

Kemsley Primary Academy

Coldharbour Lane, Kemsley, Sittingbourne, ME10 2RP

Inspection dates 10–11 February 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | This inspection: | Good 2 |
| Leadership and management | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. From starting points that are often low, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those who are disabled or have special educational needs are very well supported. There is a highly skilled team of teaching assistants who contribute well to this support. Consequently these pupils make good progress.
- Regular checks by the academy’s leaders have ensured that teaching is improving and is good. Carefully targeted training is provided for all staff.
- The school’s work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils say they feel totally safe in school, a view that is strongly supported by parents and staff.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities which develop their confidence and widen their experience. Pupils thrive and develop into confident young people. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The headteacher leads the academy very effectively. She is relentless in her drive to bring about lasting improvements. She is absolutely determined to make the academy an exciting and enriching place for learning.
- Leaders have managed staff performance exceptionally well. This has helped to bring about significant improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Early years provision is good. As a result of good teaching and leadership, children have a very good start to academy life in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good. Pupils are happy in the academy and their parents agree. They have positive attitudes towards learning.
- Leaders and managers, together with governors, are fully committed to providing a high standard of education for all pupils. Their actions are having a positive impact on raising standards and improving teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Systems for marking and assessment in writing are not used well enough by all teachers to move pupils’ learning on quickly enough.
- The youngest children in the academy are not always able to practise their newly-learned skills in the outdoor area as this is in need of development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons, 13 of which were seen with the headteacher or the executive principal.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, the executive principal of the academy trust, subject leaders and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors talked informally to pupils at lunchtime and break times, observed them in assemblies and around the academy. They also listened to them read.
- In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' books and a range of documents, including the academy's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. They also scrutinised information on pupils' progress, checks on teachers' effectiveness, reports from the academy trust, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. They visited the breakfast club.
- The inspectors took account of 54 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 15 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Gay Whent, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alison Botarelli

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kemsley Primary Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Kemsley Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, Kemsley Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The academy is part of the REAch2 (Raising Educational Achievement for Children) Academy Trust.
- The current headteacher is the second leader of this academy and was appointed in December 2013. There has been a high turnover of staff; staffing from September 2014 is now more stable.
- The academy is in a federation with Milton Court Primary Academy. This is known as the Grovehurst Federation.
- There are eight classes, including two part-time Nursery classes and a Reception class. The Reception children attend full time. A small number of children attend the Nursery full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. There is a small number of pupils from other ethnic groups. Although few pupils speak English as an additional language, there is a higher proportion in the early years classes.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or looked after children. There are currently a small number of looked after children at the academy.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The academy runs a breakfast club and an after-school club. These are managed by the governing body and are reported on as part of the inspection.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve marking in writing to the same quality as that used in mathematics so that pupils make faster progress.
- Improve the outdoor learning experiences for children in the early years provision so that they have as many opportunities as possible to practise and develop their language and number skills and accelerate their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Many parents are full of praise for current leaders, including the headteacher, and are delighted with recent changes in the academy. They say 'everything is good now' and many share how their children are being helped 'to succeed'. Governors describe the headteacher's leadership as 'inspirational'. All staff strongly agree that the academy is well led and managed. The headteacher has lost no time in addressing the academy's weaknesses and making changes necessary for rapid and robust improvement.
- The headteacher, her senior leaders and the effective governing body have the expertise and determination to drive the academy forward. Together they ensure that all pupils are making good or better progress. They provide clear and decisive leadership and as a result good teaching and good behaviour flourish.
- The management of teachers' performance is extremely rigorous. Teachers receive constructive feedback and focused support to help them improve their skills and to learn from each other through shared observations of teaching. Consequently, teaching is now good. All teachers say they feel very well supported through the academy trust's training opportunities.
- The academy is now confident in the accuracy of its assessment because its judgements have been regularly validated by external agencies and leaders in other schools. Information is regularly shared with governors who check and challenge any underperformance.
- Middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects, have a secure understanding of their areas of responsibility. They have a very clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards higher and how to do this. Inspectors agree that the academy's 30 day improvement plans are very detailed and focus sharply on driving forward achievement for all pupils, whatever their ability. Leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, focus sharply on ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential, that they have equal opportunities to prosper and that there is no discrimination.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as possible. They are supported very well in classrooms and also in small groups.
- The new curriculum is being taught well. There is a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Effective links between literacy, science and geography ensure that pupils are fully involved in their learning in these subjects. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues are taught across a range of subjects.
- The academy prepares pupils for life in modern Britain extremely well; it strives to foster good relationships at all times. British values, such as tolerance and respect for different faiths and cultures, are promoted well. The academy has launched its own 'Discovering Democracy' programme. In Year 4 pupils have taken part in a series of lessons where they learnt how laws are made. They produced their own 'bills' regarding banning graffiti and reoffenders' punishments.
- The academy is making very good use of the primary school sports funding. Parents have been very impressed with the range of lessons the academy has put into place, from dance classes to martial arts. The academy has been able to buy into a local sports network giving it access to inter-school competitions. The funding has been used to increase teachers' skills and confidence. It has also been effective in promoting pupils' physical development and understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding pupils fully meet statutory requirements. They ensure that there is safe recruitment of all staff and that all pupils are kept as safe as possible. Thorough risk assessments are in place wherever these are seen as a necessity.
- The executive principal of the academy chain has provided very effective and appropriate support. This has enabled academy leaders to make well informed and accurate decisions about the academy's next steps.
- Good practice is shared through partnerships with other schools, especially the school in the federation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very well informed about the academy. They are well organised and apply their wide range of skills and valuable expertise not only to challenge, but also to support the academy's leadership. They each have an annual monitoring cycle linked to their particular roles and responsibilities. Governors understand the impact that teaching has on pupils' achievement and are fully aware of the quality of teaching across the academy. They know how underperformance has been tackled. They are aware of how good teaching is both recognised and rewarded. Governors have a good knowledge of performance management. They are fully aware that pay is linked to performance and that awards are not automatic. Governors have an accurate knowledge of the academy's pupil

