

Westgate Primary School

Summerhill Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 2LP

Inspection dates

5–6 March 2019

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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The head of school, executive headteacher, trustees and governors share high expectations for staff and pupils at the school. Leaders have secured improvements and created a culture of achievement and aspiration. The school now provides a good education for its pupils.
- Teaching and learning have improved and are good. As a result, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make typically good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well. The proportions of pupils who reach the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics are above the national averages by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Pupils' writing is a real strength. Progress in reading and mathematics has strengthened. Previously, the proportions of pupils achieving the higher standards in reading and mathematics were below the national averages.
- Currently, too few pupils, particularly but not exclusively the most able, develop skills, knowledge and understanding at the higher standard in the foundation subjects.
- The early years provision is excellent. Leadership of the early years is outstanding. Children are nurtured and thrive in a rich, safe and secure environment. They learn exceptionally well.
- Governance has been successfully reviewed. Governors provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. They are reflective and take action to further improve their effectiveness in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Leaders have created a culture of support and improvement, and teachers value the guidance they receive. The curriculum is broad and balanced and inspires pupils to learn. The leadership of foundation subjects continues to develop and is having a greater impact on the quality of teaching and outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding and pupils feel happy, safe and well cared for at school. There are very strong relationships between pupils and adults.
- Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. They work well together and are friendly, polite and hard working.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils, particularly the most able, achieve greater depth in their skills, knowledge and understanding across the wider curriculum.
- Strengthen the leadership of foundation subjects so that leaders further improve the quality of teaching and learning and pupils achieve even better outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The determined and highly effective leadership of the head of school, ably supported by the assistant head of school, has galvanised staff and ensured that the school has improved. The head of school, senior leaders and governors work effectively as a team with a shared ambition. Together, they have secured and embedded a positive culture and ethos within the school and raised expectations.
- The multi-academy trust's aims, of improving learning experiences, raising aspirations and realising ambition, are evident in all that the head of school and his leadership team do. Staff and governors are committed to the shared vision and the pursuit of excellence. Overseen by the chief executive officer (CEO) of the multi-academy trust (MAT), who is also the executive headteacher, leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching and learning is a constant focus. This has been challenging because of staffing difficulties and turbulence. Teaching and learning have improved. Leaders' robust monitoring identifies any weaknesses in teaching. Effective support is provided and improvement is expected to meet leaders' high expectations.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is strong. Leaders provide good support for their colleagues, have strong subject knowledge and skills, and conduct a range of monitoring activities. They analyse pupils' progress and attainment information, and have a clear view of the strengths and areas for further development in their subjects. In subjects other than English and mathematics, leadership roles are less well developed. Leaders of foundation subjects are not yet having a full impact on the quality of teaching and learning or pupils' outcomes.
- Staff are proud of the school and enjoy working there. They are well motivated and know that they are accountable for pupils' progress. They value the range of professional development opportunities available to them to enhance and update their teaching skills. Teachers who are at an early stage of their career are very positive and highly responsive to the support that the school provides. Senior leaders and the MAT set great store in getting the best from staff and developing their leadership skills. Staff share good practice within school and with other schools in the MAT. There are beneficial links with the other MAT schools for both staff and governors, through the provision of specific support and training.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Where appropriate, learning is linked through a range of topics and experiences, carefully chosen to inspire and challenge pupils. Leaders are aware that they are not yet seeing the same depth of learning in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in foundation subjects, that is evident in their English and mathematics learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the promotion of fundamental British values, underpins all aspects of the school's work and the curriculum. Much learning is planned around first-hand, real-life experiences, and includes opportunities for exploration and problem solving. Learning is enriched through visits.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional funding from the pupil premium, sports funding and for pupils with SEND. Leaders and governors monitor the use of this

funding and its impact on the outcomes of specific groups of pupils to ensure that it is making a difference to their achievement.

- Only a small number of parents and carers responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, inspectors also looked at the school's own survey of parents. The mainly positive responses indicate that parents are pleased with what the school does and are supportive of its work. Almost all parents spoken to at the start of the inspection echoed this view.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. There is a good mix of experienced and new governors on the school's local governing body and the new chair has appropriate expertise and skills. The chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the MAT have carried out a review of the governing body's work. The chair of the governing body has ensured that all the recommended actions have been addressed.
- Governors are well informed by leaders but conduct their own monitoring, gathering evidence to validate the information they receive. As a result, they are well informed and equipped, using information about the school's progress to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide a good balance of challenge and support to leaders. Governors ask questions about the progress of different groups of pupils and about the impact and quality of teaching and learning. Checks are made on the use of pupil premium and other additional funding to ensure that it is being spent wisely to make a difference for pupils.
- Governors understand and fulfil their statutory duties including those relating to safeguarding and welfare.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety and well-being have a high priority. All safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Staff, including those who are new, are effectively trained on all aspects of safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty and about online safety. This ensures that all staff are vigilant, and know what signs to look for and the procedures to follow to report concerns.
- The head of school is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and, along with three deputy DSLs, receives appropriate and up-to-date training for this role. The DSL team are very knowledgeable and determined to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. There is always at least one DSL on site for staff to go to, should there be a concern.
- All background checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are carried out efficiently. High-quality safeguarding records are kept, making use of technology to ensure that these are efficient and effective. Leaders work closely with a range of

external agencies, where appropriate, to ensure that pupils and their families receive timely and effective help and support. Leaders are resolute in ensuring that all concerns and referrals are followed up.

- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and staff and parents agree that the school keeps pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils enjoy learning. They are enthusiastic and curious, and have a thirst for new knowledge and skills. A group of pupils agreed that, 'We learn about the past so we can change the future.' There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, pupils are confident to take risks and 'have a go'. They know that their efforts will be valued. They want to do well and work hard. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective and they use appropriate language to evaluate their own learning.
- Pupils work well together, supporting each other successfully with their learning. A group of pupils agreed with one who said, 'We help each other, which helps us all to learn well.' Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations for their conduct in lessons.
- Most adults are skilful in asking questions that extend pupils' learning and deepen their understanding. This is evident in English and mathematics in particular, although the effectiveness of questioning is not consistently at the same high level in all classes. Tasks are usually well matched to the different needs of pupils. Sometimes, however, challenges are not always as demanding as they could be in the foundation subjects.
- Pupils are usually clear about what they are learning and the purpose of their tasks. In an art lesson, for example, Year 2 pupils were mixing colours and creating different tones and tints by blending paint. One pupil said, 'It's good to know this, so you can paint the sky because it's never just one blue.' Projects are planned to provide meaningful links and opportunities for pupils to apply their learning across the curriculum. Occasionally, there needs to be greater clarity about the skills, knowledge and understanding being taught.
- Phonics skills are taught well using the school's agreed phonics programme, which is followed closely. Pupils use these skills effectively to help them read unfamiliar words and to support their early writing.
- Reading for enjoyment has been, and continues to be, promoted very well. Teachers read aloud to pupils every day and pupils of all ages thoroughly enjoy being read to. Teachers introduce pupils to a range of different authors and genres. All classrooms have an exciting, motivating reading area. High-quality children's literature is often the starting point for learning across a range of subjects. A relatively new, whole-class approach to the teaching of reading, comprehension and vocabulary skills, in key stage 2, is already having an impact on pupils' achievement, not only in reading but also in writing. There are well-understood, school-wide processes for writing, from the initial planning, through redrafting and editing, which result in the impressive final presentation of pupils' written work.
- Effective strategies have improved teaching and learning in mathematics. There is a continuing focus on developing pupils' ability to apply their mathematical knowledge,

and developing their reasoning, problem-solving skills and fluency in calculation. Pupils are increasingly adept at explaining their thinking. They develop a depth of understanding rather than simply getting correct answers. Short, focused sessions have helped to improve pupils' basic mathematical skills, enabling pupils to make good progress.

- Teaching assistants generally work closely with teachers and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They provide individuals and groups with well-targeted and appropriate extra support when needed. Teachers know the pupils very well. Different groups, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language, are supported appropriately and well, and learn successfully.
- Within the overall picture of good and much-improved teaching and learning, there is a little inconsistency, where best practice is not yet fully embedded. There are occasions when the depth of pupils' learning is not achieved as well as it might be. This is mostly but not exclusively in the foundation subjects for the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are great ambassadors for their school. They are happy and proud of their school and their achievements. They present themselves and their work very well. They are polite, confident and friendly, and show a genuine interest in and caring attitudes towards others. They enjoy all that they do in school and have very positive attitudes to learning, which help them to achieve well.
- Pupils are very positive about their teachers. They agreed that, 'Teachers are fair and care, listen to us and celebrate when we do great things.' Staff provide a very safe, caring and nurturing environment where pupils learn to respect each other and adults. In their responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, the vast majority of pupils agreed that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally. Pupils learn without fear of discrimination of any kind and get on very well together. They learn to listen to others, respecting their views and opinions, even if they do not always agree with them.
- Lots of sport and other physical activities encourage pupils' awareness of and positive attitudes towards health and fitness. Every class has an energetic fitness session first thing in the morning. One pupil said, 'It helps to wake the brain up and get it working.'
- Leaders and staff set great store in building pupils' self-esteem and confidence. There are effective strategies to ensure that all pupils thrive, have memorable learning experiences and have high aspirations for themselves. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to talk about wider issues affecting the world, such as the impact of landfills and the importance of recycling.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They understand how to keep safe in a range of situations in and out of school, including when online. They know bullying can take different forms but say it very rarely happens in school and, if it does, it is always sorted out. They are confident to turn to adults in school should they have any

