

Newlands Primary School

Dumpton Lane, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 7AJ

Inspection dates

17–18 May 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

- Since his appointment, the headteacher has built rapidly on the school's strengths and correctly identified the areas for further improvement.
- His determined leadership and ambition, shared by the senior leadership team, governors and The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) has effectively improved the school since the previous inspection.
- As a result, important aspects of the school have been strengthened. The quality of teaching and learning, pupils' outcomes and their behaviour are now good.
- Effective teaching, learning and assessment ensure that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, generally make good progress, although rates of progress are a little uneven across the school.
- Occasionally, in a few classes, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, can achieve.
- In mathematics, pupils do well in arithmetic and calculations but have not developed good enough skills in reasoning mathematically.
- While pupils are now making more rapid progress than previously, standards are not yet as high as they could be, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Children get a good start to school in the Reception classes. They make rapid progress from their starting points and are well prepared to continue learning in Year 1.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. Staff effectively support pupils who find managing their own behaviour more difficult.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy their time in school. They are friendly, caring and respectful to other pupils and adults.
- There is a strong senior leadership team. Some middle leaders are relatively new to their roles. While they have already demonstrated considerable influence in their areas of responsibility, their effective work has not yet had time to demonstrate the full impact on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes.
- Governors know the school well. With the Thanet joint local governing body and TKAT, governance ensures that leaders are held to account effectively for the school's performance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to further raise pupils' attainment, particularly in key stage 2, ensure that the successful strategies and high expectations that help to broaden pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding at a greater depth are used consistently in all classes.
- Provide greater challenge for the most able pupils, ensuring that more pupils achieve higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Strengthen the role of middle leaders to ensure that their work has even greater impact on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides very effective leadership for the school. He is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Positive attitudes, high expectations and the determination to provide the best possible learning and personal experiences for pupils have improved the school since the last inspection.
- The headteacher has the confidence of governors, staff, parents and pupils. One member of staff expressed the views of many with the comment, 'During the past year the school has improved greatly and I believe it will only go from strength to strength.'
- The senior leadership team has been strengthened. Senior leaders know they are fully accountable in their areas of responsibility and make a considerable and effective contribution to school improvement.
- Some middle leaders are relatively new to their roles. They are making a positive difference in their subjects or areas of responsibility but have not yet had time to secure enough impact on the quality of teaching and learning or pupils' outcomes.
- All leaders are encouraged and supported effectively to further develop and enhance their skills and expertise and are enthusiastic to do so. They benefit from working with other leaders in TKAT, to share good practice and keep abreast of current research and initiatives, as well as working together in school to learn from each other.
- There is strong teamwork across the school and a culture of learning for all. Leaders share the headteacher's aspirations and ambition and are committed to the school's improvement. One member of staff expressed the views of many with the comment, 'I couldn't work with a more dedicated, hard-working team that has the children at the heart of every decision we make.'
- The focus on improving teaching has helped to raise standards across the school. The performance management system is established and ensures that teachers are accountable for pupils' progress. Where weaknesses are identified, appropriate support and coaching is provided and improvement is expected.
- Staff benefit from well-targeted training that meets whole-school priorities as well as individual needs very effectively. Teachers who are new to their careers are supported well. They commented very positively on the guidance they receive from all leaders.
- Effective monitoring provides leaders with accurate information on the school's strengths and the areas for further development. Plans are already in place to review school improvement planning to more accurately reflect what actions are taking place and to include more frequent milestones to evaluate the ongoing impact on improvement.
- Leaders are rightly aware that the most able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable in order to reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Leaders make rigorous checks on pupils' progress through the termly assessment information and checks on the work in pupils' books. They have regular meetings with teachers to discuss the needs of individual pupils or groups of pupils. Any additional support is swiftly provided. Well-targeted, appropriate interventions help pupils catch up if they are at risk of falling behind.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are taught through topics, which are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs as well as their interests and to cover a wide range of subjects. There is an appropriate focus on improving pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of clubs, visits and visitors to school. Pupils in Year 1 were very enthusiastic to talk about their trip to Howletts Wild Animal Park as part of their topic, wild world, which provided them with memorable learning experiences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values are promoted well through the school's values and the ethos of the school. Respect and tolerance are fostered effectively. Pupils learn about and celebrate different religions and cultures. They understand the need for rules within the school and the wider society.
- Leaders ensure that pupils, whatever their needs, have equal opportunities to learn and take part in all that the school offers. Pupils learn without fear of discrimination of any kind. The school's inclusive ethos and the focus on pupils' personal as well as their academic development mean that staff do all they can to reduce any barriers to learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from well-targeted support from a range of carefully planned interventions and specialist provision. These fully meet the range of the pupils' needs, which, for a few, are specific and very complex.
- The pupil premium is spent well to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils have the same opportunities to participate in activities as other pupils. Senior leaders carefully check any differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, and other pupils nationally. This ensures that action is taken to provide a range of effective additional support, appropriate to the needs of the pupils, to enable them to make similar progress to others.
- Good use is made of the primary physical education and sport premium. This effectively extends and enriches the existing strong provision. Working with Thanet Passport and sports coaches, for example, enhances the skills of pupils and teachers and, therefore, improves outcomes for pupils. The introduction of a wider and more varied range of activities including, for example, street dance, street football and American football has helped to increase the level of participation. The school has received a school games gold award, which acknowledges its successful work.
- Parents are positive about the school. They expressed confidence in the leadership and particularly appreciate the headteacher's presence at the start of the school day. One parent wrote: 'Since the arrival of the headteacher, I have been impressed with his friendly manner towards children and parents at the school gates in the morning.'

