulnerable pupils and their home circumstances. They are alert to local and national risks and ensure that staff are trained accordingly. The school works successfully with external agencies for the benefit of vulnerable pupils, and leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils receive the support they need.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Governors and staff are appropriately trained and know their responsibilities well. As one member of staff said, 'Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.'
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. This is because e-safety is an integral part of the school's curriculum. Pupils are given opportunities to share any worries they have with staff about their online experiences.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, confirm that their children feel happy and safe. One parent spoke for many, saying: 'I am very happy with everything about this school.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. As a result, pupils' attainment and progress has improved.
- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils work hard and want to do well. They are beginning to become resilient learners, and work well together.
- Helpfully, teachers check the accuracy of their regular assessments of pupils' progress with each other and with staff from other schools. Teachers' rigorous approach to assessment means they have a good understanding of pupils' starting points.
- Teachers place a successful emphasis on teaching reading, writing and mathematics, and provides good opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in other subjects, particularly writing. For example, pupils were successful in writing a poem about

magnets in a science lesson.

- Effective phonics teaching in early years and key stage 1 contributes well to pupils' strong progress in reading and writing. Teachers match reading books well to pupils' abilities, and pupils are becoming confident readers as a result.
- The teaching of mathematics has been strengthened by the appointment of a mathematics specialist. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their skills and understanding, especially in problem-solving and real-life mathematics. For example, during the inspection pupils were observed using mathematical resources to measure equipment and fittings in the school hall.
- The teaching of writing shows great improvement. Pupils have valuable opportunities to practise their writing and grammatical skills. They study and learn from high-quality texts and write at length in a range of styles. Pupils take great pride in their handwriting, as shown in their eagerness to earn a 'pen licence'. Teachers introduce pupils to interesting vocabulary. For example, pupils worked out the meaning of words such as 'verdant' and then successfully applied them in their own writing.
- Helpfully, teachers in all classes use the school's policy for feedback and marking consistently. Work in books shows that pupils take the opportunity to revisit misconceptions and challenge themselves further.
- Teachers' questioning does not always give pupils opportunities to think deeply about their learning. As a result, pupils are not always challenged as effectively as they could be, particularly the most able.
- Teaching assistants usually provide purposeful and sensitive support to a range of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They skilfully prompt pupils without overly leading or restricting independence.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make strong progress due to well-targeted support and focused class teaching. Teachers are swift to identify pupils' potential to ensure that they make the progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There are excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. Staff know the pupils well, and pupils' individual needs are supported effectively.
- Pupils are confident to confide in adults in school if they have any problems. They say that bullying is rare but that teachers are good at resolving any issues should they arise.
- The high number of pupils who attend breakfast club benefit from a calm and healthy start to the day. This also supports improved attendance and punctuality.
- The positive ethos of the school enables pupils to flourish as learners. They are beginning to develop their own ideas and articulate their thinking. For example, in a lesson on Christianity they explored more deeply what it means to 'ascend to heaven'.
- Pupils' self-assurance is developing well. High aspirations permeate the school and as a

result pupils are growing in confidence. Leaders have sensibly had a watchful eye on developing pupils' resilience for national and county tests. As a result of leaders' actions, pupils are now better equipped to sit these tests. This year a significantly higher proportion of pupils passed the Kent Test (11 plus) than in previous years. Leaders also ensured that Year 6 pupils were well prepared for their recent statutory tests.

- The school is highly adept at supporting pupils who join the school after the beginning of the school year. Many arrive speaking little or no English. These pupils settle in quickly and are welcomed and accepted by the whole school community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders and staff skilfully and effectively model the school's high expectations for behaviour. As a result, pupils understand how to behave well.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful of adults and each other. They demonstrate this by holding doors open for adults and visitors and showing good manners at all times.
- Play and lunchtimes are supervised well with healthy activities available for pupils to take part in. For example, many key stage 2 pupils were observed intently practising their skipping for the weekly Friday skipping competition.
- The school is a calm orderly environment. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and respond positively to teachers' high expectations for behaviour and learning. Pupils demonstrate high levels of effort and take great pride in their work. Work in their books reflects the high standards teachers set for them. Occasionally in lessons, where teaching lacks challenge or slows in pace, some pupils lose concentration.
- Leaders have given careful consideration to the needs of all pupils. The 'learning zone' offers appropriate support to highly vulnerable pupils and is used effectively to help a small number of pupils successfully self-manage their behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Overall attendance has improved when compared with the same period last year. Attendance for groups of pupils, such as those who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, shows a marked improvement. The school provides highly individualised and intensive support for those pupils whose attendance is low. Parents increasingly trust the school to care for their children. Pupils are incentivised to be in school on time by an appropriate balance of rewards and celebrations. The school rightly takes a firm line on unauthorised holidays and absences. Despite this improvement, attendance remains below the national average, and leaders recognise the need to continue the good work they have already put in place.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points. In 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development rose from the previous year, although this remains just below the national average.
- Pupils continue to achieve well as they progress through key stage 1. In 2017, the

proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was above that seen nationally.

