

# Gravel Hill Primary School

Watling Street, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7QJ

**Inspection dates** 21–22 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils achieve well. Their progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good. There has been an improving trend in all areas of learning over the last three years.
- In 2013, standards at the end of Year 6 were above the national average. A few pupils attained the highest level (Level 6) in mathematics.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is exemplary. Their needs are identified and they are supported through tailored programmes that involve the whole family.
- The quality of teaching is good, with a small proportion that is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and, as a result, pupils make good progress in lessons.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress regularly and rigorously. This has helped to bring about improvements in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors play a central role in pushing standards up. They support leaders and teachers, and make sure that their efforts towards better performance are maintained.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils take on the responsibility for their own behaviour and that of their peers. This is because the school trains them to take on leading roles which carry a sense of responsibility.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. As a result, they feel extremely safe.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress and are well prepared for entry into Year 1.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is of sufficiently high quality to enable pupils to make rapid progress.
- Occasionally, children's progress in the Nursery, Reception classes and Year 1 slows because adults do not help them to make the most of their learning.
- Occasionally, older pupils lose concentration when they are not very interested in, or have not understood, the work set for them. This slows down their progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the senior management team, a number of subject leaders and other leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, the Chair of the Governing Body, two co-opted governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and parents to find out their views of the school in general.
- Inspectors looked at relevant documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, policies regarding behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to the safeguarding of all pupils.
- Inspectors examined the most recent government data on the achievement of pupils in the school and looked at the school's systems for checking on pupils' progress through the year.
- Inspectors took account of responses from 40 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses from 100 parents to a similar questionnaire run by the school in 2013.
- Responses from seven members of staff to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

## Inspection team

Mina Drever, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector
Lee Selby	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Half of its pupils are White British. The other half includes several other ethnic groups, the largest of which are Black African, Asian and Indian.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language – about one sixth of pupils on roll – is larger than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is larger than the national average. About one third of the pupils receive this funding. In this school, eligible pupils are those entitled to free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above the national average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils join the school at different times throughout Key Stage 2.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has embarked on an expansion programme to become two-form entry in September 2014. A building programme is in progress.
- The school is a member of two school partnerships, one with two other primary schools, started by the headteacher. The school buys into a second partnership of 13 schools, including two secondary schools.
- The school runs breakfast club managed by the governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - making sure that staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in Year 1, provide more support when children choose activities by themselves, so that they make more rapid progress
  - ensuring that pupils in Key Stage 2 are given engaging tasks and understand the purpose of the work set for them so that they remain interested and motivated.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well from their different starting points. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below the level typical for their age. Overall, they make good progress and are well prepared for entry into Year 1. A few children make less progress than they could because they get too excited when choosing their own activities and their learning is not structured well enough by adults. This is sometimes the case with Year 1 pupils.
- Achievement has been on an improving trend for the last three years. This is due to the successful work of senior leaders and governors to improve the quality of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- Pupils achieve well above the national average. In 2013, Key Stage 1 attainment rose in reading and mathematics, although it declined slightly in writing. A third of pupils attained the higher level (Level 3) in reading and mathematics. The results of the 2013 Year 1 screening check in phonics (understanding the sounds that letters make in English) were well above average. At Key Stage 2, attainment improved substantially in all areas of learning. Some pupils attained the highest level (Level 6) in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they benefit from the school's highly effective approach to supporting children and their families. In addition to the one-to-one and group support in class, in literacy and numeracy, the school works with parents and grandparents in a variety of ways to help improve outcomes for these pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well in all areas of learning. This is because they receive good quality language support throughout the school. Pupils from other ethnic groups also achieve well.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve well. They make better progress than other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. The gap in attainment with other pupils closed in 2013 in reading and mathematics. A very tiny gap of half a term remains in writing, and they were behind other pupils in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test by nearly half a level.
- Pupils who join the school at different times are well supported and quickly make good progress. They do not always attain at the same levels as others because they often have a lot of catching up to do.
- The school's recent approach to improving reading skills is having a huge impact in developing pupils' love of reading. Pupils have a good sense of different types of books and are encouraged to develop their own taste in choosing what they read. One Year 3 boy told inspectors that he likes reading about space, for instance, and explained that this is because he is 'fascinated by planets and stars'.
- Occasionally, progress slows for older pupils when tasks are not engaging enough and they lose interest.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children have a lot of fun because teachers provide a rich learning environment. There is good emphasis on the development of communication skills. However, at times, children's learning lacks structure when adults do not intervene enough to support the learning.
- Good learning takes place when teachers have high expectations, keep a close eye on pupils' progress in their tasks, check on their understanding with high quality questioning and feedback and give pupils resources which stimulate their interest and curiosity.

