

Ellington Infant School

High Street, St Lawrence, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 0QH

Inspection dates

28 February – 1 March 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

- Determined leadership has got this school firmly back on track. It provides a good quality of education and has some significant strengths.
- Leaders and governors at all levels make a strong contribution to the good and improving picture of teaching and outcomes.
- Weaker outcomes for Year 2 pupils in 2016 do not reflect the good progress of current pupils.
- Leaders and staff have made significant and critical improvements to the way they assess and track pupils' capabilities. They use this information carefully to make sure that pupils achieve well relative to their different starting points.
- Effective teaching means that pupils' learning builds strongly over time. They remember what they have learned and work hard when set practical or written tasks.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, make good progress to begin to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Most-able pupils make good progress. However, teaching does not provide the right level of challenge for them consistently enough to ensure that enough pupils fulfil their potential by the time that they leave.
- Pupils enjoy school and are rightly proud of the work that they produce. The very successful promotion of pupils' personal development makes sure that they are ready to learn.
- Pupils feel safe. Their views are important to the adults in the school. Relationships at all levels are strong.
- A rich variety of opportunities provides pupils with cultural experiences that a number would otherwise not have. Leaders have identified correctly that the promotion of music and the arts forms a relatively limited part of this.
- Leaders and staff do all they can to form close partnerships with parents for the benefit of their children. However, despite the extensive efforts of staff, some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities still miss too much school.
- The early years provides well for children's varying needs. Consequently, children make good gains in their learning and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The outdoor learning environment in early years is especially rich. However, children are not always as purposefully engaged and challenged as they could be when not working with an adult, including most-able children.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure teaching that challenges a greater proportion of the most able or potentially most-able pupils to fulfil their potential, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Sustain the extensive work with families to ensure that more disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities attend school regularly.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and the environment in early years is of consistently high quality to promote the best possible outcomes, including for most-able children.
- Strengthen the school's promotion of pupils' outcomes in music and the arts.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The resolute leadership of the headteacher has paid off. Although the school's journey since the previous inspection has not been without its setbacks, current pupils receive a good and improving education.
- Leaders have established a culture of high expectations. Staff and pupils rise well to this challenge and it is reflected throughout the school and environment. Leaders have secured and embedded the core values, drive and purpose of the school. Staff are rightly proud to work at the school and enjoy doing so. They have a clear understanding of the goals that everyone is aiming to achieve. All respondents to the staff survey agreed that the school has improved since the previous inspection.
- The drive for continuous improvement is clear. Leaders carried out a rigorous analysis of why pupils' outcomes in 2016, using the government's new ways of assessing pupils, were much lower than seen nationally. The decisive action that they have taken as a result has secured an immediate upturn in outcomes for current pupils.
- There has been a complete overhaul of the way staff assess and track how well pupils are doing. There is now a much sharper focus on how much progress pupils are making from their differing starting points. However, the impact of previous weaknesses in assessment is still evident. Following local authority advice, a number of children reaching the end of early years were assessed as meeting age-related expectations, even though they were not completely secure. This will undoubtedly have an unfavourable impact on any comparison against the more exacting requirements of current assessment procedures at the end of key stage 1.
- Leaders and teachers take an analytical approach to reviewing the school's assessment information. Leaders check closely how well different groups of pupils are doing, with extensive analysis, including where groups overlap. For example, in the current Year 2, an unusually high proportion of disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders' strategic analysis is matched precisely to individual pupils so that teachers are accountable for targeting any gaps in learning. School records show rigour and depth in regular discussions between leaders and teachers about pupils' progress, including specific identification of potential barriers and possible solutions.
- Leaders responsible for particular year groups or subjects are clear-sighted about the effectiveness of their own areas and have a good grasp of school priorities. They have a firm understanding of how to use their own checks of the school's effectiveness to drive further improvement. Leaders' rigorous monitoring and evaluation have secured a good degree of consistency of practice and approach across the school. Teachers receive and act positively on the constructive and developmental feedback they are given.
- Recently strengthened links with a local outstanding infant school, led by a national leader of education, have been welcomed by leaders and staff. Outward-looking, leaders routinely work with other schools, including inviting professional challenge in their drive for further improvement.
- Strong leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that funding is well spent to meet an extremely wide range of

needs. The special educational needs coordinator keeps a close eye on the difference made by the raft of additional support and help for pupils.