- In 2017, outcomes in the phonics screening check in Year 1 remained stubbornly below national results. Leaders swiftly identified the reasons for this, and their firm actions have led to improvements in the teaching of phonics. Pupils are now able to use their phonics knowledge successfully to help them read. The school's accurate performance information indicates that pupils are making rapid progress, with a higher proportion on course to achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check this year.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 rose significantly from the previous year. The proportion of pupils achieving the age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, although not yet at national figures, rose sharply from the previous year. In 2017 the school's results at the expected standard for combined reading, writing and mathematics were the most improved in Kent, with an impressive rise of 34% from results in 2016. National assessments in 2017 showed that pupils' progress had also considerably improved and was securely above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils are generally challenged to achieve well, as seen in the challenging work set for most-able pupils in lessons. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher standard by the end of Year 6, particularly in reading and mathematics, rose sharply, although it remains below the national average.
- In 2017, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, and that of other pupils nationally narrowed significantly. Disadvantaged pupils increasingly make good progress from their starting points. This is as a result of the carefully tailored support in place to ensure that they do not fall behind. The school's own performance information and work in pupils' books shows that the progress of this group of pupils is broadly in line with that of other pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported very effectively. As a result, they learn well, and make strong progress from their starting points in a range of subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in early years and make strong progress. Many enter the early years with skills and abilities below those typical for their age.
- The leader of early years shows strong leadership. She manages her team effectively, sharing planning and creative ideas to support children's learning.
- Adults have high expectations for children's behaviour and give close attention to their well-being. For example, children are so successfully taught how to brush their teeth that the school is known locally by health professionals as 'a centre of excellence for oral hygiene'.
- Transition into Nursery is managed well and routines are quickly established. Children understand the school's rules. They know how to keep themselves safe, even when taking risks. They play well together, successfully learning how to share and take turns.
- Phonics is taught effectively throughout the early years. Children in Reception Year use the sounds they have learned to build words and write sentences. Children were

observed writing successfully a story based on 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and their own experience of planting seeds.

- Leaders work hard to involve parents in their children's learning with activities such as phonics workshops and 'stay and play'. The school's innovative annual 'early years' conference' brings in interesting speakers to talk on relevant themes, for example managing behaviour and developing speech and language. These are well attended by parents and further support their children's development. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the provision in early years. One parent whose daughter attends the Nursery commented, 'My daughter is keen to learn and know more.'
- Some adults use skilful questioning to deepen children's understanding. For example, when playing hopscotch children were encouraged to draw and count the numbered squares. However, not all staff use questioning as effectively and this can slow the pace of learning.
- Children in Nursery and Reception are given rich and interesting opportunities. They are taught alongside a small number of children on assessment and observation placements who are taught by staff from Ifield School. For example, children learn to swim, increasing their confidence in water and teaching them an important life skill. They have weekly trips in the minibus to Ifield School's woodland, where they develop independence and an understanding of nature. By the end of their time in early years, children are well equipped to move to Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	118585
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10046499

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Richard Martin
Executive Headteacher	Abigail Birch
Head of School	Christopher Jackson
Telephone number	01474 566 979
Website	www.kings-farm.kent.sch.uk
Email address	office@kings-farm.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 May 2016

Information about this school

- King's Farm Primary School is a member of The Cedar Federation, along with Ifield School. The federation has a single governing body.
- King's Farm Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group from Nursery to Year 6.
- The school serves a community with above-average levels of deprivation.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national

average.

- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils join and leave the school during each school year.
- 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 teaching and learning in 22 classes throughout the school. All observations were conducted jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher of The Cedar Federation, the head of school and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with four governors of The Cedar Federation.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and also heard some read.
- The views of parents were taken into account by analysing 19 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, including 19 free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke informally with parents at the start of both inspection days.
- Inspectors considered responses to the school’s own pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff by analysing 22 responses to the staff survey and one letter from a member of staff.
- Inspectors evaluated pupils’ learning over time by examining a sample of their workbooks.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school’s documentation, including leaders’ evaluation of the school’s effectiveness and notes from external visits carried out by the local authority.
- Inspectors examined the school’s records of current pupils’ progress, behaviour and attendance. Safeguarding procedures were also reviewed, including the arrangements for keeping pupils safe and recruiting staff.

Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Sean McKeown	Ofsted Inspector
Barney Geen	Ofsted Inspector

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