

# Queenborough School and Nursery

Edward Road, Queenborough, Kent ME11 5DF

## Inspection dates

5–6 October 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- This is an outstanding school where everyone is an enthusiastic learner and makes a valuable contribution to the exceptionally positive ethos.
- Children make outstanding progress in the early years because the quality of care, teaching and learning is exceptional. Life in the Nursery and Reception classes is full of joy, excitement and curiosity.
- The pupils love learning because teachers and other adults make it interesting and enjoyable. Every pupil in every class experiences very high-quality teaching and learning every day.
- Pupils throughout the whole school make consistently rapid progress. As a result, the standards achieved in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the end of key stages 1 and 2 national assessments are all above average. The school is aware that the proportion of pupils who achieve at the higher levels could be even greater.
- All groups, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, achieve equally highly across a wide range of different subjects.
- Pupils are very well looked after and their individual needs are carefully identified and supported exceptionally well. The strong emphasis on positive values underpins outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning make an important contribution to their excellent achievement. Attendance rose sharply last year so that it is no longer below average. Leaders are rightly ambitious to improve this even further.
- Leaders and all staff have an unwavering determination to give Queenborough pupils the best possible start to their education, remove barriers and open the pupils' eyes to the rich possibilities that life has to offer.
- Leaders, including governors, provide clear vision and purpose, motivating staff and pupils alike. They invest heavily in staff development and are alert to spot and unlock potential. They collaborate well with others to ensure that the school is outward and upward looking.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Further increase the proportion of pupils who exceed expected standards.
- Improve attendance so that it is above average, and encourage all pupils to attend school every day on time and fully benefit from the outstanding education on offer.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher, governors and school leaders are passionate about creating a community where everyone, adults and pupils alike, is an enthusiastic learner. Everybody who visits or is part of the school comments on the special atmosphere, which is positive, purposeful and caring. There is a very evident emphasis on ensuring that pupils become well-rounded, confident individuals who can, and do, make a strong personal contribution and move on to secondary school with confidence, having achieved well in primary school.
- All senior and middle leaders make an exceptionally strong contribution and work as a very cohesive team. As a result, aspects such as provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the early years, key stages 1 and 2, English and mathematics are all very well led. Leaders of other subjects are also influential and developing strong leadership skills. Well-developed routines, agreed systems and high expectations about the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and behaviour are consistently applied across the whole school. In this way, all pupils benefit from equally excellent educational experiences.
- Leadership is seen as everybody's responsibility. All staff and pupils feel respected and listened to, and they know that they have an influence on the direction of the school. Staff believe that senior leaders recognise, value and build on the skills and expertise of each individual. They feel encouraged to try out new ideas and take risks.
- The school's self-evaluation is incisive and effective, and everyone understands the key priorities for improvement. The school's individual assessment and tracking information is used very well to identify and focus on pupils who could be achieving even better, and subjects where further improvements can be achieved. Priorities are identified correctly and improvements achieved because of the sharp whole-school focus. The performance targets of staff are linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan. For example, last year all teachers and the family liaison officer had a target relating to attendance.
- There are noticeable improvements in pupils' achievements in writing and mathematics as a result of action taken during the last academic year. The success of the current emphasis on providing greater challenge for the most able pupils and increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve greater depth in their learning, particularly in mathematics, is evident in their books and in lessons.
- Recruitment and retention of teaching staff have been difficult in this part of Kent. This school has bucked the trend by being imaginative, proactive and developing its own staff and leaders. Excellent induction processes ensure that new staff, and those undertaking new responsibilities, quickly become familiar with school systems. High-quality professional development makes an exceptional contribution to the professional cohesion which is very evident throughout the school, and leads to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. This investment in staff generates strong loyalty to the school and is underlined by the extremely positive responses to the online staff survey.

- Leaders are determined that all pupils will benefit from a wide range of rich experiences underpinned by strong values such as mutual respect, personal responsibility and the rights of people to hold different views. There is a common commitment to this vision. The curriculum has been refreshed and revived, and is leading to increased enthusiasm from adults and pupils alike. 'Wow events' are common features and specialist teachers enhance provision further, for example in drama, music and sport. Some opportunities are part of normal school life, for example all Year 4 pupils learn to play the clarinet and all pupils experience activities such as outdoor education.
- The school signs up to special projects, for example the current Nutcracker project involving Year 5 pupils working in conjunction with the Royal Ballet. Homework activities are related to the new curriculum and there is evidence that more pupils are completing homework now than previously. Visits and visitors, such as musicians, artists and authors, and opportunities for pupils to experience enrich the curriculum further and strengthen pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school uses additional government funding exceptionally well so that disadvantaged pupils achieve better than other pupils nationally. Their needs are carefully assessed and funding targeted well to enrich their experiences, encourage higher attendance and promote rapid progress. There is an emphasis on making sure that pupils' progress is accelerated as early as possible. The sports premium is also used effectively to widen pupils' participation in a range of sporting activities and develop teachers' skills.
- Leaders and staff work well with parents and the wider community. There are regular opportunities to share pupils' work and their achievements inside and outside school through Twitter and during termly open afternoons.
- The school is outward looking and staff at all levels share ideas and work with colleagues from other schools on the Isle of Sheppey. Leaders are quick to bring in external expertise to keep staff up to date and their ideas fresh. For example, the youngest classes are benefiting from local authority advisory support. The school makes good use of leadership training from the National College of Teaching and Leadership and engages in action research with Canterbury Christ Church University. The headteacher is currently providing leadership for another local school.