achievement data and how this compares to national data. Governors make regular visits to the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are very friendly and energetic. They are proud of their academy. The vast majority of pupils display positive attitudes to their learning. Their enthusiasm for learning contributes well to their improved progress.
- Incidents of inappropriate behaviour have reduced recently and are now rare. This is as a result of an important whole academy drive by the headteacher. Those who attend the breakfast club have a calm start to their morning. They join their classes ready for learning at the start of the school day.
- Good behaviour management systems ensure an effective and consistent response to poor behaviour. Pupils know there are consequences for poor behaviour and they think these are fair. Few parents indicated any concerns about behaviour. Pupils are respectful of all staff, whatever their role in the academy.
- Pupils in Year 6 place a high value on their smart fleeces, embroidered with the logo 'Lead the way. Set the example'. They know they need to be role models of good behaviour in order to keep them. They 'stand tall' in their uniforms as they watch the youngest children walk to the dining hall.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally, when the pace or challenge of a lesson slows, a few pupils begin to lose their focus for learning.
- Leaders' check pupils' attendance rigorously and any concerns are followed up promptly. As a result attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy coming to the academy. They say 'we like to learn something new every day' and a group of older pupils unanimously agree that their school is 'just brilliant', 'perfect'.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. This extends to all parts of the school day including the after-school club, where pupils benefit from good quality provision. The vast majority of parents agree that their child feels safe at the academy. One pupil remarked that 'I feel safe as soon as I come into the school each morning' and many others agreed.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Younger pupils listened exceptionally well to a film clip in an assembly about keeping safe on the internet. They responded sensibly to the questions which were raised afterwards. They know how important this is for them.
- Pupils say that they know exactly what to do if there was any bullying. They trust all staff and say that they look after them very well. Adults listen to what pupils have to say and pupils know that their worries are taken very seriously. They feel highly valued by the staff.

The quality of teaching is good

- The academy's focus on improving the quality of teaching has resulted in teaching that is now good overall, with some outstanding practice. This has had a direct impact on pupils' achievement in their reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are making good progress and standards have risen. Strong and supportive relationships between all adults and pupils promote learning in all classrooms.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan work carefully and make pupils' learning interesting and engaging. This is appreciated by pupils. They say 'lessons can be hard but they help to push you to your limits'. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils discussed how to develop a character profile and improve the descriptions of the alien they had created. This led to a stimulating discussion relating to their knowledge of planets and ensured high quality engagement for all pupils in their learning.
- Pupils are developing a real love for reading. Pupils of all ages readily share their favourite book and authors. They are reading a range of books which includes both stories and information texts. As a result, standards in reading are rising rapidly.
- In their marking teachers highlight where pupils are successful. The systems for assessing pupils' work in mathematics are used extremely successfully by teachers and pupils. These identify what pupils need to do to improve their mathematics and what this looks like. As a result, pupils respond well to marking comments and apply this to their learning. This high standard of marking is not being used in writing as not all pupils follow up their teachers' advice to improve the quality of their writing.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning very skilfully to move learning forward. They work closely to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and ensure they make good

progress.

