

Dartford Bridge Community Primary School

Community Campus, Birdwood Avenue, Dartford, Kent DA1 5GB

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

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

- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are not effective. Systems for recording and reporting concerns to leaders are disorganised. As a result, leaders and staff do not have a clear understanding of pupils' needs.
- Governors accept leaders' assurances about safeguarding too readily. They have not ensured that safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose.
- Leaders' actions to improve the school have not been effective. Standards have declined over time.
- Leaders have not secured the confidence of staff, parents and carers. Many staff do not feel valued and supported. Numerous parents say leaders do not listen to or act on their concerns.
- The wider curriculum does not meet pupils' needs. Pupils do not study a range of subjects with any regularity. Standards are too low, particularly in science.
- Too few pupils, including those from vulnerable groups, make the progress which they are capable of by the end of key stage 2.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate over time. Teaching does not meet the needs of different groups of pupils well enough, including the most able and those who need help to catch up.
- Children in Reception Year are not consistently given effective opportunities to develop their interests and extend their learning. Their well-being and safety are not of the highest priority.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of phonics is secure. Pupils make good progress in developing their early reading skills.
- The leadership of mathematics is effective. Consequently, the teaching of mathematics is improving.
- Children make a strong start to their learning in the nursery.
- Leaders' work to ensure pupils attend school is effective. Overall, pupils' attendance is high.
- Specific provision (the Hub) for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for pupils who display challenging behaviours is inclusive and well led.

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?

- Ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are effective by:
 - urgently completing a comprehensive safeguarding review so that all arrangements meet requirements and are fit for purpose
 - recording all concerns about pupils and subsequent actions in a central, secure and well-maintained system
 - making sure that all designated safeguarding leads understand their responsibilities and work collectively to keep pupils safe
 - making sure that governors maintain proper oversight of the effectiveness of the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils from harm.
- Improve all aspects of leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - a sustainable and effective leadership structure is put in place
 - systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching are strengthened, so that leaders can drive improvement at a greater pace
 - the school's curriculum is developed so that it engages all pupils and deepens their learning across a range of subjects
 - additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively so it makes a positive impact on the outcomes of this group of pupils
 - leaders, including governors, secure the confidence of staff, parents and carers.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in a wide range of subjects, particularly in science
 - pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with consistently effective support in lessons to enable them to make good progress from their starting points
 - assessments of pupils' learning are reliably accurate
 - assessment information is used to address gaps in pupils' learning, so tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of

leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that safeguarding procedures are effective. Systems for reporting and recording information about pupils' welfare are not fit for purpose. The procedures used by governors to check leaders' work in this area have failed to identify weaknesses in the school's systems. Consequently, leaders are not well informed and do not have an accurate overview of pupils who may require additional support or who are at risk of harm.
- The school's effectiveness has declined in recent years. Poor leadership has resulted in standards that are too low and an ineffective culture of safeguarding.
- The leadership of teaching is ineffective. Leaders have not acted quickly enough to ensure that the quality of teaching improves across the school. They do not follow up agreed actions to ensure that these are implemented consistently. As a result, there are wide variations in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders' oversight of the wider curriculum is inadequate. They have failed to ensure that the curriculum is suitably broad and well organised. Teaching of subjects other than mathematics and English is sporadic and poorly planned. For instance, pupils' artistic abilities are not developed well, nor are their scientific knowledge, skills and understanding secure.
- Parents' confidence and trust in the wider leadership of the school has broken down. A significant number of parents voiced dissatisfaction to the inspectors regarding a host of issues. These include worries about how the school is led and managed, teaching arrangements, safeguarding concerns and their children's progress.
- Many staff do not feel well supported or valued by leaders. Consequently, staff morale is low. This is reflected in the high levels of staff absence and temporary staff covering lessons.
- The leadership of mathematics is effective. This subject is monitored carefully and actions for improvement are followed up tenaciously. Work in pupils' books and the school's own performance information show that pupils make strong progress in mathematics.
- The school's physical education (PE) and sports provision is led well. Additional sports funding is used effectively. Teachers support pupils well in PE lessons because they have received appropriate training over time. Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting clubs and activities, such as girls' football and multi-skills.
- Leaders are beginning to look more closely at the impact of pupil premium funding. They have plans in place to ensure that this funding is used more precisely so that outcomes for this group of pupils improve. However, current plans lack a specific focus. As a result, this group of pupils are not making the progress they need to catch up with their peers.
- Over the past year, the strategic oversight of provision for pupils with SEND has reduced considerably. High levels of staff absence have resulted in few opportunities for leaders to closely monitor the impact of additional support for this group of pupils.

