

Cage Green Primary School

Cage Green Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 4PT

Inspection dates

4–5 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not managed the transition well to the revised national curriculum and new key stage 2 assessments this year. The impact of leaders over time has been limited in terms of outcomes.
- In the Year 6 tests taken last summer, pupils' results were below the national average in English and mathematics. The progress of pupils was not rapid enough, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers have not had a good enough awareness of national curriculum requirements, particularly in mathematics, to plan learning comprehensively and set high expectations. This means that there are gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge.
- Monitoring of planning, teaching and pupils' progress is not accurate enough to give leaders a full picture of what is working well and what needs to improve.
- Teachers do not adapt activities in lessons well enough when pupils are not fully challenged by their learning or are not making good progress over time. The needs of different groups of pupils are not consistently well met.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account sufficiently for the more rapid progress of all pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Early years provision provides children with a rich and confident start to their education.
- The Phoenix Centre (a specially resourced provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder) is well managed and supports the well-being of children both in the centre and in the main school.
- Safeguarding is effective and clearly seen as a priority by staff and pupils.
- Pupils are polite and behave well. They have good relationships with each other and with adults. They feel well supported by teachers and work well in response to their teachers' expectations.
- Parents and pupils feel that the school supports their personal development and cares for them.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop holistically, including an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise standards by ensuring that teachers:
 - have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and a better knowledge of national curriculum content, especially in mathematics, to inform their planning
 - develop pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
 - check pupils' progress more effectively during their learning activities and adapt them to increase pace and challenge
 - develop practice to secure greater consistency so that it provides appropriate support, stretch and challenge, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management on teaching by ensuring that:
 - self-evaluation is more accurate and leads to better systems and rapid improvements in outcomes
 - pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are monitored securely with more effectively planned activities and higher expectations, so that pupils achieve consistently strongly across a range of subjects
 - governors have a more accurate understanding of pupils' achievement, based on more rigorous challenge to leaders over their evaluations and expectations of progress for all groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- New curriculum plans and assessment practices have been introduced to reflect the significant changes in curriculum and assessment arrangements for schools nationally but these have lacked the precision needed to ensure that pupils learn all they need.
- Leaders routinely monitor the school's work but self-evaluation is not as accurate and rigorous as it needs to be. Work to improve teaching has not made enough difference to pupils' outcomes, particularly in mathematics. There has been an impact in some classes and on developing writing within a wide range of subjects.
- The management of teachers' performance and training of staff ensures that there is no inadequate teaching, but leaders' evaluations of teaching, coupled with assessment of pupils' progress over time, do not accurately pinpoint which aspects of teaching need to improve and this has limited the impact on pupils' learning.
- Subject leaders do not evaluate impact sharply enough by checking if pupils' achievement improves sufficiently. The deputy headteacher is currently absent; however, as part of succession planning, four middle leaders have been promoted to acting assistant headteacher posts. They have had opportunities to learn about leadership and the expectations of the new curriculum. This has raised capacity for continued improvement and their impact on teaching is improving but is not yet effective enough.
- The use of a topic-based curriculum, with clear links between subjects, has increased pupils' enjoyment of learning. Where these links are used effectively, they support pupils' progress in English and mathematics; however, practice is not yet consistently effective.
- Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement and are determined to learn from pupils' weaker outcomes this year to move the school forward.
- The Phoenix Centre is well led and provides effective support for pupils both in the centre and in the main school. Leaders have a clear understanding of what is required and provide guidance for teachers and teaching assistants which helps all pupils in all areas of their learning.
- Provision for children in the early years supports their learning in all areas of development. Leaders use assessment information to improve learning opportunities and are quick to adapt teaching to meet the children's needs.
- Pupils can participate in music, sport, arts and a wide range of clubs. They have leadership opportunities, visit places of interest and experience a wide range of activities. These support personal development and are appreciated by parents and pupils.
- Additional physical education and sport premium funding is used well to increase teacher confidence, broaden the range of activities on offer and increase the numbers of pupils taking them up. The school has gained a gold school games mark for this provision.
- Leaders spend pupil premium funding to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds on training, additional pastoral or teaching support, therapies, equipment and enrichment activities. The school tracks the outcomes for these pupils but is still developing precision in finding what is most effective.

- The school works effectively with other local schools and in other collaborations. The local authority provides support to the school through regular visits and centralised training. This has helped the school to develop teaching, assessment and curriculum planning, but this work is not as effective as it needs to be.