- Pupils enjoy and are greatly enthused by the broad and balanced curriculum. The wide range of opportunities on offer promotes both their basic skills and personal development well. Thoughtful promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development goes a long way towards compensating for pupils' sometimes limited life experience. Pupils learn to appreciate and wonder at the world around them through topics such as 'What a wonderful world', and through visits to the sea and local art gallery.
- Curriculum and extra-curricular activities broaden pupils' cultural experience through activities such as Bollywood dancing, archery, golf, yoga and fencing. Staff and pupils recently put on a production inspired by a trip to the home and museum of a local Victorian author. However, leaders have rightly identified that the richness and quality of music and the arts in school is at an early stage of development.
- The school's teachings promote fundamental British values very well according to pupils' ages. Respect is deeply embedded throughout the school. Pupils have visited law courts and carried out their own cases in role play. Democracy and 'pupil voice' is promoted strongly in school, including through the school council. Pupils learn about different religions, including through visiting a synagogue and receiving visits into school from members of the Muslim and Hindu communities.
- Very effective use of extra sports funding significantly increases young pupils' opportunities to engage in local sports tournaments and competitions with pupils from other schools. Training for staff to refine their skills when teaching physical education has also ensured that the difference made by the additional funds is sustainable.
- Leaders and staff work tirelessly to engage with parents and families for the benefit of pupils. They use a wide and growing range of methods to communicate with parents, including both older and newer technologies. Leaders' serious commitment to this aspect of its work is evident in the investment in the excellent work of the family liaison officer.
- The local authority provided leaders with robust challenge to check that weak data about key stage 1 performance in 2016 was not indicative of wider concerns. Recent audits of the school have provided reassurance that leaders are demonstrating a strong capacity to keep the school moving forward. The local authority has responded readily to school leaders' request for specialist support in priority areas.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors know the school well and provide its leaders with appropriate challenge to keep it moving forward strongly.
- Following an external review, the governing body was restructured. As a result of this streamlining, governance is more strategic and focused more sharply on important priorities. Their regular visits, checks and meetings with leaders are strongly linked with gauging how well school leaders are securing improvement against the improvement plan.

- Governors undertake regular, pertinent training to develop the necessary understanding and skills to be effective. They use this extremely well. For example, they asked leaders to provide a more precise overview of how well different groups of pupils are doing relative to their starting points.
- The governing body is realistic about priorities that need further work. Governors are strongly focused on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils as well as those that fall just outside this definition. Leaders and governors work diligently to ensure that they spend pupil premium funding wisely. They have carefully identified potential barriers to better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, spending contributes to getting these pupils ready to learn as well as providing targeted academic help.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff place a very high priority on keeping children safe. Exhaustive checks and risk assessments of activities and the environment are maintained. Leaders follow up safeguarding audits rigorously, keen to ensure that their practice is the best that it can be.
- Thorough recruitment checks are systematically recorded on the single central register. Relative to their different roles, staff are well trained in safeguarding principles and procedures.
- Thorough records detail any identified concerns and the action taken as a result. Leaders do not hesitate to consult with other professionals to ensure that pupils are safe and protected, and are tenacious in following up on concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and other adults have strong subject knowledge. They use this well to make learning points clear for pupils. Sequences of learning build pupils' understanding systematically, for example using equipment to work out simple fractions, progressing to simple calculations involving fractions. Pupils clearly understand the journey they are on and can make connections in their learning. They recall readily and build securely on what they have learned before.
- Adults put their well-developed questioning skills to good use. They check pupils' understanding carefully and are alert to any misconceptions. Where these are identified, adults follow these up with skilful questioning that enables pupils to both get to the right answer and explain their thinking.
- Teachers plan carefully how to make sure that learning is made fun, interesting and engaging according to pupils' ages. Careful planning means that time is used well to achieve a good balance between different types of activities. The high levels of productivity evident in pupils' books over time indicate teachers' high expectations.
- Teaching assistants provide very effective support for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This support enables pupils to access concepts at their own level, for example understanding that different coins can be used to make

the same amount, but using smaller amounts of money. Teaching assistants have a strong understanding of the individual needs of the pupils they work with, and so adapt their approach accordingly.

