

Lenham Primary School

Ham Lane, Lenham, Maidstone, ME17 2QG

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most pupils make good progress and achieve well in most subjects. Some make exceptional progress from their starting points.
- Teaching and learning are good overall. Most teachers have high expectations of the pupils and teach interesting and imaginative lessons.
- Most pupils learn to read quickly and reach the expected levels. Those who fall behind are effectively supported so that they catch up well.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are a positive aspect of the school because pupils feel safe, respected and well looked after. Pupils are proud of their school, behave well and their attendance has steadily improved. They are eager to learn, tolerant, friendly and respectful of both adults and each other.
- The headteacher is well supported by a strong team of leaders and an effective governing body. Governors have made a strong contribution to the school's drive to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make better progress than others because they are well taught in class and in their small groups.
- The school is improving because leaders and governors have ambitious development plans based on an accurate and detailed knowledge of the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils develop a good understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics), so they do not achieve as well in reading as they do in other subjects.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly but marking does not always show in detail how they can improve work themselves.
- In a small proportion of lessons, the pace is not brisk enough to enable the pupils to complete all the tasks planned.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which four were joint observations with senior leaders. Additionally, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and assemblies and to observe the teaching of small groups of pupils who needed extra help with their work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, representative governors, including the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, and with school staff, including senior and subject leaders.
- Pupils' work in books was scrutinised and a representative sample of pupils was heard reading. Information and data about the performance of pupils in national tests and work completed in classrooms were analysed.
- Records and logs about pupils' safety, attendance and behaviour were examined.
- The school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, together with the minutes of governors' meetings and reports written by representatives of the local authority, were considered.
- Inspectors heard the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff. Forty parents and carers responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a further 15 spoke to inspectors at the school gate. Inspectors also considered three written responses from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Richard Potts, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lenham Primary School is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school serving a large village and its outlying rural area.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly similar to the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A below-average proportion of pupils is supported by the pupil premium, which provides extra funding to improve the achievement of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those in the care of the local authority.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils enters and leaves the school every year at times other than the usual ones for joining or leaving.
- The school meets the government's current floor target, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school shares its site with a private nursery, which did not form part of the current inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in reading so that attainment comes into line with that in writing and mathematics by improving pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding and the small proportion which requires improvement becomes at least good by:
 - ensuring that all pupils know from teachers' feedback the next steps in their learning and how to achieve them and by providing greater opportunities for pupils to learn from their mistakes
 - increasing the pace of a small number of ineffective lessons, so that pupils have enough time to complete their tasks.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below the levels typically expected for their age. They make rapid progress in developing a range of skills, particularly listening and social skills, and join Year 1 with attainment that is still below, but closer to, average.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make better progress than that typically expected for their age, particularly in writing and mathematics, so that attainment is a little above the national average.
- The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is good because the extra support they get is well targeted and effective. As a result, the achievement of this group is generally better than that of other pupils in English and mathematics. Pupils who enter the school other than at the normal times are well supported, although on occasion, it takes time for them to catch up.
- The school has well-developed systems to identify pupils' learning needs, so that appropriate programmes can be put into place quickly. As a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. Some make exceptional progress, so that their overall attainment is better than that of their peers.
- Most parents and carers agree that their children make good progress in their learning. As one said, 'Ours is a really lovely school and my two can't wait to get here every morning. They've got on really well because the teachers make learning such fun.'
- Pupils develop a range of reading skills and are encouraged to read widely, although few pupils achieved better-than-average scores in the 2012 phonics reading check of pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds that they make. While achievement in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly in line with the national average, achievement in writing is better and some pupils made excellent progress from their starting points to attain the highest levels in mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have taken urgent action to address weaknesses in aspects of pupils' reading, and across the school there are early signs that their confidence in systematically applying their phonics skills is improving.
- The school is committed to equality of opportunity and makes sure that discrimination is not tolerated. As a result, pupils of all abilities benefit from high-quality educational experiences.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, no inadequate lessons were seen.
- In a large majority of lessons, careful assessment is used to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' different abilities. Lesson planning is detailed and learning targets are clearly identified for both individuals and groups of pupils.
- Teachers maintain a careful check on pupils' progress as the lessons proceed, using skilful questioning to judge levels of understanding and to encourage deeper thinking.
- Teachers' high expectations in most lessons lead to work that is challenging and most teachers ensure that learning proceeds briskly, although in a very few lessons the pace slows so that pupils are left with too little time to complete all the activities planned.
- Relationships are characterised by respect and trust and are strengths of the school. Pupils respond well to instruction and imaginatively planned and well-taught lessons ensure that the school is a very positive place in which to learn.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and know how to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Effective teaching assistants support learning well, so that there are no appreciable gaps in the progress of various groups of pupils.