## **Governance**

- The governors have a wide range of valuable skills and expertise, and they make a strong contribution to the strategic direction of the school.
- They undertake training to enhance their knowledge and skills. They keep up to date with school policy reviews, self-evaluation and improvement planning. They carry out regular in-depth visits to find out how well the school is doing and to discover pupils' and staff's views.
- Governors are exceptionally well informed and know in detail the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. Governors contribute to an overarching strategic plan and, in their words, 'keep the leaders on their toes'.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils, parents and staff believe wholeheartedly that all pupils are safe, happy and well looked after in school. The safety and well-being of pupils are very high priorities and there are secure systems for making sure that staff, governors and volunteers are suitable to work with children.
- The staff and governors are regularly informed and well trained, including in aspects such as protecting pupils from the dangers of extremism. New staff receive intensive induction and follow-up briefings so that they know what to look out for, what to do and whom to contact if they have any concerns. All staff know each pupil and their individual needs very well indeed and are highly vigilant. Relationships with parents are positive and supportive. Parents and carers commented in person and in writing on the high level of support received by their children and themselves.
- Online safety is a high priority and a group of pupils, the online safety crew, help to make sure this aspect remains a high priority. As a result, children know how to keep safe online. There is very little poor behaviour or bullying. All of the pupils feel that there is a trusted adult they could turn to if they needed to. There are high levels of supervision at all times and the school site is very secure.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- Staff are proud to be part of this school community and they enjoy working here. All teachers, particularly inexperienced teachers, are very well supported by coherent teaching, learning and assessment systems and the support of senior and middle leaders. Teachers and support staff work as a team and develop their individual skills and confidence by observing and learning from the practice of their colleagues. Specialist teachers enhance the overall quality of teaching.
- Teachers make good use of 'hooks' to spark interest and enthusiasm. For example, Year 3 pupils received a letter from a villain which sparked off their mathematics lesson. Pupils are encouraged to be imaginative and both adults and pupils are prepared to take risks. There is a strong emphasis on exploring and investigating across the age groups from Nursery to Year 6. As a result, across the whole school, there is a real buzz. Pupils are highly attentive and usually thoroughly engrossed in their learning.
- Teachers and support staff know their subjects very well and therefore are confident to probe and extend pupils' understanding. They know what pupils already understand, can do and need to learn next. Lessons are well organised, no time is wasted and there is good use of practical resources and active strategies to promote learning.
- Adults work well together to make sure that all pupils are fully included. When necessary, additional support is provided within the context of everyday learning. This approach keeps least-able pupils and pupils who have additional needs fully integrated into their class. Adults are alert to how well pupils are learning during lessons. They check on possible misconceptions, provide useful feedback and introduce more support or extra challenge. There is evidence in lessons and in books of pupils responding to the feedback and improving their work as a result.