- In every class there is a positive climate for learning. In a monitoring report the Chair of the Governing Body states that 'an environment for learning is seen as a priority. Adults treat pupils with respect and pupils respond positively in return. They are keen to engage in their learning.' This accurate report reflects these key factors in the more rapid rates of progress and improved standards.
- Teachers provide a variety of different work for different groups of pupils. On the rare occasions when the work is not set at the right level of difficulty, a few pupils lose their sharp focus on learning and their progress slows.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Current assessment systems are rigorous and data on pupils' progress is checked thoroughly every six weeks by academy leaders. This includes a check on accuracy. If any pupil, of any ability, is at risk of falling behind, teaching and support are immediately adapted and impact is checked closely. The vigorous focus on improving teaching has had a very positive impact on learning.
- The majority of children start at the academy with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. Very few children have advanced communication skills and for a minority, these skills are very limited.
- Pupils learn phonics (the sounds that letters make) well. This is seen in very much improved results in their most recent phonics check at the end of Year 1. Linking sounds to letters is carefully modelled by staff, practised and reinforced in a range of interesting writing activities. In Key Stage 1, pupils' skills are built on well and they make good progress to reach standards that are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with average. In the 2014 national tests, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading and mathematics compared favourably with the national figures. However, figures were lower in writing.
- Because teaching is continually being reviewed and improved, and behaviour is good, pupils are making at least good progress. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. Current assessment information and evidence in pupils' books shows that pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have made rapid progress over the last few years in writing and mathematics and good progress in reading.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good, particularly in reading. This is because their needs are quickly identified so that support is tailored exactly to their needs. Teachers, together with skilled teaching assistants, plan work at just the right level of difficulty.
- Teachers set a range of increasingly difficult activities for the most able pupils. They rise to the challenge and make good or better progress while applying their learning in different ways. The older most able pupils say they 'We know it takes hard work but we are prepared to do this.'
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress throughout the academy. This is due to the very effective support they receive within their class. The academy is rigorously focusing on reducing the gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils. In the 2014 national tests disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were a term behind other pupils in the class in mathematics and reached the same levels as their classmates in reading and writing. Compared to all other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were four terms behind in mathematics and two terms behind in reading and writing. Current data shows that gaps are reducing considerably.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress from starting points, which are often below what is typical for their age. The proportion of children reaching the early learning goals by the end of Reception is broadly in line with the national average. This is the result of rapid progress for many children. All children make good progress in social and emotional development. Those children who arrive with little or no English are supported particularly well so that they rapidly acquire a good level of spoken English. Owing to the range of opportunities they are offered, they become more confident and curious learners. All children are well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- Parents are enthusiastic in their praise for the new online 'learning journal'. This enables teachers and their assistants to capture observations and record evidence of children's skills, knowledge and understanding. Parents say they are very well informed about their children's progress.
- Teaching is good. Staff are particularly successful in creating a welcoming and stimulating environment.

Most learning is skilfully developed by adults as the children play as they have identified what the next steps need to be. Those teachers who are recently qualified are well supported by experienced and outstanding practitioners.

- The use of storytelling is outstanding. The youngest children in the Nursery enact their own stories. They use their imaginations vividly; for example, children decided that the giant in one version of 'Jack and the beanstalk' chases princesses away and eventually eats them!
- Children behave well in the early years because activities are interesting and fun, and because they are kept engaged in their learning. Classroom and outdoor areas are well organised and tidy, so that children can play happily and learn well. Every morning the outdoor area is carefully checked so that it is a safe place for all children. At present, children do not have enough opportunities to practise their newly-learned skills both inside and outside, but the academy has recently put forward plans to extend outdoor learning opportunities. This is essential so that children can carry out all aspects of their learning both inside and outdoors seamlessly.
- The early years provision is very well led and managed. The leader is successful in promoting effective teamwork. All staff know the children well. They work successfully with parents where really good levels of communication enable children to get off to a good start. Teachers use the information gained from their observations to carry out planning that is closely linked to children's learning needs. Staff ensure that children's health, safety and wellbeing are of the utmost importance. They successfully provide children with a safe, secure, attractive and enjoyable learning environment.

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 | 139396 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 449891 |

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 | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 257 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Eileen Hargreaves |
| Headteacher | Cathryn Andrews |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
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