- The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils in Year 6 were engrossed in studying the experiences of the 'Windrush' immigrants and were deeply affected to learn of the treatment many had received.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and add helpful and encouraging comments, although these are not always closely related to the intended learning target. As a result, not all pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning and how to achieve them. Even where helpful comments are made, pupils are not always given the opportunity for further practice, so that they do not always learn from their mistakes and not all make the progress they should.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has worked closely with parents and carers to improve attendance. As a result, rates of attendance have improved steadily over three years and are now above the national average. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and that the teachers make their learning fun. Very few pupils arrive late.
- The school has well-developed and effective systems of rewards and sanctions. Carefully maintained logs indicate that poor behaviour and racist incidents are rare. Repeated indiscipline is dealt with swiftly and decisively and the rate of exclusion is low.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are a defining feature of the school. Most show commitment and a determination to succeed, although on the few occasions when teaching is less than good, some pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration and behave well. Disabled pupils and those whose special educational needs impact on the way they behave are well supported and the expectations of them are no different from those of their peers. Pupils' positive attitudes to their work contribute strongly to the good progress most make in their learning.
- Close partnerships between the school and those agencies providing help for parents and carers add to the effectiveness of the school's work.
- The majority of parents and carers who expressed their views through the online questionnaire (Parent View) and through verbal and written comments to the inspection team believe that the few incidents of bullying are promptly and effectively dealt with. Pupils say that there is very little bullying and that they feel safe and well protected. They have a good understanding, for their age, of the different types of bullying and express trust and confidence in the staff. Most pupils are confident that any issues affecting their well-being are dealt with sensitively and quickly.
- Pupils express pride in their school and are eager volunteers for extra responsibilities and tasks. Most pupils are helpful, tolerant and thoughtful towards each other and polite towards adults. One pupil's comment, typical of others, was, 'There'll always be little niggles and fall-outs, normally between best friends, but we make sure they'll be best friends again the next day.'

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is strongly committed to the creation of an outstanding school over time and has assembled a workforce that shares her vision.
- Well supported by capable and knowledgeable senior and subject leaders, the headteacher has acted decisively to tackle weaker aspects of the school's performance. Under her leadership, attendance has improved steadily and attainment in mathematics and writing has risen. There remain small variations in the rate at which pupils make progress in all subjects across the school, but plans to enhance the school's effectiveness reflect a detailed and accurate evaluation of its performance and provide a solid foundation on which to secure further improvement.
- Senior leaders carefully monitor the work of teachers and other staff. The process of setting targets for teachers to improve their work is effective, because it is focused on meeting pupils'

needs and on supporting their progress. There is a close link between teachers' range of duties, their effectiveness and their pay.

- Leaders and managers keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing and ensure that any extra support is deployed effectively. The school's resources are used effectively to support learning and, as a result, pupils make at least good progress.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is well matched to pupils' learning needs and promotes good achievement. A range of imaginative and creative learning opportunities promotes pupils' interest and leads to positive attitudes to work. Further enrichment opportunities, such as good-quality trips, visits and after-school activities, complement the work in classrooms.
- Building on its success in promoting healthy and active lifestyles, recorded in the previous inspection report, the school is using its new primary school sport funding to develop closer links with neighbouring schools to share and develop expertise to create a legacy for the future. Pupils are keen to participate in a developing range of new sporting opportunities and, although still at an early stage, this is increasing the take-up of activities designed to enhance their physical well-being.
- The school works well with external agencies, in particular those helping individual pupils and their families. At the time of the inspection, all appropriate safeguarding arrangements were in place.
- Working with her neighbouring colleagues, the headteacher is promoting growing levels of cooperation within the local cluster of schools whereby expertise and good practice are developed and shared to the advantage of the wider pupil community.
- The local authority maintains a 'light-touch' oversight of the school. Through careful monitoring and the arrangement of suitable support, the local authority has made an appropriate and valued contribution to the school's improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide strong support for the work of the school. Their insight, commitment and energy contribute positively to its strategic drive for improvement. They make decisions based on a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, including those in the teaching. Their monitoring work, coupled with the good-quality training they have undertaken, means that they have a good understanding of the school's performance data, which allows them to hold the school effectively to account for its improvement and to ensure that performance is closely matched to teachers' pay progression. They keep a close eye on how the school deploys its resources. As a result, they make well-informed decisions about the use of pupil premium funds and recognise that this is helping to narrow the gaps in performance between groups and individual pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118294
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	429554

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Smith
Headteacher	Jenny Young
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2009
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