- Adults often introduce an element of fun. For example, pupils in a Year 2 mathematics lesson enjoyed giving their teacher advice as to how she could sort out her mistakes in calculations and avoid them in future. Teachers link the learning across different subjects and they make very good use of questioning and prompting to promote deeper learning. They plan plenty of opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, explain their reasoning and evaluate their own learning.
- The changes introduced to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics and writing are having a positive impact on pupils' interest and achievement. This is particularly noticeable in the development of deep understanding and challenge in mathematics. Teachers are not content to take pupils' initial responses and probe further to make sure that all pupils, particularly the most able, really stretch themselves.
- The teaching of literacy is strong. Reading has a high priority and there is a successful emphasis on turning pupils into good readers as early as possible. As a result, pupils' reading skills are well above average by the end of Year 2. Younger pupils who need extra support with reading are very well supported and catch up quickly.
- All adults have high expectations and aspirations about behaviour and learning. There is a fully embedded behaviour code which works very well indeed. Pupils are taught to understand the different strategies they use when they are learning. They are able to reflect on what strategies to use at different times. Pupils say that this helps them if they are finding things a bit tricky and gives them confidence to have a go.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Parents are very positive about the high levels of individual care and support, and the difference this makes to pupils' sense of belonging and well-being. Pupils say they are completely safe and happy. They have high expectations about their own achievement. They want to do well and their attitudes to learning are excellent. They are very proud of their school and their part in making it a very special place.
- Pupils are very keen to take part in the many opportunities to have a real say and influence the school. They take up important roles, such as online safety crew members and building learning power ambassadors, and carry them out enthusiastically. They are confident that their ideas are taken seriously and make a real difference.
- There is a highly developed sense of community throughout the school with pupils keen to help each other and thoughtful about the needs of others. This thoughtfulness extends to adults. For example, one pupil asked the headteacher if she was coping with the pressure of having an inspector in school. Pupils and families make valuable contributions to charities.
- Pupils are very well supported at times of transition, for example at the beginning of the school day and when they move between activities and classes. Parents praised the school's practice of sending letters during the summer holiday to pupils whom they know find change very difficult. Pupils who have particular emotional needs benefit from subtle and effective support.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is confirmed by the overwhelmingly positive responses to pupil, staff and parent surveys.
- Pupils say behaviour is very good indeed. They sign up to the school's behaviour code and say there is very little poor behaviour and hardly any that could be termed as bullying. Children with specific needs cope well because of the school's well-embedded behaviour management systems and sensitive effective support.
- Pupils are polite, welcoming, kind and considerate. They listen carefully and with respect and interest to what others say. They encourage others and celebrate their successes. In lessons, pupils are attentive and respond quickly so that no time is wasted. They understand how to manage any distractions and keep a focus on their own learning. Playtimes are happy, well organised and enjoyable.
- Attendance has been poor in the past. Last year it was one of the highest priorities for improvement and the sharp focus is continuing this year. As a result, attendance has risen significantly, particularly the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Far fewer pupils than previously take regular time off school and there have been some real success stories. Despite this improvement, attendance is still only broadly average and too many pupils continue to arrive late, missing an important part of the school day. Leaders are determined to keep up the improvements and ensure that all pupils benefit from the outstanding education on offer.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- When children arrive in the Nursery their attainment is generally well below that typical of their age, especially in speech, language and communication. The pupils make strong progress throughout each key stage so that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was above that expected for their age in all national assessments in 2015 and improved further in 2016.
- Throughout the school, the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding expected standards is high and rising. Outstanding progress is evident in the increasing proportions of pupils achieving highly as they move through the school.
- This outstanding progress is also very evident in the outcomes and progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As these pupils move through the school, more and more of them reach the expected standards, similar to their peers. Often particular needs are so successfully addressed that they no longer require additional support and come off the special needs register.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are also above the national average for all pupils. Their progress is often exceptionally rapid. This is because the school invests a great deal of time, resources and expertise to make sure that all pupils get off to a really strong start. Staff regularly pinpoint the individual needs of each pupil and adapt the everyday teaching to address these needs successfully.
- The most able pupils also achieve well, particularly in reading. There is a very strong emphasis on ensuring that all pupils develop strong reading skills. Pupils told inspectors that they love reading in this school. This was evident in Year 6 pupils' attentiveness in the reading activities related to their class novel and Year 2 pupils' enthusiastic retelling of a story with actions as part of a writing activity.

- Leaders and staff believe quite rightly that the most able pupils could achieve even higher outcomes and are ambitious to challenge this group even further. The most able pupils are clearly relishing the current whole-school focus on deepening understanding and reasoning in mathematics.
- In lessons and books, it is clear that most pupils are working at least at the expected levels for their ages and are already making rapid progress even though it is relatively early in the school year. The quality of handwriting and presentation is very good and shows that pupils take great pride in their work. This attention to detail has a positive impact on the accuracy of their work, particularly in mathematics and science.
- The quality of pupils' work seen in a wide range of different subjects, such as history, geography, art, music, drama and dance, is also high. For example, Year 5 pupils were engrossed in their Nutcracker dance session. They showed delicacy of movement and a good understanding of the story.
- Pupils promote their own learning. In all of the sessions visited during the inspection, pupils were engrossed and fully involved. The use of different learning strategies is fully embedded and understood by the pupils. They confidently describe what, how and why they are learning, what strategies they are using and how they can improve. They take real pleasure in working things out for themselves. They are confident that they know what to do if they get a bit stuck. They can explain their reasoning and they like a challenge.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is outstanding. Adults know the children really well, are responsive to their needs and there are high levels of care. There is a lovely range of activities and children are engrossed in exploring and learning.
- Children make outstanding progress from starting points which are generally low. Children's achievement by the time they leave Reception has been above average in the past. It dipped slightly to around average last year and is set to rise again this year to well above average. Girls achieve slightly better than boys but gaps are small. Leaders use pupil premium funding very well to identify and address children's individual needs. As a result, disadvantaged children make excellent progress and achieve at least as well as other children.
- The adults constantly, accurately and subtly check on children's knowledge and achievements. They then use this information on a day-to-day basis to review and adapt the provision to meet the children's needs and interests.
- The children respond well to the clear routines and play their part in making everything run smoothly. Their behaviour is excellent. They care about each other and know when to be gentle, for example when stroking the free-range chickens which share the outside area. The adults promote independence very well and the children know the importance of not giving up easily. For example, one little boy showed high levels of perseverance when trying to balance on a narrow plank.

