

Eastling Primary School

Kettle Hill Road, Eastling, Faversham, Kent ME13 0BA

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2016

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have taken rapid action to improve teaching, especially in mathematics and writing, so that more pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- The majority of current pupils achieve well and reach the standards expected of them. In 2016, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standards was well above the national average.
- However, a few of the most able pupils are not yet achieving the highest standards in their subjects, especially in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils with an education, health and care plan are very well supported by specialist teaching so that they make good progress, especially in reading and writing.
- A few pupils who need additional support are not yet reaching the same standards as others with similar starting points.
- The school works effectively with other schools in the local area to ensure that pupils receive a wide range of educational experiences and to support staff to improve their practice.
- Disadvantaged pupils are increasingly doing well because there is bespoke support for these pupils that meets their individual needs.
- Governors are very committed and ambitious for the pupils in the school. They scrutinise the work of leaders effectively and check that funding is used efficiently.
- However, leaders are not reviewing the impact of new approaches sharply enough, so they may miss what works best.
- Pupils are polite and respectful. They are caring and concerned about others. Pupils, teachers and parents work well together so that the school plays a central role in the community.
- Pupils receive a good start to their education in the early years, make good progress in school and are well prepared for secondary school on leaving.
- Those pupils who fall behind in reading receive good support so that the majority catch up quickly.
- However, a few pupils do not attend school often enough and overall the school's attendance is slightly below that of other schools.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop teaching and learning by:
 - improving the school's approaches to teaching so that the most able pupils consistently exceed the expected standards in their subjects, especially in mathematics and reading
 - ensuring that all teachers use the most effective strategies to teach pupils spelling, punctuation and grammar so that those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who are not achieving the expected standards, catch up quickly.

- Further improve leadership by:
 - refining the approaches leaders use to analyse the progress pupils make from their starting points, so that intervention and support can be more precisely targeted
 - evaluating more precisely the difference funding makes on the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that the most effective strategies are applied consistently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and his leaders work effectively together to improve the standards in the school. His determined and dogged leadership has ensured that the school remains at the heart of the community and continues to thrive.
- Leaders evaluate their work regularly and work in partnership with governors to prioritise areas that require further attention. They have a good grasp of the progress of pupils in each year group and ensure that they act quickly to support pupils so that most catch up. This is especially the case with pupils who have a high level of need or are vulnerable.
- The leadership of teaching is increasingly effective following an overhaul during the last academic year. The systems to reward pay and performance are fair and stringent. Leaders also make very good use of the links with local schools, guidance from the local authority and the local university to support teacher improvement. As a result, all of the teaching in the school has improved and is now strong.
- Leaders at all levels work well with support staff. Teaching assistants enjoy working at the school and are well supported with appropriate training. They provide well targeted support in lessons and work especially well in mixed year group classes with the younger pupils.
- Leaders have used the additional funding for pupils who have extensive special educational needs and/or disabilities particularly well. The larger than average number of pupils who have a high level of need receive a bespoke curriculum and specialist teaching that ensures that these pupils are currently making strong progress from their starting points.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well so that the majority of these pupils are reaching the standards expected of them and those that need to catch up are given appropriate support to do so. The support for pupils who attend less well has been particularly effective in reducing absence in most cases. Although leaders have a good sense of the difference these strategies make on individual pupils, they are not sufficiently clear about which strategies are the most effective across the school, or consistently fast enough at adapting them so that gaps in pupils' performance are eradicated.
- Leaders make very good use of the additional funding for sports to provide a wide range of experiences for all pupils. Pupils reported how much they enjoy playing competitive sports as well as trying out new activities such as learning to trampolining, play golf and tenpin bowling.
- The curriculum is exciting and stimulating. Pupils frequently go outside of the classroom, for example to the local garden centre, to broaden their understanding on trips and visits. Leaders have rightly prioritised the teaching of science and work well with other schools to provide a richer curriculum. Teachers also use information technology very effectively to deepen pupils' understanding and capture their interest. There is a full programme of guest speakers and assemblies that complement the learning that is taking place. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning and are very positive about the experiences they have.
- The school's ethos is for all children 'to be happy, make lasting friendships and be fully

supported to develop their talents'. Leaders promote these values well to staff, pupils and parents, so that no matter what age, background or ethnicity, pupils are well supported. This is especially the case for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, pupils are sensitive and respectful of each other's differences.

- Parents are very supportive of the school and its work. They are very positive about the work of leaders and enjoy the many opportunities they have to take part in school life, as well as the regular updates they receive about the progress that their children make. The parent teacher association also makes a significant contribution to school life by raising money from a programme of activities throughout the year.
- The local authority has provided particularly good support and challenge, especially for the headteacher, following the dip in results in 2015. As a result, the teaching has improved and more pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- The school works well with a cluster of local schools, the Rural Swale Collaboration. Together, they have addressed common issues, such as developing effective approaches to help the most able pupils attain the highest standards and ensuring that teachers' assessments are accurate.