Governance of the school

- Governance for the school is provided by the local governing body and the Thanet joint governing body, which works across the five TKAT Thanet academies. They are accountable to the Thanet regional board and TKAT.
- Governors know the school well. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve further. Governors are well informed by the headteacher and their own monitoring and strategic work, which enables them to ask searching questions. Governors have the appropriate skills, expertise and experience to do this.
- There is a good balance of challenge and support to leaders. The director of education for the Thanet regional board ensures that the headteacher and senior leaders are held to account very effectively for the school's performance.
- Governors understand that a key focus for improvement has been for senior leaders to ensure improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. They have a clear view of the quality of teaching and how the performance of staff is managed to reward effective practice and meet targets.
- Governors have a good awareness of the information about pupils' achievement. This enables them to question the progress and attainment of different groups. They check that additional funding is making a difference for pupils in order to determine that it is being used effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school keeps their children safe and that they are well looked after.
- Training for all staff is up to date and any new requirements are immediately brought to the attention of all staff.
- As well as the main designated safeguarding leader, four other staff are also trained in this role. This ensures that there is always a trained safeguarding lead available to staff, should they have a concern.
- Effective systems and procedures are in place and are fit for purpose. Staff spoken to know what they should do if they have any concerns.
- Record-keeping of concerns and any subsequent referrals to external agencies are well organised. Leaders check that everybody who works with pupils is suitable to do so. All visitors to the school are checked in and wear badges so pupils can identify them.
- The school site is safe and the grounds and buildings are regularly checked and are well maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. As a result, pupils' outcomes have improved.

- Teachers work hard and successfully to plan stimulating lessons and activities, which engage and motivate pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy all they do.
- Teachers strive to find the best ways that different pupils learn. For example, learning literacy and numeracy skills through sports activities benefits all pupils and boys in particular. Pupils are particularly motivated to learn through using new personal computer devices in the classroom to engage in planned online activities. One boy said that learning through online activities was, 'An absolutely astonishing experience.'
- Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very good. Pupils want to do well and work hard. They are proud of their school and their achievements and know that their opinions and efforts are valued.
- Pupils are increasingly responsive to the school's promotion of a can-do culture. This is giving them confidence to take risks in their learning and develop as resilient learners.
- Teachers provide motivating, inspiring classrooms. Displays are used well to support teaching and learning and there is a purposeful atmosphere in the school which promotes learning well.
- Well-trained and skilled teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning and work well with teachers. They effectively support pupils in class or working with individuals or small groups, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's policy for marking and feedback is used consistently. The effectiveness of teachers' comments, however, in deepening pupils' learning is not of the same quality in all classes. Where it is most effective, pupils say that teachers' comments help them know how to improve their work.
- Phonics skills are taught well and used effectively by most pupils to help them read unfamiliar words. These skills get them off to a good start in the early years and key stage 1.
- Reading is taught well. Reading for enjoyment is promoted effectively across the school. Older pupils demonstrate mature attitudes and competencies when studying challenging texts. Pupils draw on their reading of a good range of quality texts to influence their own writing. They discuss as a class, with a considerable level of sophistication, authors' choices of vocabulary and structure to develop their comprehension, retrieval and interpretation skills. This approach is welcomed by pupils who said that, 'It is much better than just sitting on your own and doing comprehension.' It is having a positive impact. A group of pupils agreed with one who said, 'I wasn't stressed in the SATs because I know now how to answer the questions.'
- Teachers are mostly using consistent approaches to teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling, which were identified as the weaker aspects of writing in the previous inspection report. This has helped pupils to make better progress. However, leaders are correctly aware that there needs to be a continued focus in these areas, and particularly in spelling, to further raise achievement. Displays of pupils' writing around the school show that pupils have opportunities to use their writing skills across a range of subjects. Leaders are aware, however, that there is more scope to ensure that pupils write for a range of purposes in different styles.