The provision for pupils with SEND lacks a sharp focus and their learning is not supported consistently well in lessons.

- The local authority's work with the school, although appropriate, has shown little impact yet. The school improvement adviser is now working closely with governors and school leaders to ensure that improvements are swiftly put in place.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governors have overseen a decline in the school's effectiveness. They have not been sufficiently diligent in monitoring leaders' actions to tackle the quality of teaching or improve pupils' outcomes, including outcomes for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Governors have only recently recognised that improvements are needed and started to take decisive action. However, this has not proved sufficient in arresting the decline in the quality of education since the last inspection.
- Governors do not meet their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Oversight of safeguarding arrangements by governors has failed to identify significant weaknesses in safeguarding practice. Governors have too readily accepted what leaders have told them and have not asked suitably probing or challenging questions.
- Governors have failed to gain the full trust and confidence of staff and parents.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Systems for reporting and recording concerns about pupils' welfare and safety are disorganised and poorly maintained, including for the youngest children in the early years. As a result, leaders do not possess an accurate understanding of what information they hold on pupils and families.
- Staff receive training on safeguarding and they know how to identify and report concerns. Designated safeguarding leads are trained to a suitable level. However, they do not have a good enough understanding of their roles; neither do they work collectively to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Many pupils report they do not feel safe in school. They say that adults are not always vigilant about poor behaviour and, at times, pupils are treated unfairly. One pupil reported that 'teachers don't always see what happens'.
- Pre-employment checks are rigorous. The school's single central register of checks on adults at the school is maintained carefully and accurately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and for the quality of pupils' work are too low.
- Too many variations exist in the quality of teaching between different classes and subjects to secure pupils' good achievement. Where teaching is less strong, teachers do not have consistently high expectations of all pupils. Activities do not challenge the

most able pupils sufficiently well. As a result, pupils do not consistently achieve the standards they are capable of.

- The learning experiences for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged are inconsistent and are not monitored well enough by leaders. Poorly planned teaching does not routinely take into account pupils' starting points. As a result, these groups of pupils are not supported well to make progress.
- Leaders have implemented clear procedures to collect assessment information and monitor these regularly. However, with so many temporary staff in the school, further work is needed to ensure that assessment practices are secure. Teachers do not routinely identify gaps in pupils' learning and plan accordingly. As a result, work set is not accurately matched to pupils' abilities, including the disadvantaged and the most able.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use well-planned questions to deepen pupils' thinking and high-quality texts to develop their language and comprehension skills. For example, in upper key stage 2, teachers skilfully develop pupils' understanding of complex vocabulary such as 'courtesy' and 'stature'.
- The teaching of phonics is effective in the majority of year groups. Staff demonstrate secure subject knowledge. However, the teaching of phonics remains more variable in Reception Year.
- The recently implemented whole-school approach to reading is helping pupils develop their comprehension and vocabulary skills. However, due to inconsistent expectations across classes and lack of focused monitoring, leaders are not yet clear of its impact. The school's library is a valuable resource which is not utilised to its full effect. As a result, pupils do not demonstrate a deep love of reading.
- The teaching of mathematics is, on the whole, effective. Where teaching is strong, pupils are encouraged to work together to support and discuss their mathematical thinking. For example, older pupils were observed working collaboratively to discuss division problems, supporting each other well and explaining their reasoning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because processes and procedures for recording and reporting concerns about pupils' welfare are not effective. Consequently, leaders and governors cannot guarantee that pupils are safe.
- Pupils show tolerance towards pupils who are different. School records show that incidents involving racism are low. However, the school's underdeveloped curriculum means that pupils have limited knowledge and understanding of a range of different cultures and faiths.
- Pupils and parents told inspectors that bullying happens often, although none was observed during the inspection. They have little confidence in the school's ability to tackle bullying, feeling that staff and leaders do not listen to their concerns.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed through 'Ubuntu',

an African expression, literally translated as 'I am, because you are.' This is an intrinsic and important feature of school life. Pupils understand its meaning and can explain that it is important to share, be kind and work collaboratively with each other.

