

Aycliffe Community Primary School

St David's Avenue, Dover, Kent, CT17 9HJ

Inspection dates 6–7 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The headteacher's strong leadership and clear vision have been the driving force behind the school's improvement over the last two years.
- The headteacher is supported well by an increasingly effective team of subject leaders and a demanding group of governors.
- The main reason for the school's improvement is the focus on eliminating weaknesses in teaching and improving the performance of all teachers. Good and improving teaching is leading to more rapid progress and rising attainment.
- The senior leadership team is strongly committed to working in partnership with others, in order to improve teaching and the pupils' progress.
- Pupils try hard in lessons as they are keen and want to do well so they can fulfil the school's aims and 'make a difference'.
- Pupils say they feel safe at all times. This reflects the attention paid by staff and governors to ensuring that all pupils are cared for and their well-being safeguarded.
- Pupils behave sensibly around the school and at play. They are considerate towards the feelings of others and show respect to adults.
- Leaders have a very clear understanding of the circumstances of pupils and their families. This means they can target guidance and support closely to their needs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching moves the learning of more-able pupils forward sufficiently rapidly.
- Some Reception children do not make enough progress because a minority of teaching is not always matched to their needs and learning is not linked between inside and outdoors.
- Marking, particularly in mathematics, leaves pupils unclear about how well they are doing and what steps they should take to be more successful.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and so the inspector took account of recent surveys of parents carried out by the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding. The inspector also listened to the reading of a sample of pupils in Year 2.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is above average. This is extra money given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or those from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class along with some Year 1 pupils. This class has been taught by four different teachers this year.
- The remaining pupils in Years 1 to 5 are taught in three mixed-age classes. This includes the organisation of pupils in Years 3 to 5 into two 'Learning Stages' for English and mathematics. These are two classes based on the pupils' attainment.
- Year 6 has been taught by specialist teachers for English and mathematics this year.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2011.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a children's centre on the school site, which is managed by Sure Start. This is inspected separately at another time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is of an outstanding quality by:
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are challenged at all times
 - providing pupils with clear guidance through teachers' marking to help them improve their work, particularly in mathematics.
- Increase the progress of children in Reception by ensuring that all adults:
 - use assessment information more effectively to plan activities that meet the children's needs
 - link learning better between inside and outdoors
 - plan activities for children to carry out independently that focus on moving their learning forward.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress is good and increasing because of improvements in the quality of teaching. This is leading to an increasing number of pupils working at levels above those expected for their age. Year 6 test results were well-below average in 2012, but attainment is now rising rapidly. Boys and girls make equally good progress and there is no significant difference in their attainment.
- The pupils' writing has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils regularly plan and 'publish' extended pieces of writing often linked closely to the topic they are studying. This gives pupils the opportunity to develop their ideas and gives their writing a purpose.
- Pupils develop and apply their key skills well such as by using their understanding of phonics (linking letters with sounds) to help them when faced by unfamiliar words. Pupils read widely and often and can talk about the reasons why they like their favourite authors. Their enquiry skills develop well through plentiful opportunities for solving mathematical problems and undertaking scientific investigations.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. The school is very rigorous in identifying individual needs and putting in place carefully tailored support both in lessons and through additional programmes.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding well to provide individual tutoring and small-group work to support eligible pupils. They make similarly good progress as other pupils, although their Year 6 test results in 2012 were one year behind others in mathematics and almost two years behind in English. The number of pupils in each year group is small and can be affected by other factors but the gap in attainment is closing.
- Children enter Reception with skills much lower than expected for their age. Changes of teachers have limited their progress in Reception this year, which is less marked than the progress made in all areas by the previous group. Their progress is better in adult-led sessions of literacy and numeracy than when working and developing learning by themselves.

