

Greenvale Infant School

Symons Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME4 5UP

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are passionately committed to ensuring that every pupil at this caring and inclusive school reaches their potential.
- The headteacher has the overwhelming support of staff, parents and governors who recognise the effect of her dynamic leadership on establishing a happy and welcoming community school.
- Leaders strive to constantly improve the school. Teachers and support staff benefit from effective training and development. Their expertise is shared to provide pupils with the support they need and to drive the school forward.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They adapt plans to ensure that activities interest pupils and match their needs. There is a clear focus on helping pupils acquire basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, most groups of pupils are making good progress. The most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Teaching of phonics is regular and effective. This helps pupils develop their early reading skills.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. It provides pupils with an exciting range of opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills in science, humanities and the arts and to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Governors ensure that the school is a safe place for pupils. They visit the school and check regularly on progress. However, they do not yet use information about the progress of groups of pupils sufficiently well to enable their checks and questioning of leaders to be as rigorous as they could be.
- Pupils are polite and well behaved around the school. Most pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to learn.
- Pupils are well cared for. They feel safe and happy at school because there is a wide range of support, and highly skilled staff ensure that they are listened to and given the help that they need.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years and make good progress across all areas of the curriculum. Staff help them to explore and develop the skills they need to play together and enjoy friendships.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that governors understand and use a wider range of progress information to hold leaders to account for the progress of groups of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching further so that the most able pupils make strong progress across the curriculum by ensuring that:
 - teachers' questions consistently challenge misconceptions and extend pupils' thinking
 - the opportunity for investigation and independent learning is as evident in writing across the curriculum as it is in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and her deputy lead the school with unwavering determination to provide the best possible education for pupils. Their unrelenting focus on improvement, despite a period of instability due to restructuring, has resulted in a school community with a palpable sense of purpose. Morale is high and staff are united in striving for the very highest standards.
- Because of this culture of high expectations pupils are making good progress from their starting points and the standards reached by pupils currently in the school are rising.
- Subject leaders benefit from involvement in research projects and attending training and local network meetings. They monitor progress in their subjects through regularly looking in books and watching each other work. As a result, middle leaders are a highly skilled team who share ideas and ensure that standards are rising across the curriculum.
- Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the leadership of the school. They recognise how effectively leaders support them in improving their teaching. One response to the staff survey which was typical of those received was, 'I have never worked so hard whilst enjoying each day that I'm here.'
- The school makes good use of the additional funding that it receives. Disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively to make similar progress to their peers across the curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Support is carefully tailored to match pupils' needs, and progress is reviewed regularly. The advice of other professionals is sought to help ensure that pupils' needs are being met. Staff build nurturing relationships with pupils and are quick to identify any adjustments that are needed to help them to learn more effectively.
- Staff work hard to ensure that parents feel welcome in the school. They are on hand with a cheery 'hello' in the morning and to offer advice and support if it is needed. All the parents who completed the online survey, Parent View, said they would recommend the school. During the inspection, comments made to inspectors included, 'Staff really care for the children' and 'I don't want my child to ever leave.' Parents enjoy the opportunities provided for them to develop learning at home with their children, such as building a 'Gruffalo garden' based on the story.
- Physical education and sports funding is used effectively. The funding has been spent carefully to ensure that it is sustainable, such as in using specialists to support teachers in developing their teaching and coaching skills in physical education.
- There are many opportunities for pupils outside of the school day. The well-attended breakfast club provides a healthy breakfast as well as opportunities to play and read. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy a wide range of clubs such as dance, Lego, computing and cooking.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well catered for. They are encouraged to think about themselves, others and the world through assemblies, developing core values such as 'reflection'. Pupils have a growing understanding of fundamental British values and how they apply in their lives.
- The curriculum is planned with care to ensure that pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Leaders adapt curriculum plans to suit the interests and needs of pupils, for example introducing a 'pirates' topic in the Reception Year. Despite these adaptations, leaders know that the curriculum does not yet provide enough opportunity for the most able pupils to develop their ideas and extend their thinking.

Governance of the school

- Governance is improving. An external review, together with recruitment of new members, has ensured that the governing body now has the range of experience and expertise in place that it needs to provide support and challenge for school leaders. Governors' minutes indicate that members increasingly ask insightful questions in holding leaders to account.
- Governors acknowledge that they do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of assessment information about the attendance and performance of specific groups of pupils. This inhibits their developing a fuller understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are diligent in their work, including their duty to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They ensure that the right checks are made on people who work in the school.
- Although the recent restructuring has created financial challenges, governors have ensured that funds are well spent to support the needs of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a culture where everybody understands that they have a role to play in keeping pupils safe. Systems for recording and sharing information are clear and well organised. Information is shared and acted on in a timely and professional manner.
- The parent-pastoral support worker has developed strong links with families. She works effectively in partnership with them to provide early help where it is needed. Other agencies are included where necessary and good relationships with other local schools mean that pupils and their families get the support that they need. This helps keep pupils safe.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe. They know how to stay safe online, around school and while out in the community, telling inspectors, for example, that they learn, 'Don't cross the road if you see a red sign.'