- Reports home to parents about pupils' progress are thorough and informative. Parents have frequent opportunities to come into school to review their child's work.
- Teachers generally use their assessments of pupils' capabilities well to meet their differing needs and secure progress from their varying starting points. However, teaching for most-able pupils is not consistently challenging enough to enable them to do as well as they possibly could, including in the early years.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and staff, including the family liaison officer, have a very thorough understanding of the individual needs of children and families. They use this effectively to ensure that from a young age children are switched on to learning and enjoy school.
- Relationships are strong at all levels. The promotion of pupils' social and moral development is especially strong. Pupils develop strong collaborative skills. They are respectful and patient with each other as they share equipment or take turns in a task. Pupils' independence and sense of responsibility is promoted very well from a young age. For example, pupils organise play equipment and fruit sensibly at playtime.
- Parents and pupils agree that pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Pupils begin to learn simple but important rules about keeping safe online, on the road or in their daily lives in school. Pupils' views are important to staff. Giving pupils a voice has a high profile, both using formal procedures such as surveys and the school council, and as part of daily lessons.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils and parents report that bullying is rare and very well dealt with. Records show that staff take any concerns seriously, investigating and logging them thoroughly. Pupils have a developing understanding, relative to their age, of what bullying is, but all agree that adults listen and sort out any problems where other pupils are unkind. Pupils unanimously agree that teachers encourage them to be friendly and respect others, including those from other backgrounds.
- The well-organised breakfast club provides effective early morning care. Pupils that attend get on well together and busy themselves in the comfortable, homely atmosphere.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strength and impact of the school's strong values can be seen in pupils' conduct and behaviour throughout the day. This positive climate extends to assemblies and

routines at the end of breaktimes. Pupils respect their environment, including through taking care with their bags, shoes and coats to keep shared areas tidy and safe.

- Activities meet pupils' needs and interests well so that most are typically motivated learners. Pupils are often highly enthused by the more-practical elements in lessons. They are excited to join in, but responsive to adults' instructions so that this enthusiasm does not get in the way of effective learning. High levels of productivity in books, including for most disadvantaged pupils, reflects a strong work ethic too. Pupils are proud of their work and achievements and confident to share them.
- In recent years, overall attendance has been below that typically seen in primary schools nationally. Leaders are using every lever at their disposal to encourage better attendance, especially for vulnerable pupils. The 'extra mile' travelled by the family liaison officer in this work is a significant asset. Overall attendance has risen so far this year, and the proportion of pupils that frequently miss school is down. However, despite the best efforts of the school, some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities still do not attend regularly enough. This has a detrimental effect on their learning and progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- As a result of making good and improving progress over time, outcomes for the current Year 2 are set to rise considerably this year. Pupils' results are on track to compare much more favourably with national expectations, as results for Year 2 leavers did in 2015. Discussions with pupils and the quality of work in their books indicate clearly that the school's own rigorous assessments are accurate. Pupils' work and achievements show that they do well in a wide range of subjects.
- In recent years, overall differences between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally have fluctuated. For current pupils, these differences are diminishing well overall, although the poor attendance of a small number has a negative impact on their progress. However, within an overall improving picture for current pupils, outcomes are typically rising faster for disadvantaged pupils than others.
- Effective phonics teaching ensures that pupils learn how to use phonics well to both read and spell. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved well. Pupils at risk of not meeting the required standard receive extra help, so that those who have not quite got there in Year 1 catch up well with other pupils nationally in Year 2.
- Pupils very much enjoy reading. Pupils were palpably excited about the book selection for World Book Day. Most-able readers develop a passionate enthusiasm and love of books from a young age. They talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors and illustrators. Lower-ability pupils have similarly positive attitudes and use their developing phonics skills diligently to tackle unfamiliar words, as do those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A rich variety of tasks, especially in Year 2, supports pupils' strong progress in writing. Pupils' writing skills develop systematically as they move through all year groups. Most-able writers are beginning to use an increasing range of punctuation, vary the way

they start sentences and organise their ideas using paragraphs. Pupils mostly spell accurately, using their phonics to make plausible attempts at more-challenging words.