Governance of the school

- Governors are motivated and committed to supporting the school's leaders to do a good job. They question leaders about pupils' academic progress but have been satisfied with steady rather than rapid improvement.
- Governors have a well-organised committee structure to allow them to fulfil their duties. They visit, attend meetings and receive a wide range of information from the school's leaders about how well the school is doing.
- In areas such as pupils' behaviour and safeguarding, governors are effective in making sure that the school takes the right steps to keep pupils safe and behaving well. They monitor the use of additional sport and pupil premium funding and are working towards a greater understanding of the ways in which the pupil premium strategy can be improved.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School policies are up to date and are carried out in practice. Staff vetting checks at the point of employment are secure, as they are for volunteers and temporary staff. Entry arrangements for visitors are robust. Because they are well trained, staff know what to do in the event of safeguarding issues. Parents are positive about the culture of safety in the school. Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to stay safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' awareness of revised national curriculum requirements lacked the precision needed in mathematics teaching and, as a result, pupils have not achieved well enough.
- In mathematics, pupils have been developing their number skills but older pupils still have gaps in their knowledge which teachers have to fill before they can move pupils' learning on. Work in pupils' books is not consistently of a high enough quality to ensure that pupils make the expected progress, especially the most able pupils.
- Most-able pupils say that they do not always feel challenged and that they can work more on their own without help. They have additional work, challenge questions or problems, but the challenges are not always well planned to develop the learning. Pupils are not systematically offered the most appropriate challenging tasks as they are ready for them.
- At times, there is a lack of guidance at the start of the task without enough information to help all groups progress. Pupils are then unclear about what they are trying to achieve or how they will know when they are making good progress.
- Teachers do not routinely identify when the pace of learning slackens and, as a result, do not adjust their teaching to respond to this and refocus pupils' learning. Pupils then take time when moving between tasks and become distracted when the pace slows. Teachers do not consistently expect enough of pupils.
- Teachers have a good awareness of the different groups of pupils in their classes, such

as the most able and the disadvantaged. Although they provide support to help these pupils to do well, they do not typically ensure that activities are well targeted and make the necessary impact so that these pupils achieve all they should.

- Although teachers provide accurate comments, the assessment of pupils' achievement is not always precise enough and comments do not routinely direct the next steps in learning. Pupils do not always improve their work in response to this feedback.
- Teachers have benefited from additional training to improve accuracy in teaching basic mathematical skills, reasoning and problem-solving. Teachers' subject knowledge in other areas has been more secure. Pupils say that teachers are usually good at explaining things to them and giving feedback.
- In English, staff and pupils engage well with a cross-curricular approach to learning. This has had a positive impact on reading and writing, including extended writing for a variety of themes.
- Staff training has been effective in helping teachers plan and assess progress in writing. As a result, achievement is better than in other areas. Nevertheless, teachers do not always insist on good handwriting or challenge some poor spelling of high-frequency words, and this hinders pupils from doing even better.
- Positive relationships between pupils and adults and good attitudes to learning support progress for most pupils. Teaching assistants effectively support the behavioural needs of pupils in the classroom.
- Parents and pupils say that homework is used effectively to help them to learn.
- Intervention sessions are used effectively to support and improve learning for pupils who are falling behind, are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents say that there is a happy atmosphere in the school. They are pleased with the wide range of opportunities offered to the pupils. However, additional extra-curricular activities can be oversubscribed.
- Staff provide good levels of nurture and care for pupils who are vulnerable, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. When parents talked about the care for their children, they said that it is 'fantastic' and that 'teachers go the extra mile'. Parents of children in the Phoenix Centre are pleased with the amount of feedback they receive and appreciate the fact that teachers take time to keep them well informed.
- Attendance has been below the national average, but effective systems including attendance cups have been put in place to address this. Attendance is now in line with the national average, with little variation between groups.
- Staff are effective at supporting pupils and their families where concerns emerge.
- Pupils are alert to the different forms that bullying can take and are confident in the support they would receive from staff if this happened. They do not accept derogatory language and are supported well by staff in this.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to make a difference and contribute, such as through the school council or harvest festival. Pupils participated enthusiastically in

the harvest festival assembly observed. This was well supported by parents.