- A range of risk assessments are completed before any outside activities are undertaken. At the time of the inspection, leaders were developing these to include more specific information about the needs of individual pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils make good progress because teachers plan lessons based on an accurate understanding of what they know and can do. A clear focus on the development of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics has ensured that pupils have a good platform on which to build skills across the curriculum.
- Regular teaching of phonics in small groups is well matched to pupils' abilities. A wide range of opportunities to practise their learning ensures that pupils transfer these skills well into their everyday work. For example, a group of pupils learning the 'ow' sound wrote, 'The snow woke Joe as it fell outside the window.'
- Pupils transfer these skills, and a range of other effectively taught reading skills, to their reading. The library is attractive and popular; pupils value the wide range of attractively presented books on offer. Pupils are encouraged to read books by a wide range of authors, which helps them to develop an understanding of how writers write differently, and to begin to develop their own preferences. At the time of the inspection, a display of the books that staff were reading helped to develop a culture of 'everyone as a reader'.
- The effective teaching of mathematics encourages pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning and to explore different methods of solving problems. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson pupils were choosing from methods such as column addition and pictorial representation of units of tens and ones to explore the different totals possible from adding a set of five two-digit numbers.
- Highly skilled staff in the nurture group and the Year 1 middle room group provide learning opportunities that are well matched to pupils' individual needs. For example, pupils in the nurture group were writing about their chicks which had recently hatched. The last chick, 'Solo', had hatched later than the rest and pupils had watched carefully to see how the other chicks helped teach the youngest chick. They used this to learn about helping each other.
- Pupils enjoy their learning across the curriculum. They want to learn. This is because teachers ensure that the curriculum is rich and exciting. Opportunities to develop artistic knowledge include learning about artists such as Pablo Picasso and exploring with a range of media; using chalks outside is a favourite. Specialist music teaching supports a joy in rhythm and music is evident throughout the school. Scientific skills are developed through investigating problems such as skidding on ice. Books show the development of scientific vocabulary such as 'habitat' and 'dissolve'.
- Teachers provide regular homework for pupils to practise their basic skills and develop home learning. Leaders check that there is just enough homework, balancing what is good for the pupils with what they judge to be manageable for the parents.
- Pupils' books across the school show that writing skills are taught systematically and well. Expectations are high, and development of sentence structure and vocabulary can

be clearly seen. While opportunities for extended writing are evident in pupils' writing books, these opportunities are not as evident in other curriculum areas. This means that the most able pupils do not have the opportunity to develop their writing across the curriculum in ways that would extend their thinking and vocabulary even further.

- Teachers' questions are not sufficiently probing to challenge the thinking of the most able pupils and to consistently check on understanding. This means that some opportunities to extend thinking and to correct confusion are missed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, happy individuals. They temper a good deal of natural exuberance with respect for adults and each other. This means that they listen well to each other and delight in helping each other to learn.
- Staff know individual pupils well. They are quick to spot any changes in behaviour that might indicate worry or unhappiness. Careful consideration is given to the root causes of any concerns.
- There is a wide range of effective support in place that helps pupils to feel cared for and listened to. 'Woody the therapy dog' has been a popular addition to the nurture provision.
- Staff have very good relationships with parents, who know that their children are well cared for. All the parents who completed the online survey, Parent View, felt that their children were safe and well looked after.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. They are confident that they can approach staff for help and that they will support them to resolve any friendship issues and everyday minor fallings-out.
- Staff provide good role models for pupils – showing kindness, consideration and good humour. At playtime staff support games involving balancing and skipping. Pupils relish the adult involvement, with one telling inspectors, 'I like playtime because teachers play with us' and pupils follow the example set by teachers by treating each other with kindness and respect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school community is built on a bedrock of caring, nurturing relationships. This helps pupils to feel special and to behave well.
- Pupils move quietly and calmly around the school. On the playground and in the lunch hall they take turns and chat happily among themselves and with adults.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons most of the time. Strong routines and systems help pupils to know and understand what is expected of them.

