

Lydden Primary School

Stonehall, Dover, CT15 7LA

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2015

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The inspection findings agree with the comment made by a parent that, 'Lydden is a friendly village school where the children are nurtured in a happy learning environment'.
- Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school's work.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. All leaders, including governors, work well together and have maintained the school's good position since the previous inspection as well as making improvements in aspects of its provision. These include pupils' achievement in writing and stronger links with parents.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their different starting points and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Teachers engage pupils well in their lessons. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils so pupils work hard and want to do well.
- Children get an outstanding start to school in the early years because of excellent teaching and leadership.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have excellent attitudes to learning. Their high attendance reflects their love of school.
- Outstanding safety arrangements ensure that pupils feel safe, are happy and well looked after.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve and hold leaders to account effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in spelling are not yet good enough.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving and investigative skills across different subjects and so progress is not always as rapid as it could be.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons. In addition, the inspector talked to pupils about their work, looked at books, listened to some pupils read and observed pupils at play times and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at the 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and at two separate written responses, and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. The inspector also took into account 11 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll has increased since the previous inspection. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- At around one in ten pupils, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- At around just over one in ten, the proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after. In 2014 there were no disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 and there are too few in Year 6 to comment separately on their achievement.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision is made for the early years in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class which the children attend full time.
- There is pre-school provision on the school site. This is managed by a private provider and therefore not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in spelling so pupils develop more accuracy and do not make repeated errors.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to develop problem-solving and investigative skills in all their learning so that they make even more rapid progress and achieve as well as they can.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, staff and governors share a commitment and determination to provide the best possible learning and experiences for pupils. Staff work effectively as a team and have high expectations. As a result, the school has maintained its good position reported at the previous inspection and has made good progress in relation to the areas identified for improvement.
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are well established and robust. Teachers know they are accountable for pupils' progress. Where any weaknesses in teaching are identified, leaders take rapid and effective action and improvement is expected. There are good professional development opportunities for staff to help them improve their skills, and good support for staff who are at different stages in their careers.
- Middle leaders are effective. They know the strengths and weakness in their subjects and areas of responsibility. Regular scrutiny of pupils' books, planning and checks on how well pupils are learning are used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. Mathematics and literacy leaders are relatively new to their posts. They make a good contribution to whole-school development as well as providing skills and expertise in their subjects. However, there has not yet been enough time to see the full impact of their work on pupils' attainment.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to ensure that all eligible pupils achieve well. Their progress is tracked carefully and effective support is given to help them catch up if they are at risk of falling behind.
- Additional primary physical education and sport funding is used effectively to provide specialist coaching for pupils and to develop teachers' skills. As a result, more pupils are able to participate in an increased range and variety of sports.
- Staff and governors have a strong commitment to equal opportunities and check that all groups of pupils are making good progress. They ensure that pupils learn without any type of discrimination and foster good relations throughout the school community and beyond.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum and in assemblies as well as in the values of the school. They learn about differences in faiths, cultures and backgrounds. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain as the school's values foster a culture of respect and tolerance for all.
- The school teaches a broad and balanced range of subjects linked to topics that pupils find interesting and motivating. Pupils said some of the things they had really enjoyed and remembered included, science experiments on forces and gravity, solving work problems and learning about Greek myths. The requirements of the new National Curriculum have been fully implemented. Trips and extra activities, including clubs, add to the experiences and enable pupils to learn new skills such as archery.