- Pupils are friendly. They enjoy positive relationships with each other. New pupils to the school are welcomed warmly. One pupil described the school as a 'social' place and commented, 'We do our best to welcome people and make them feel happy.'
- The Hub offers highly inclusive support for a small number of pupils with SEND and for pupils who may display challenging behaviours. Pupils value this space in the school greatly and appreciate the expert individual attention and care they receive.
- Pupils learn about online safety and know what to do if they are subjected to cyber bullying. They say that the blogging club helps them understand how to keep safe online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In lessons, the majority of pupils pay attention to their teachers and show a desire to learn. Where teaching is strong, pupils display respectful and thoughtful behaviour. However, where teaching is weaker, pupils quickly lose concentration and seek to distract others from their learning.
- At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy the opportunity to participate in their games, choose books to read or play with their friends. During the inspection, pupils were supervised adequately on the playground and no poor behaviour was seen. However, pupils say this is not always the case, saying that staff often ignore or are not quick enough to sort out poor behaviour.
- Pupils' transitions around the school are not managed well. Leaders and staff do not consistently reinforce expectations for behaviour and, too often, these times of the day are not supervised well. As a result, pupils' behaviour can be silly and, in some cases, risks being unsafe.
- Leaders monitor the attendance of pupils closely. Leaders' work with families is effective and ensures that pupils attend school regularly. Consequently, pupils' attendance is above that seen nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is too low. Too few pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils do not make the gains in learning they should from one key stage to the next. In key stage 2, pupils do not make enough progress to allow them to catch up in reading, writing or mathematics. Overall, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 remains persistently below national figures in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes for the small number of disadvantaged pupils in 2018 were lower than those of others nationally in reading and mathematics. These pupils receive support for their well-being and enjoy a range of enrichment activities. Nevertheless, work in current pupils' books shows that they are not making the progress they need to in order to

catch up with others nationally.

- In other subjects, standards are low. This is particularly the case in science. Pupils do not cover key scientific concepts in any depth, nor do they have opportunities to develop their investigative skills.
- Some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. Some find it hard to tackle their work because it is not well matched to their needs and neither are they reliably provided with the resources needed to support their learning.
- Work in current pupils' books shows that the most able pupils do not receive consistent stretch and challenge across the curriculum. Consequently, they do not learn as well as they should across a wide range of subjects.
- The proportion of pupils who met the standard required in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 was in line with that seen nationally. Pupils are taught early reading skills systematically and effectively.
- Outcomes in key stage 1 assessments are stronger than those seen in key stage 2. However, work in current pupils' books and observations of learning show that pupils' progress overall is not consistently strong across a wide range of subjects. Leaders recognise that further work is required to ensure that pupils make the gains they should in all year groups.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years is inadequate because procedures for safeguarding children are not effective. For example, adults in Reception Year do not pay sufficient attention to ensuring that children are always well supervised, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Adults do not show the highest regard for children's health and safety. Risk assessments of the outside area are not recorded carefully enough. Some areas of the Reception Year environment are untidy, resulting in trip hazards for the children.
- The early years leader has a clear vision and an accurate understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, she has not provided staff with effective support to ensure that they are maximising children's experiences.
- In the past, teaching in the early years has resulted in a higher than average proportion of children achieving a good level of development. However, due to current inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, this trend is not securely set to continue.
- Children get off to a good start in the nursery. Parents confirm they are happy with the provision and say their children are settled and coming on in 'leaps and bounds'.
- The strong progress made by children in the nursery does not continue in the Reception Year. For example, some children who show emerging early writing skills are not supported well enough to develop these further.
- Children's learning is not extended or developed consistently well. Adults do not use what they already know about children to plan suitably engaging activities, inside and outside the classroom. For example, an area has been set up outside to develop writing skills, but children lack a stimulus and purpose for writing. As a result, this area is not

always used effectively for its intended purpose.

- Interactions between adults and children do not always engage children successfully in their learning. For instance, a group of children were observed threading beads to develop their fine motor skills. However, adults' lack of sharp oversight and engagement resulted in children quickly losing interest.
- Children's development of number skills shows early signs of success. In mathematics, inspectors observed children enjoying using dice to successfully work out how to add two numbers.
- Where teaching is stronger, children settle well and listen attentively. Children respond to well-established routines confidently and purposefully, for example when helping to put resources away. However, this is too inconsistent to promote effective learning overall.

School details

Unique reference number	135280
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10054133

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	442
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Alastair Jefford
Headteacher	Sarah Randall
Telephone number	01322 424021
Website	www.dartfordbridgecps.com/
Email address	headteacher@dbcps.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than the national average.
- The school has two classes in each year group other than Year 6, which currently has one class. From September 2019 there will be two classes in each year group.
- The school has a nursery offering morning and afternoon sessions.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all but one class, as well as visiting the Hub. They also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms and observed groups of pupils learning. Almost all these observations were carried out with school leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of senior and middle leaders.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Together with senior leaders, inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views and considered the 96 responses to the online pupil survey.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed pupils' progress and attainment with leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before school and considered the 92 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 77 free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the 30 responses to the confidential online staff questionnaire.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised to gather information on leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, the behaviour and safety of pupils, the work of the governors and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children and looked at the school's single central record.

Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lizzie Jeanes	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Scutter	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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