The quality of teaching is good

- The proportion of lessons across the school that are well taught is increasing and teaching is typically good. One feature of all classrooms is the calm and purposeful atmosphere generated by teachers. Typical of the most effective teaching is the way teachers question pupils to keep them on their toes and to probe their understanding. Resources are used creatively and the methods adopted quickly gain and retain the pupils' attention. Pupils benefit considerably when they have the chance to learn from each other such as when they constructively assess each other's work.
- The organisation of teaching in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 has enabled teachers to closely match work and their teaching to the needs of the pupils. This has led to more rapid progress and pupils working with confidence.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for groups and individuals because they are briefed well by teachers. They know when to intervene to move learning forward and when to encourage greater independence from the pupils. Their work with pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective because they know their targets and how they are to be achieved.
- There is some highly effective marking in Years 1 and 2 where pupils are required to respond to their teacher's comments and so improve their work. The school has identified this as the model it wants at all times, but is not achieving this yet. This is particularly the case in mathematics where marking provides little guidance for pupils.
- When at its best, teaching challenges all pupils. However, there are times when more-able pupils are held back by sitting through explanations of skills they already understand.
- Sessions led by adults in Reception are often taught confidently and well. However, assessment

is not used effectively to plan activities to move each child's learning forward rapidly. Adults miss opportunities to extend children's learning when they are developing their own ideas. Learning is also not linked well between inside and outdoors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very proud of their school and the part they play in it. They are regularly asked their views about a wide range of issues, such as the proposed changes to uniform and the organisation of teaching groups at Key Stage 2. Year 5 pupils are trained to act as 'buddies' for younger pupils and pupils take responsibility for helping newcomers to settle in quickly.
- Pupils respond quickly to their teachers and are always willing to answer their questions, although some can lose concentration when teaching is not stimulating. They collaborate well when working together on tasks and enjoy sharing their ideas with each other in discussion. Most pupils say they enjoy school as reflected in their rising attendance.
- The pupils' good manners and politeness help to make the school an orderly and happy environment. Teachers are consistent in the way they manage the pupils' behaviour. They are particularly successful in the methods they use to help those with behavioural difficulties understand what is expected of them and what to do when they fall short.
- Pupils use the word 'STOP' to remind them that bullying is actions by others that happen 'Several times on purpose' and that if this occurs they should 'Start telling other people'. They are confident that any incidents, including of racist name-calling are dealt with swiftly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations of teachers and sets them challenging targets for improving their performance. He does not tolerate anything less than good teaching and makes sure that individual training is provided when anyone falls short of his expectations. Salary progression is only awarded for teaching that leads to pupils making good progress.
- Subject leaders' skills have developed well so that they now play a crucial role in supporting the headteacher's drive to improve teaching and raise the pupils' achievement. The leadership's evaluation of the school is very accurate. Plans for improving performance are sharply focused on raising the pupils' attainment and meticulously put into practice. The school has the capacity for further improvement.
- The school's close engagement with the local authority has considerably aided its drive to improve teaching, raise attainment and develop the expertise of governors and subject leaders. The partnerships established with local schools have also yielded valuable support for improving teaching and provided many opportunities for the mutual sharing of good practice.
- The strong partnership with home is based on a very clear understanding of the circumstances of pupils and their families. Support for them is individualised depending on their needs and includes running family workshops and providing additional support for pupils where their families are going through stressful times.
- While there is a strong focus on developing key skills of literacy and numeracy, creatively organised topics and the wide range of clubs add much interest to the pupils' daily lives. The woodland area is used well to broaden the pupils' experiences of the natural world. An improvement since the previous inspection is that pupils now regularly have the opportunity to learn about science by undertaking investigations.
- There is a strong focus on ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils although there is more to be done to support the learning of the more-able pupils. There is no discrimination within the school.
- The school pays much attention to the promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Festivals and the different cultures represented by pupils are celebrated, but pupils have limited first-hand experience of the lives of different people both within this

country and abroad.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body's role has been strengthened considerably since the previous inspection, particularly in its ability to question the headteacher and use national data to determine the school's performance. This is because of more effective procedures and increased expertise secured through regular training. Governors are quite clear that teaching needed to improve so that the pupils' progress and attainment could rise. They understand the action being taken by the headteacher to improve teaching and how he uses formal procedures for managing the performance of teachers to drive up the quality of teaching. Governors have not been afraid to take the difficult decisions needed to bring finances back into order following a deficit budget two years ago. They carefully monitor the impact of spending decisions such as one-to-one and small-group support derived from pupil premium funding and the organisation of teaching groups at Key Stage 2.

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	118449
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	401753

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Hester
Headteacher	John Dexter
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 November 2009
Telephone number	01304 202651
Fax number	01304 225507
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