Governance of the school

- Governance is good. Governors are an organised and effective body. They have good systems in place to ensure effective leadership. For example, the retirement of the long-serving chair at the end of the last academic year did not constrain the governors as they have ensured that other governors have the appropriate skills to take on new roles. They have also recruited governors with specific expertise in finance and human resources following a review of their skills and experience.
- Governors work in pairs to monitor the impact that leaders make. They visit the school regularly to talk to parents and pupils as well as visiting classrooms. They are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but recognise that some of the information they receive is not sufficiently precise for them to hold leaders to account as effectively as they would wish. This is especially the case with regard to pupil premium funding, where they have detailed knowledge about the range of support that this funding provides and the impact on individuals, but are not clear enough about what actions are making the biggest difference for this group of pupils.
- Governors exercise useful oversight over the performance of staff and manage school finances well. They regularly check that the school's policies are up to date and have particular regard for the school's safeguarding procedures, as well as the safety of the school site. They are committed to the school and maintaining its central place in the community and are ambitious for the school to improve further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There are widespread systems in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Staff are suitably checked when recruited and all staff have appropriate training that is regular and up to date including those with additional responsibilities. The headteacher is tenacious in pursuing the best outcomes for pupils and makes very good use of the local services available. As a result, pupils feel safe and well looked after. They are confident to report any concerns, knowing that these are dealt with quickly. All parents surveyed or spoken to reported that their children are well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Good teaching is ensuring that more pupils than in the past make good progress from their starting points. Where teaching is most effective, teachers plan thoroughly and assess pupils' work skilfully so that pupils in each class, despite the differences in age and ability, make good progress.
- Across both key stages, teachers demand that pupils use sophisticated vocabulary and insist on a high standard of technical skills in writing. Pupils make good use of the opportunities to improve their work and value the guidance they receive; for example, in a lesson on informal writing, one of the older pupils successfully developed his writing to include sarcasm and irony.
- The teaching of reading is very well developed. Both younger and older pupils are able to use a range of techniques to read difficult words. There are regular assessments and those that fall behind are supported to catch up. Pupils read regularly and are given good guidance by staff to explore the well-stocked library. Leaders also work well with parents to ensure that pupils read frequently at home. However, a few of the most able older pupils are not reading sufficiently demanding texts, which is limiting the development of their vocabulary.
- Mathematics teaching is more effective than in the past because teachers make the most of the new curriculum and their subject knowledge to bring topics to life. Many pupils said that they 'love maths' because they can apply their knowledge to different problems. In the mathematics workbooks, the most able older pupils tackle topics such as Euler's Law or Leopard's disappearing triangle, which gives them an opportunity to think more deeply about their work. However, these workbooks show that a few pupils still could move onto more challenging tasks more quickly.
- The support for the lower-attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well developed. In all classrooms, teachers and additional adults provide effective guidance and support for lower-attaining pupils. In mathematics pupils use apparatus effectively to help them consolidate their understanding and there is useful support for writing in literacy lessons. Teachers and other adults work well together to address misconceptions, but a few of these pupils do not catch up as quickly as they could because of remaining weaknesses in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The specialist teacher is particularly effective in supporting very low-attaining pupils with an appropriate focus on developing pupils' key skills. As a result, these pupils gain confidence and make progress so that they can now work through the same curriculum as their peers.
- Pupils enjoy the regular homework that helps them practise skills such as reading and spelling, as well as more demanding tasks for the older pupils. Parents also report that they appreciate the opportunity to support pupils' learning at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils enjoy school and pupils from every year group confidently shared their very positive views with the inspector. Parents also say that their children are very happy in school and that they are very well supported.
- Pupils are encouraged to follow a healthy lifestyle and be active. Pupils reported that they should 'eat five pieces of fruit or vegetables a day' from the 'healthy tuckshop' and that many walked to school as well as enjoying their regular swimming lessons.
- Pupils participate in a wide range of additional activities, including sport, music and art clubs. They enjoy learning new skills and having new experiences.
- There are a range of useful programmes and visitors that help pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils of all ages were able to explain how to use social media safely as well as what precautions to take when crossing the road.
- Pupils are very confident that they can share problems with staff and know who they can talk to. Parents also expressed confidence that issues are dealt with well, with one parent stating, 'When there is a problem it is resolved efficiently and effectively.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They listen carefully to each other and work well together when required. They follow the school's 'golden rules' well.
- The older pupils are proud to act as 'buddies' to children who join the school. All pupils can stand for election to the student council and pupils report that leaders take the council's concerns seriously and act upon them. Pupils also enjoy the opportunity to become 'Young Sports Leaders' to organise their own clubs at lunchtime.
- Pupils work hard and try their best. They take pride in their work in their books and are keen to describe what they have learnt. They are proud of their school and eager to show visitors around.
- Pupils' attendance is just below the national average. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as well as others. However, the school's work with the few disadvantaged pupils, who in the past were frequently absent, means they now attend more often.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare and that when it occurs, staff deal with it effectively. Older pupils are trained to be 'Young Mediators' to help prevent bullying occurring. Parents reported that if they had a concern, they were 'seen on the same day' and the problems 'were fully resolved'.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2015 progress in mathematics and writing was significantly below the national average, especially for the most able. Leaders took rapid steps to address this and current information shows that the majority of pupils are making good progress from their starting points to achieve or exceed expected standards by the end of key stage 2.
- In 2016 the proportion of pupils attaining the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was above that seen nationally. Also, in 2016 more pupils exceeded the standards expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics than the national average.
- In mathematics, current pupils attain well because leaders have introduced a new