- Parents are very positive about all that the school offers children. Almost all parents who completed Parent View are very happy with the school and very supportive of its work and leadership. They particularly appreciate the 'share-a-class' sessions where they have opportunities to work with their children in class.
- The school ensures safeguarding requirements are fully met. Procedures are very well established and the safety of pupils is a priority of the school's work .
- The school works well with the local authority, which provides good support, including assessing the school's effectiveness and checking the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear picture of the strengths of the school and the areas for further improvement. They are well informed about all aspects of the school's work by the headteacher and their own frequent visits to the school. They understand the school's performance information and understand how well the school's standards compare with those in other schools nationally. They have a good level of expertise and offer skills in a range of areas. As a result, they are able to provide good levels of challenge and support and effectively hold the school to account for its performance. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and fully support the headteacher in expecting nothing less than good or better teaching. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. They ensure that pay progression is linked to pupils' good progress. Governors have a very clear understanding of how the pupil premium and sports funding is spent and the impact it has on pupils' achievement. They closely observe the impact on learning for children in the early years, having approved substantial funds for developing the outdoor learning area.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning which help them to make good progress. They behave equally well in and out of lessons, including at break and lunchtimes and when working with other adults.
- Parents and pupils appreciate the benefits of a small school and pupils really enjoy all their experiences at school. A group of pupils agreed with one who said, 'We know everyone, we're all friends and it's like being in one big family.'
- Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well. They are very friendly and polite and show respect for each other and adults. Adults are excellent role models for pupils.
- Pupils live up to and promote the school's values extremely well because they are fully involved in deciding what they should be. They work and play together exceptionally well.
- Responsibilities, such as school councillors and buddies, are taken very seriously and enjoyed by pupils.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View agree that pupils are well behaved. One parent commented that the school, 'brings the children up to care deeply about each other and to protect each other and help each other, and this is noticeable at school drop-off time. On the very rare occasion a child is upset or looking sad, the other children are straight onto it, ensuring the upset child receives the attention required. It's really quite touching to witness.'
- Attendance is high and pupils are consistently punctual to school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents agree that their children feel safe, are happy at school and well looked after.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that they know how to keep themselves safe out of school. For example, the work of the older pupils to promote road safety and to encourage adherence to the speed limit in the village has been entered in a competition. Pupils act as ambassadors to actively promote e-safety.
- Pupils say they are not aware of any bullying in school but they are aware that bullying can take different forms, including name calling, physical bullying and cyber-bullying. They have every confidence that should any issues arise, they could talk to staff who would listen to them and act quickly.
- Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for every trip and a daily risk assessment is made of the outdoor area for the early years.
- All safeguarding requirements are fully met.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils learn well because teaching is good. Literacy, reading and mathematics are taught well through meaningful and relevant activities. Pupils understand the purpose of their learning and have opportunities to apply their skills.
- Teachers plan exceptionally well to ensure that work is at the right level for pupils of different ages in the mixed-year group classes. They use assessment information well to match work to the different needs of pupils, so that all groups can make good progress.
- Staff and pupils trust each other and enjoy positive relationships. Pupils enjoy learning, work hard and want to do well. They are confident to have a go and share their ideas, knowing their opinions will be valued.
- Teachers challenge pupils to think more deeply and extend their learning through skilful questioning. This enables teachers to spot any misconceptions and deal with them straight away.
- Strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that additional help given to disadvantaged pupils, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supports learning well and promotes good progress.
- Stimulating classrooms and displays of pupils' work in classes and around the school celebrate achievements as well as supporting learning effectively. Teachers and pupils use technology to good effect to support learning, for example, the use of tablets and visualisers.
- Teachers' marking and feedback give pupils good guidance on how to improve their work and they have time to respond to comments and suggestions. Pupils also learn how to reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of their classmates. They do this exceptionally well and with great maturity. This is because