- A few pupils need a good deal of support to sustain good behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants provide this effectively so that learning time is not lost and inappropriate behaviour rarely distracts others.
- Attendance, while remaining below national figures, is improving for all groups of pupils. Persistent absence figures have fallen to be below national figures. Leaders and the parent–pastoral support worker are helping parents to understand how important it is to be at school every day. Pupils enjoy the wide range of rewards, including postcards home and weekly assemblies that celebrate their good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children join the early years with skills that are often well below what is typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. This was especially true in 2016 when the proportion of children, particularly boys, achieving a good level of development dipped. This year, many children are developing their learning skills rapidly and are making good progress from their starting points across the curriculum.
- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress across the curriculum. This can be seen in the work in their books and learning journals, observations in lessons and the school’s own tracking information.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their starting points, in some cases doing better than other pupils. The pupil premium grant is used effectively to support this progress.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected phonics standard in Year 1 has improved substantially over the last three years, towards the national average. Proportions of pupils who then catch up in Year 2 are also rising steadily.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils attaining at the expected level in Year 2 who had previously attained expected levels in the early years was in line with or above national proportions in reading, writing and mathematics. However, a small group of pupils with complex needs meant that lower-prior-attaining pupils did not attain as well as similar pupils nationally.
- Leaders take swift action to address any patterns of underachievement that they have identified. For example, they have adapted curriculum plans to appeal more to boys. Staff are aware of any focus areas, such as speaking and listening, and skilfully ensure that opportunities to strengthen target areas weave throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This progress is often in ‘small steps’ due to the pupils’ complex needs. Individual learning-plan targets are well informed by specialists, including speech and language therapists, to ensure that they are aspirational but achievable. Pupils’ progress is regularly reviewed and evaluated to support progress effectively.
- In 2016, very few pupils attained the ‘greater depth’ standard in Year 2 in reading, writing or mathematics. Leaders have responded swiftly to this and the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are now identified and their progress is tracked more closely. Proportions of pupils attaining the higher standards are rising,

but leaders acknowledge that there is still more to be done to ensure that the most able pupils attain as well as they could.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years area provides an attractive and stimulating place for children to learn. Well-planned opportunities for play and exploration follow children's interests and ensure that they successfully acquire early reading, writing and number skills. As a result, from low levels on entry children make good progress.
- Highly skilled staff ensure that language is developed at every opportunity. Story sharing is used well in Nursery to encourage children to explore characters and feelings. For example, a child discussing the bear in a bear hunt story explained that the character was sad because, 'he wanted to go in the house'. In Reception, children painting a map of their journey to 'Neverland' were reinforcing positional language as they painted.
- The outside area is used effectively to encourage exploration. During the inspection a group of children developed learning and interest as they explored ways of using sieves, jugs and watering cans to pour water down a guttering pipe. They worked happily together, telling each other, 'We need more' and, 'It's going down the slide.'
- Adults observe children carefully and use the observations to create detailed records that identify the next learning steps for children accurately because they build on what the children know and can do.
- Children behave well. They are friendly, curious and kind. When some children need support to manage their feelings, or develop friendships, it is readily available from well-trained staff.
- Children are safe. A safety checklist is completed regularly. Children are well looked after and staff ensure that statutory requirements are met.
- As in the rest of the school, relationships with parents are warm and welcoming. Parents value the opportunities to work and learn with their children provided by the 'stay and play' focused sessions. Their contributions and comments are included in the attractive learning journals that show the children's progress.
- The early years provision is well led. Leaders demonstrate determination, skill and expertise to sustain and develop provision. While not all children transfer from Nursery to Reception, leaders share information about the needs of individuals and groups so that plans and provision can be tweaked to best suit needs. As with the rest of the school, leaders know that the most able children are a group that needs further extension through questioning and challenge.

School details

Unique reference number	118317
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10032881

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Snook
Headteacher	Amanda Allnutt
Telephone number	01634 409521
Website	www.greenvale.medway.sch.uk
Email address	allna004@medwaymail.org
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Following a period of restructuring, the school is a smaller-than-average-sized infant school.
- There is a Nursery, and two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is now broadly in line with the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons across all classes and conducted a range of learning walks, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and a range of other staff, governors and the local authority representative.
- Inspectors carried out work scrutinies and 'book-looks' across the curriculum, some with school leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning in classrooms and in a pupil meeting. They observed pupils in lessons, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. Inspectors heard pupils read, observed assembly and visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors undertook a check of the school's policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including the statutory checks made during the recruitment of new staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, teaching, behaviour and attendance, and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered minutes of the governing body meetings, reports from advisers, and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the start of the day. Inspectors also considered 21 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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