approach to teaching the subject. Current information shows that in both key stage 1 and 2 the vast majority of pupils are assessed as reaching the expected standards required of their age group. Evidence from books and assessments shows that many pupils (over half the cohort) are working at greater depth in mathematics. However, there remain a few of the older most-able pupils who are yet to reach this higher standard.

- Pupils' good progress means they attain well in reading. There are good systems in place to support pupils developing greater fluency and accuracy as well as reading more widely. Teachers and additional adults work well together to check that pupils continue to make progress and provide useful support if pupils need to catch up. Current information shows that pupils in both key stage 1 and 2 are making strong progress from their starting points to achieve the expected standards. However, a small number of the most able pupils do not read enough challenging texts or a wide enough range of different authors.
- Standards have improved in writing. Pupils make good use of the helpful advice on how to improve their work. Leaders ensure that teachers consistently follow the guidelines so that all pupils benefit from this. In key stage 2, current information and evidence from books show that the majority of pupils are achieving well.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standards in the phonics screening test and current information shows that this trend will continue. Those pupils who do not meet the standards receive useful intervention to catch up quickly.
- Disadvantaged pupils reach similar standards to their peers. Current information shows that the majority of disadvantaged pupils in both key stages are reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics required for their age group. The difference between the progress of these pupils and others nationally is diminishing. Leaders provide good support for the most able disadvantaged pupils, especially in key stage 2. They make good progress as a result of judiciously planned programmes and in 2016 these pupils reached standards that allowed them to gain entry to a selective school for the first time.
- The support for those pupils who have an education, health and care plan is very effective. These pupils are making strong progress from very low starting points as a result of effective teaching and innovative approaches to the curriculum. The majority of other pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and reach the standards expected of them in reading and mathematics. However, a few pupils continue to struggle with achieving the expected standard in writing due to continued weakness in their punctuation, spelling and grammar.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children make good progress and are well prepared and ready for Year 1. In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards was above the national average and, although there was a dip in 2016, it remains in line with the national average.
- Although the children are very new to the provision, they have settled in quickly. The classroom is well organised so that children are engaged and follow instructions well.

- Teaching is good. Adults plan well together to develop the independence of children and, even at this early stage in the year, children are working well on their own and in groups. Leaders are promoting writing effectively, for example children attempted to write about why they liked their pictures of animals using 'because'. Many of the children are at an early stage of letter forming but persevered with this challenging task.
- Leaders are ambitious for the children and recognise that a few children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not reach the expected standards in writing and reading by the end of the year. As a result, they have developed additional support for these children to catch up so that the provision meets the needs of all learners.
- Children behave well and even at this early stage take turns and play by themselves without needing adult intervention.
- The arrangements for starting school are good. Children settle in quickly and are already taking part in school life. The 'buddy' system works particularly well so that children are confident to mix and socialise with older children. The transition to Year 1 is skilfully managed because there are close links between the teachers so that children move effectively onto their next stage of learning.
- Parents are thoroughly involved in their children's learning. There are good systems to capture the progress that children make across the year and parents value the information they receive. Parents also welcome the many opportunities they have to participate in activities and trips with their children.
- Although the proportion of children who achieve the expected standards in mathematics is above the national average, leaders are ambitious to improve standards further. This is especially the case with the outdoor provision, which currently does not provide enough opportunities for children to explore shape or number.
- Children are happy and feel safe and well supported. They enjoy coming to school and making new friends.

School details

Unique reference number	118336
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10000665

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tish Hanifan
Headteacher	Mr Dave Walsh
Telephone number	01795 890252
Website	www.eastling.kent.sch.uk
Email address	office@eastling.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2011

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average primary school with a greater than average number of boys in the school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after) is just below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above that found nationally, especially for those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school meets the government's guidelines for publishing information and policies on the school's website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons across all year groups. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- The inspector held meetings with leaders, other staff and with governors. The inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector evaluated key documents including the school's strategic planning, minutes of meetings, reports of attendance and academic progress.
- The inspector scrutinised books in lessons and a sample of key stage 2 pupils' writing and mathematics books.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at break and around the school and during other activities.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and spoke with pupils informally and formally. The inspector took into account the 24 responses from parents on Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents) and spoke to parents informally at the end of the day.

Inspection team

Seamus Murphy, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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