teachers promote a culture of supportive learning where pupils are 'learning coaches' for each other. One pupil said, 'Doing this really helps me; for example, I can see how using humour in writing is effective, so I'm going to make sure I do that.' Another said 'Looking at his work has reminded me to use more varied punctuation in my writing.'

- Reading is taught effectively. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well, including by skilled teaching assistants. Pupils enjoy reading the class text. In discussion with the inspector they agreed with one pupil who said, 'It's good to discuss the book together because you can get your own thoughts sorted out in your head and really understand what's going on.' Reading for enjoyment is promoted well.
- The teaching of writing has improved since the previous inspection because pupils have more opportunities to write at length and in other subjects. Pupils' writing is often of a very high quality, imaginative and engaging for the reader. Pupils know their targets for writing, which are shared with parents through their homework activities.
- Mathematics is taught well because teachers plan lessons based on meaningful activities. For example, pupils made good progress in understanding how to read timetables. This was because their work was linked to the Harry Potter text they were reading as a class and so pupils were motivated and fully engaged in learning.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning help them excel at working in teams and planning activities to develop problem-solving and investigative skills, developing responsibility and resilience, as seen when the older pupils were designing and constructing machines with various functions. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to develop these skills in a range of subjects and so make the rapid progress of which they are capable and achieve as well as they might.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress from their different starting points.
- In this school, caution needs to be taken when interpreting published results on pupils' attainment because of the small and fluctuating numbers in the Year 2 and Year 6 groups. For example, in 2014, one pupil in Year 2 represented 11% of the group and in Year 6, one pupil represented around 14% of the group.
- Children start in the Reception year with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age in communication and language and physical development, and stronger in their personal, social and emotional development. They make outstanding progress in the early years because of the excellent provision.
- In 2014 by the end of Year 2, attainment was above average in reading and writing and considerably above average in mathematics. This demonstrated a continuing rising trend.
- By the end of Year 6 almost all pupils reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Currently, across the school, the most able pupils are challenged sufficiently well and make good progress. The school responded promptly to the fact that no pupils reached the higher Level 5 in reading by the end of Year 6 in 2014, although the most able pupils did particularly well in writing. A focus on comprehension, group reading and sharing texts as a whole class is improving pupils' more advanced reading skills. The school's check on progress shows pupils are on track to do better this year.
- Pupils' success in writing is due to an increasing enjoyment of writing, in English and other subjects.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national figure. Pupils apply their phonic skills well to help them read unfamiliar words.
- Many pupils read with fluency, expression and understanding. They know about a range of authors and can explain which books they prefer to read.
- There are now clear expectations for handwriting, which has led to better presentation of pupils' work, which can be seen in their books. However, teachers are correctly aware that this is not yet fully consistent across the school. The school is also aware that spelling remains a relatively weaker aspect of writing and is taking action to improve this. Too many spellings are inaccurate and errors are often repeated.
- An increased focus on mental mathematics and more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to real-life problems support their good achievement in mathematics.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well met, enabling them to make similar good progress to others. Their needs are identified early and precisely so that

appropriate support can be given to help them make good progress from their various starting points.

- Disadvantaged pupils across the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because they are given effective support. In 2014, there were too few eligible pupils in Year 6 to comment on their attainment compared to other pupils’.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children in the early years are given an excellent start to school. By the end of the Reception year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is well above the national average. As a result, children are very well prepared to continue their education in Year 1.
- Teaching is outstanding. Pupils are given exceptionally rich, meaningful and stimulating experiences so they are highly motivated and develop curious and enquiring minds and a love of learning. For example, children had great fun finding number resources buried in a huge tub of shredded paper to help them match and order numbers to 10. They thoroughly enjoy counting to 100 with song and actions and learning appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
- Children quickly develop a love of books and stories. They understand that writing is a way of communicating and expressing thoughts. This was demonstrated to excellent effect when children wrote shopping lists and instructions for making pancakes. Teaching consistently challenges children in a very supportive and caring way but with high expectations.
- Staff work extremely well as a team that has an excellent understanding of the needs of young children. They place a strong emphasis on fostering independence, meeting children’s welfare needs, their social skills and enjoyment. Children become confident to ask questions and take considered risks in their learning and play.
- Children’s behaviour is outstanding because of high expectations. Strong routines are well established and children learn to understand the consequences of their actions and make good choices. They show care and consideration for each other and help each other out without being prompted to by adults.
- The relatively new outdoor area provides a wealth of experiences for pupils in all areas of learning.
- The leadership of the early years is outstanding. Assessments of achievements in learning are used well to help plan the next steps. Staff ensure that children learn in a safe and stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors. There are excellent links between home and school.

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

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| Unique reference number | 118400 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 444138 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 81 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Brittain |
| Headteacher | Carole Davies |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13–14 January 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01304 822887 |
| Fax number | 01304 822887 |
| Email address | headteacher@lydden.kent.sch.uk |

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