- High standards of literacy are expected by teachers. This is especially evident in the marking of homework and class-based tasks. Pupils must spell correctly and use grammatically correct sentences. They have to show that they have understood the written comments by the teacher.
- Although most pupils are motivated and engaged by the tasks set, at times some older pupils lose interest in their work because it does not interest them very much.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Behaviour is good because leaders and all adults instil in pupils a mature and positive attitude towards mutual respect. Pupils are confident. They take responsible roles in the school, such as delivering glasses of water to dining tables, and ensuring that their peers return used plates and cutlery in an orderly manner in the dining room.
- Pupils understand all forms of bullying through a variety of approaches, including anti-bullying week. Parents are very well informed by the school on various forms of bullying and on e-safety. Incidents are very rare and pupils and their parents feel secure that the school deals with them very effectively.
- Teachers' expectations of good behaviour in lessons ensure that disruptions to learning are rare. Lessons run smoothly, especially when they are infected with teachers' enthusiasm for a topic. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children responded with glee to the London Naughty Bus story and could not stop talking about it. This helps pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning across the school.
- All the above is a result of the central ethos of the school – 'We are a family' – symbolised by the tree of life, where each individual has equal value, no matter the size or age or position in the school. Pupils know that with that comes responsibility and respond to it with great maturity.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Systems for keeping pupils safe are rigorous and there are regular risk assessments. Pupils feel very safe. They have complete trust in the school's system for keeping them safe, as do their parents.
- Attendance is consistently above average due to robust monitoring systems – which involve parents at every step – and to clear rewards and sanctions.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because learning behaviour is not exemplary across all classes.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Senior leaders, governors and staff are committed to the pursuit of excellence. Parents are unanimous in recommending the school to others and pupils take immense pride in their school.
- Staff performance is managed well and has contributed hugely to the improvement of pupils' progress and attainment. Targeted support and training, resulting from the rigorous checking of teaching, have helped individual teachers to improve their practice and teaching assistants to become fully involved in the ongoing assessment of pupils' progress.
- Leaders in charge of subjects are fully involved in assessing the quality of the school's work and in the monitoring of teaching, and play a central role in pupil progress meetings. They receive regular professional development and lead on training for other staff. Their participation in the school's development contributes positively to improvements in pupils' achievement.
- The school offers a range of activities rich in opportunities that fire the imagination, such as the cultivation by pupils of a section of the garden. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength of this school. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop a strong awareness of the arts, for example through visits to the theatre and museums as well as visiting artists. They are also aware of environmental issues and develop a social conscience through charitable work. The spiritual aspect is developed through thematic assemblies reflecting on the impact of changes in our lives, for instance, and through the study of different religions in the school.

- The pupil premium funding is very well targeted so that eligible pupils make good progress, for example with one-to-one support for families, access to the breakfast club, music in Years 4, 5 and 6, and additional support in literacy and numeracy.
- The new government funding to develop physical education has been used to buy in a training programme to improve the confidence of teachers. However, the school already has very comprehensive programme of physical education which includes much competitive participation by pupils, such as in football teams and a street dance club.
- The school works very well with its partner schools in pursuit of higher standards. For example, headteachers jointly observe lessons in one another's school once a year in order to identify outstanding teaching and disseminate it through in-house training.
- The school meets the statutory safeguarding requirements.
- The local authority has worked well with the school for a number of years to help raise standards.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have made a strong contribution to the school's improvement since the previous inspection. They feel passionate about the education of the children who come to this school, regardless of ethnicity, language or social background. They believe that each child deserves the best and are supportive of the school's leadership, which is striving for higher and higher standards. Governors ensure that they are trained so that they have the skills necessary to carry out their responsibilities. They support leaders and hold them to account in equal measure. The governing body has an accurate view of how the school's performance compares to that of other schools. They know about the quality of teaching and how teachers' pay and reward are linked closely to the progress of their pupils.
  - Governors know exactly how the pupil premium funding is spent and what the impact is on pupils' progress. They are aware of the quality of teaching across the school and support leaders' work in bringing about further improvements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101407
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	425522

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	278
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Hazel Teale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Melanie Neale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22–23 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 521343
<b>Fax number</b>	01322 529932
<b>Email address</b>	head@gravelhill.bexley.sch.uk



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