- The school environment, including play spaces, dining space, work rooms, library and displays, is pleasant and used well to support the development of the pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attitudes are positive in all environments. Pupils play well together.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are considerate and polite, they hold doors open and speak politely to visitors. They follow the school rules and teachers' expectations, and seek to make good use of their learning time. Some pupils lose focus in lessons when the content does not challenge them.
- Pupils learn to take care of the school environment and each other. Displays of work are of high quality and are respected by pupils, as are equipment used at breaktimes and practical resources used in classrooms.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are respected by other pupils. Pupils based in the Phoenix Centre have many opportunities to work with other children their own age.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- From their different starting points overall, pupils are not making good enough progress to fulfil their potential across the full range of subjects. Progress across year groups and subjects is not strong enough to ensure that pupils are well prepared for secondary education.
- The number of pupils in Year 6 achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics fell below the national average last year. Pupils have not built the secure knowledge and skills they need, with too many gaps in what they know.
- In mathematics, younger pupils are now developing basic skills more systematically. A lack of confidence in reasoning and problem-solving means that pupils make less progress when mathematics problems have to be reached by interpreting a written question.
- Most-able pupils make good progress when work is challenging and teachers' expectations are high. However, these experiences are not sufficiently frequent. There is some evidence of greater depth in writing, with the number of children writing at greater depth last year being above the national average, but this is not yet consistent.
- Pupils' writing ability is not yet consistently good. The school has taken action to improve this by introducing new initiatives to improve performance; these include cross-curricular writing and improved feedback. Pupils' written work in Year 6 includes opportunities for extended writing.
- Historically, pupils in the early years make good progress, with most achieving a good level of development. Boys have not made as much progress as girls, but the change to some of the teaching practices means that boys are currently developing well.
- Most-able pupils read well and understand what they have read. Many other pupils do not read as fluently and this affects their ability to attempt problems which require reading skills.
- Outcomes in phonics have not been strong, but the teaching of phonics is now more

systematic and as a result pupils are beginning to make more consistent progress.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is variable and not yet strong enough in mathematics, spelling and grammar when compared to other pupils nationally.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has a strong vision and high expectations. Leadership is very effective and the team are committed to professional development so that they can continue to improve their teaching.
- Children arrive in school from a variety of settings. Transition arrangements are effective and include visits to the children's pre-school and home. This has enabled children to settle quickly into school.
- The learning environment is welcoming, stimulating and well organised. Resources are readily accessible, and this helps children to find what they need and tidy away independently and confidently.
- Staff are carefully deployed to support and encourage the learning, well-being and safety of the children. The teachers are able to teach formal work, as teaching assistants are highly skilled and able to support wider learning effectively. They work well together to assess how well the children are learning and what they need to do next. Assessments are accurate.
- In the sessions when children choose their own activities, the rich environment offers many opportunities for learning through play. Outdoor provision supports learning, with clear flow and clear areas of learning enhancing provision. There are many opportunities for mark-making and the development of early literacy and mathematics skills.
- Language development is strong as a result of good adult interactions. Adults talk to children about their choices of activities. They ask questions and encourage the children to respond and to extend their learning.
- During the inspection, children were not influenced by gender stereotyping, with girls and boys engaging in all activities.
- Early years performance has fluctuated over the past three years, but although there have been some differences between groups, children make at least expected progress.
- The early years leader makes effective use of information about the children and advice from outside advisers. Boys had not been making such good progress and there has been a rapid response to include more relevant books to encourage their interest.
- The early years leader has an accurate picture of the provision's strengths. The next steps will be to focus on the impact of the changes she has made.
- Children have settled into school quickly and are excited by their learning. One child exclaimed, 'I have written my name.'
- The school uses a 'learning journey' folder to record achievements and progress. This is shared with parents. At present this does not contain enough accurate detail about progress, but will be improved during this academic year. Parents are pleased with the quality of this provision for their children.

- Pupil premium spending to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds has helped them to settle into school and has supported their learning. Children whose development is not sufficiently rapid are identified quickly and further intervention is provided.

School details

Unique reference number	118574
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10012299

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

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	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Antonia Balaam
Headteacher	Graeme Garthwaite
Telephone number	01732 354325
Website	www.cage-green.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@cage-green.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 July 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not yet meet the updated requirements on the publication of information, specifically that about the pupil premium, on its website.
- This is a well above average-sized primary school where the majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and require support is well below that found nationally, but well above for those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school manages a specially resourced provision, the Phoenix Centre, for up to 30 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. This unit is currently full.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including information on pupils' current attainment and progress, improvement planning, the use of pupil premium and sports funding, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors visited 16 lessons or part-lessons, some of which were observed jointly with senior and middle leaders. In addition, part-lessons were seen during a number of learning walks.
- They looked at pupils' work and listened to them read.
- Inspectors observed breaktimes, lunchtimes and the start of the school day as well as attending a harvest assembly.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to talk to them about their work.
- Inspectors met senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The team analysed the 55 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke briefly with parents and carers as they brought their children to school at the start of the day.
- Inspectors analysed 31 questionnaires completed by staff and 119 questionnaires from pupils.

Inspection team

Ann McCarthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Jenner	Ofsted Inspector
Anthony Linnett	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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