- There is a strong focus on speech, language and communication, which is important as this aspect is a weakness for many of the children. Adults are adept at promoting conversation and involvement, such as dressing up as a bear as part of retelling and acting out a story. This type of activity is linked to very effective teaching of early reading. Adults model language well using appropriate technical vocabulary. They provide activities which spark curiosity and motivate the children. For example, children were very keen to discover and read the hidden high-frequency words and then hide them again for others to find.
- The early years team makes sure that the learning environments are well organised and planned with a wide range of highly stimulating activities inside and out. These activities provide rich experiences and are open-ended so children are able to extend their own learning. For example, a Nursery child who made an electrical circuit using the materials available wanted, and was supported, to include a switch device to light his bulb off and on. This type of activity underlines the high level of challenge particularly in the Nursery.
- Leadership of the early years is very strong. The other staff recognise the passion and ambition of the leader to ensure that the children get off to a really good start so that they become enthusiastic and successful learners. There is ongoing staff development to raise their knowledge and skills even further. The current priority is to improve child-initiated play so that it is even more closely tailored to meet children's needs and provide more challenge. Safeguarding procedures are strong and risk assessments appropriate and rigorous.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive and appreciate the strong relationships between themselves, their children and the early years team. Parents appreciate the ongoing opportunities for them to see what and how their children are learning, and to contribute achievements from home.

## School details

Unique reference number	118345
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10005722

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Butt
Headteacher	Barbara Conroy
Telephone number	01795 662 574
Website	<a href="http://www.queenborough.kent.sch.uk">www.queenborough.kent.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@queenborough.kent.sch.uk">headteacher@queenborough.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 November 2011

## Information about this school

- Queenborough is a larger than average-sized primary and nursery school situated on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent.
- There are two classes in most year groups and three classes in Year 2. There are 90 part-time places in the Nursery.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The great majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their home language.
- The proportions of pupils who receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, or with an education, health and care plan, are just below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.

- The school collaborates, shares and develops expertise with a group of other local schools and with Canterbury Christ Church University. The local authority promotes the work of the school as a role model for others.
- The headteacher has recently taken up the post of interim executive headteacher of Eastchurch Primary School which is also on the Isle of Sheppey. The deputy headteacher is currently providing training in middle leadership for a nearby multi-academy trust.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection started as an inspection of a good school under section 8 of the Education Act, 2005. On day 1, the lead inspector converted the inspection into a full section 5 inspection in order to gather sufficient evidence to establish whether the school was now outstanding. Four Ofsted inspectors joined the lead inspector on the second day.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and looked at the work in the pupils' books. On day 1, the lead inspector and senior leaders jointly observed learning across all age groups. On day 2, further observations were carried out in all classes, also, in the main, jointly with senior leaders. Most of the learning seen on day 2 of the inspection involved English and mathematics but a range of learning in other subjects was also observed. During these observations, inspectors looked at pupils' books and discussed the learning with pupils.
- The lead inspector had lunch with pupils on day 1 and met with a group of Years 5 and 6 pupils with particular responsibilities. Inspectors spent some time outside and around the school during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of information provided by the school including assessment information, monitoring records, self-evaluation and improvement planning documents, and records of governors' activities. Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' work across the curriculum and also viewed videos showing pupils engaged in a variety of different activities with musical accompaniment composed and performed by pupils.
- Inspectors met with all of the senior leaders, staff with responsibilities for promoting attendance and supporting families, subject leaders, a mixed group of staff and trainee teachers, and a local authority adviser. The lead inspector had a telephone discussion with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 50 responses to its online staff survey, 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 30 responses from pupils to its online pupil survey. Inspectors also looked at the parent and carer responses to in-house surveys. Two inspectors met informally with parents at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Sheena MacDonald, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Donovan	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Quirk	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Scutter	Ofsted Inspector

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