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. They develop secure calculation skills, for example understanding the relationships between multiplication and division facts. The breadth of their learning, such as understanding how to interpret graphs, prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Most-able pupils have a good repertoire of strategies to draw on. They are not always able to get easily to the right answer, but using their resilience, jottings and equipment they are increasingly encouraged to develop mastery of the concepts and skills involved.
- Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good, and sometimes very good, progress from their particular starting points. Teaching and activities are successfully adapted to meet their wide-ranging needs and sometimes exceptionally low starting points. Skilled and trained teaching assistants provide individualised programmes of support as appropriate. Plans for this provision are detailed and regularly reviewed to check that support is making enough difference.
- Although current most-able pupils are often challenged well, this is not consistent over time to ensure that enough pupils have achieved the higher standards, or depth of work, of which they are capable. Not enough pupils working within age-appropriate expectations make the sort of strong and sustained progress that would enable them to work at greater depth by the time that they leave. This includes the most able disadvantaged pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- Many children start their Reception Year with a narrower range of skills, knowledge and understanding than is typical for their ages. Overall, children's starting points this year were particularly low, with a high proportion of boys and children with additional needs. Through recognising and providing for their varying needs, adults ensure that children make strong progress and are well prepared for Year 1. Effective use of additional funds to provide extra support means that disadvantaged children catch up well with age-related expectations.
- Adult-led or guided activities are particularly strong. Adults use their knowledge of individual children and their prior learning well to help them to take the next steps. Effective phonics teaching enables children to quickly gain the confidence to begin using and applying their skills. Adults' subject knowledge is strong, which lends confidence to their teaching. They take good account of children's differing needs and stages in learning phonics.
- The successful promotion of children's personal, emotional, social and language skills begins well in the early years. When choosing their own activities, particularly in the rich outdoor environment, children learn well in many different ways. For example, a group made good use of their problem-solving skills to create cross-struts at the bottom of a wooden-block castle tower, to make it more stable. In the 'forest area', children busily found and marked off items from varied lists of living things, colours and shapes. The quality and variety of resources, especially outside, is rich and supports all areas of learning.

- Relationships are strong at all levels. Children are safe and feel safe. Effective systems are very well established, so transitions between activities are smooth and time is not lost. Adults value children's views and make sure that they have a voice. Children have a say in planning the environment, for example the garage role play for budding car mechanics. Adults constantly look for ways to engage children in talk to bring on their language skills. However, there are inconsistencies in the level of challenge when children are not working directly with adults, especially for the most able. Planning for sessions where children select their own activities does not take enough account of children's different starting points.
- Children are proud to share their work and achievements. 'Love to learn' books encourage links between home and school with regular activities sent home. The promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective, for example through the celebration of their own achievements in their 'special spaces' as well as marking other world festivals.
- Leaders and staff try hard to engage parents in their children's schooling from the start. Helpful information is readily available on display for parents. Staff invite contributions from home to be celebrated in the 'special spaces'. Parents are warmly welcomed to 'early bird reading', the Christmas play and 'book time'. Creative leadership means that phonics input for parents is now included as part of these more-popular activities, whereas previously dedicated workshops for parents had been poorly attended. Current sounds are prominently displayed outside as a good reminder to encourage parents to reinforce children's learning at home.
- Leaders and staff draw on helpful links with a range of other professionals to meet the particular needs of children who have special educational needs/and or disabilities. Making effective use of advice, necessary adaptations are made to ensure that children are successfully included throughout the day.

School details

Unique reference number	118414
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10024502

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Luxmoore
Headteacher	Nicky Brown
Telephone number	01843 591638
Website	www.ellington-infant.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@ellington-infant.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This infant school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school. There are three classes in each year group.
- Approximately one third of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, which is above average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by the school, or a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- An increasing proportion of pupils arrive or leave mid-way through a key stage.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

- In conjunction with the local authority, very recently, links have been strengthened with a local outstanding infant school that is led by a national leader of education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes during the inspection, many of them more than once. The majority of these visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- During these visits, inspectors observed parts of the lessons that were taking place, but focused particularly on gathering evidence about what teaching and learning is typically like over time. This included scrutinising the work in pupils' books and on display, talking with them about their learning and checking the school's assessments of their progress. Inspectors also considered leaders' and external visitors' evaluations about the quality of teaching over time.
- Inspectors met formally and informally with a wide range of people to gather further evidence. This included pupils, parents, staff, school leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority. An inspector also listened to pupils reading.
- A wide range of the school's documentation and records were also reviewed, including particular scrutiny of those relating to safeguarding.
- The inspection team analysed 32 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, as well as the results from 13 electronic questionnaires completed by staff and 20 by pupils. All of the written comments that were added to these were considered alongside other inspection evidence.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Wibroe	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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