- In mathematics, teachers have focused on developing fluency in arithmetic and calculation. Pupils are motivated to learn multiplication tables and receive badges to show their achievement. Leaders have, however, identified that there is a need to focus on ensuring that pupils' mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills are developed, and that there are greater challenges for pupils to learn with a deeper level of understanding, particularly the most able pupils.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved and is good. There are, however, occasions when teachers' expectations are not high enough for what pupils can achieve. Successful strategies used to broaden pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and work at greater depth are not always evident across all classes. As a consequence, pupils sometimes do not learn as well as they should. The demands made on the most able pupils, in particular, are not always sufficiently challenging to enable them to achieve high standards.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff know the pupils well and as a consequence, pupils' personal, social, emotional and behavioural needs are supported very effectively and they are well looked after.
- Pupils are friendly and polite and show caring attitudes towards each other and adults. They have a strong sense of pride in the school and in their achievements, which they are keen to share with visitors.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. Pupils understand that bullying can take different forms and say that any bullying in school is very rare. If any problems should arise they are confident to turn to staff and know they will be listened to and helped. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations in and out of school, including when using the internet.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club enjoy a safe, healthy and sociable start to their day at school.
- Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe and that they are happy and well looked after.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils are usually attentive and get on with their work. Behaviour around the school and at playtimes and lunchtimes is generally good. Leaders know that there is more to do, however, to make behaviour at lunchtimes even better. Some pupils expressed a little concern about rough behaviour by a few pupils in the playground at lunchtime but said it was much better than it used to be. There is a good level of supervision and staff deal effectively with any inappropriate behaviour.

- Pupils demonstrated excellent behaviour during the inspection when the school had to be evacuated due to a fire alarm. The pupils were very responsive to their teachers' instructions and left the building in a calm, orderly and safe manner. They waited patiently and sensibly in their designated areas until it was safe to go back to their classes.
- A new relationships and positive behaviour policy has recently been introduced. This has made the systems for managing behaviour very clear to staff and pupils. Procedures are implemented by staff and expectations are well known by pupils. The impact on pupils' behaviour is evident, as the number of incidents by a small number of pupils has reduced considerably.
- Pupils with specific needs are supported well and focused as quickly as possible on their learning. If any unacceptable behaviour should occur in class, teachers deal with it quickly so that the learning of others is not interrupted.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View agree that pupils behave well.
- Attendance has improved and most pupils attend regularly. However, attendance remains below the national average. Leaders do all they can to promote regular attendance and work hard with families where attendance issues persist. Leaders keep careful records to track the progress of individuals and different groups.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The effective action taken to improve teaching and learning has resulted in improved outcomes for pupils by the end of key stage 2. This is seen in a range of subjects as well as in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' work in their books and the school's information about progress for pupils currently in the school show that pupils overall are making good progress from their starting points. However, progress is uneven across the classes and year groups and progress in writing and mathematics is not as strong as in reading.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standards for their age by the end of Year 2 was above that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion reaching a greater depth was above national figures in mathematics, below in writing and only just below in reading.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2016, the proportion that reached the expected standards for their age was below that found nationally in reading and above national figures in writing and mathematics. However, too few pupils achieved the highest standards in reading, writing or mathematics. The proportions were all below the national figures.
- Progress between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 in 2016 was not significantly different from that found nationally. It was strongest in writing and weakest in mathematics. The school's information shows that in all year groups, all pupils are currently making at least the progress expected by the school and some, particularly in key stage 1, are making more rapid progress.