problems or concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The atmosphere around the school is calm and purposeful. The behaviour of pupils when discussing and debating an issue in assembly was exemplary. Behaviour in lessons is good and helps pupils to learn well and make strong progress. Most pupils consistently conduct themselves well in the playground and around the school. Pupils are aware of the school's expectations for their behaviour and clearly know what they should and should not do. A few pupils need frequent reminders from adults, which they respond to well, rather than independently regulating their own behaviour.
- Overall attendance improved in 2018 and was just above the national average. This is being sustained this year despite a bout of sickness that reduced the weekly figures to below average. Leaders keep a close check on patterns of attendance for different groups of pupils and ensure that there is robust follow-up if the school is not informed about a pupil's absence. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has decreased.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, the proportions of pupils who reached the expected standards at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 were above the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. The combination of good interpersonal skills, strong work ethic and very positive attitudes to learning means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- At the end of Year 6, in 2018, the measures of pupils' progress, from their end of key stage 1 starting points, were in line with the national averages for reading and mathematics and above the national average for writing. For the past two years, pupils' progress has been strongest in writing, when compared with reading and mathematics.
- The school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books show that current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language, are making good progress. Improvements in teaching and learning and actions taken to strengthen achievement are having a positive impact. Progress is improving for current pupils in mathematics and reading.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in writing was considerably above the national average. This demonstrates the strength of pupils' outcomes in writing. Pupils are confident, successful writers. For the past two years, however, too few pupils have achieved the higher standards in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Leaders and teachers are working hard to address this and the impact of this work is evident in pupils' books.
- Topic work shows a breadth of learning across the curriculum. However, rightly, leaders are focusing on high-quality learning to deepen pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the foundation subjects.
- The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics

screening check have been above the national average for the past two years. By the end of Year 2, in 2018, almost all pupils achieved the expected standard.

- The small and varying proportions of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 make year-on-year comparisons difficult. The progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is generally in line with the school's expectations. As with other pupils, there is a little variation across the classes and leaders are monitoring carefully where individuals, especially the most able disadvantaged pupils, need to catch up.
- Pupils with SEND are supported well and make good progress. The support they receive meets their needs effectively and enables them to fully participate in activities alongside other pupils. Pupils who are at the very early stages of learning English when they start school are supported very well. They quickly acquire English language skills and work towards fluency. The school values all the different languages that are spoken at home. For example, there is a prominent display of high-quality and familiar texts in a range of languages.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Last academic year, children's starting points were well below those typical for their age. Children made very strong progress and caught up. By the end of Reception, in 2018, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was in line with the national average. In the current year, children's starting points are typical for their age and the school's assessments indicate that a larger proportion will exceed the expectations for their learning by the end of the year. This demonstrates excellent progress over time. It also shows the high expectations of the early years leaders and staff.
- Leaders and staff ensure that children make an exceptionally strong start and quickly settle into the routines that so effectively support their learning and personal development. Children swiftly develop confidence and independence. By the end of the Reception Year, children are very well prepared for their successful transition into Year 1.
- Children's well-being is paramount. Staff provide a warm, welcoming, stimulating and safe environment. All children's welfare needs are met extremely well and all necessary actions are taken to support children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- Highly effective teaching supports children's needs very well. There are very clear expectations and challenges for learning in all activities, whether children are learning independently or with an adult. Leaders ensure that all adults know and use key questions to support learning. Staff provide very positive role models for children.
- Children's speaking and listening skills are developed extremely effectively. Children plan and reflect on their own learning. They listen to a partner describe what they will do, and then they, in turn, share this with the rest of the class. Adults praise children for their efforts but also sensitively check for any misconceptions, guiding children to improve. Children respond extremely well to adults; relationships are strong and trusting.
- Children's early reading and writing skills are very well developed. Children quickly learn to love books and to write for real purposes, as well as for the simple pleasures

of using words and mark making. The early years environment, both inside and outside, is rich and enables high-quality learning in all areas of the curriculum, and provides opportunities to practise skills.

- Children behave really well. They share and care for each other. One boy, without any adult prompting, made sure that a girl, who did not have someone to talk to, joined him and his partner. Children concentrate exceptionally well and show steely determination to succeed when faced with challenge. Staff create motivating and exciting experiences to develop children's curiosity and engage their enquiring minds.
- Outstanding early years leadership has created and continues to develop the high quality of this provision. Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the school so that children's development and learning at home and at school can be shared and celebrated. Leaders use their regular assessments to review planning and make sure that children sustain their excellent progress.

School details

Unique reference number	142613
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10058126

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Trixie Ball
Headteacher	Daniel Terry (head of school) David Lloyd (executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01322 223 382
Website	www.westgateprimary.org
Email address	headofsch@westgate.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Westgate Primary School converted to academy status on 1 April 2016 and is part of Cygnus Academies Trust. This is a small multi-academy trust (MAT). The MAT has a board of trustees and the school has a local governing body. The chief executive officer of the MAT is also the executive headteacher.
- There is one class in each year group except for Year 3, where there are two classes.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and examined work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors talked to individuals and groups of pupils about their learning and their views of the school. They heard some pupils read. They observed pupils arriving at school and their behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with the head of school, the assistant head of school, the executive headteacher, the chair of the governing body and the chair of the board of trustees. Meetings were held with other leaders with key responsibilities.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents, including: leaders' checks on the school's performance and the quality of teaching and learning; the school development plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to safeguarding and pupils' attendance.
- There were 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including one free-text comment. An inspector spoke to some parents at the start of the day and the school's own survey of parents was examined. This had 41 responses. Inspectors also took account of 20 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 22 to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector

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