- However, in mathematics in key stage 2 pupils' ability to explain their ideas and reason mathematically is holding them back from making the best progress possible and achieving high standards. Similarly in writing, pupils are not always making rapid enough progress to achieve high standards. Leaders have correctly identified these areas for improvement and are taking effective action to address them.
- Regular and systematic teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 has resulted in an above-average proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check over the last three years.
- Pupils develop a range of strategies to help them read with confidence, understanding and expression. They use inference to develop good comprehension skills. Their reading has a positive impact on their writing as they have a growing sense of what will keep a reader engaged and motivated. Leaders are fully aware, however, that there needs to be a continued focus on developing pupils' reading skills in key stage 2.
- In some classes, the most able pupils currently in the school, including those who are disadvantaged, are challenged to achieve well but this is not the case in all classes. Leaders have correctly identified, however, that in key stage 2 in particular, challenges should be greater and expectations higher to ensure that this group consistently achieves high standards in their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils are achieving increasingly well and in some cases make more rapid progress than others in the school. Their progress is carefully tracked and the provision of appropriate support helps to reduce barriers to learning. A range of successful strategies ensures that these pupils achieve well. Differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This includes pupils who have complex needs or significant learning difficulties. The provision is well led and pupils' needs are accurately identified with appropriate support provided.

Early years provision

Good

- The teachers and other Reception staff know the children very well. They assess them when they join the school so that they know children's strengths, interests and abilities and carefully monitor progress in their learning and their personal development. This means that staff can effectively plan the next steps for individual children.
- Teaching and learning are good. There is a successful focus on children's early reading and writing skills as well as interesting and stimulating activities across all areas of learning. Activities capture the interest and imagination of the children so that they rapidly develop a love of learning and enquiring minds.
- Children quickly develop a love of stories as books are shared with them and good-quality texts are used as a basis for a wide range of their learning. Children were engaged in a range of activities based on 'Jack and the beanstalk'. They were enraptured to receive a letter from the giant, which provided them with a purposeful reason to write their own letters in reply. Displays of children's writing around the classrooms show how they respond enthusiastically to stories such as 'The three billy goats gruff' and 'The gingerbread man'.

- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that are generally below those typical for their age, although this does vary from year to year. In the current Reception Year, a higher proportion than the previous year started with skills below those typical for their age.
- Children, including those who are disadvantaged, make good and often very rapid progress to catch up in the Reception Year and are well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been rising. From being considerably below that found nationally in 2014, it was above national figures in 2016. Leaders have correctly identified that there is scope to increase the proportion of children exceeding expectations by the end of the Reception Year.
- Children's behaviour is good. They share and cooperate well with each other and develop good social skills such as taking turns and listening to each other. Their independence and confidence are promoted well and children settle quickly and happily into the routines of the day.
- The early years is very well led. Staff are skilled and experienced and are encouraged and expected to enhance their expertise through their professional development. There is a shared depth of knowledge and understanding of the development of children in the Reception Year.
- Safeguarding and welfare requirements appropriate to this age group are met. Children are well cared for and nurtured and kept safe. All the necessary actions are taken to support any children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and to reduce any barriers to learning.

School details

Unique reference number	138436
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10024510

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	375
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Georgina Glover
Headteacher	Christian Markham
Telephone number	01843 593086
Website	www.newlands-tkat.org
Email address	c.markham@newlands-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	16–17 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Kennal Academies Trust.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2016.
- Newlands is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are three classes in Year 4 and two classes in every other year group.
- There are two classes where pupils with specific and complex needs spend some of their time. These are known as Galaxy Class, for key stage 2 pupils, and Butterflies for key stage 1 pupils.
- There is provision for the early years in two Reception classes which children attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes. Some observations were conducted jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and examined work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime and asked them for their views on the school. They also talked to pupils about reading and listened to some pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and staff with key leadership responsibilities. Meetings were held with governors and the director of education of TKAT's joint local governing body and the regional board for Thanet.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including: leaders' checks on the school's performance and the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which included five written responses, and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the school's own parental survey. Inspectors took account of 53 responses to the questionnaire for staff and 24 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Joyce Lydford	Ofsted Inspector

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