

# Great Totham Primary School

Walden House Road, Great Totham, Maldon, CM9 8PN

**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Attainment has been consistently above average over the last five years throughout the school and is especially high in reading.
- Pupils make good progress in all subjects and year groups.
- Teachers plan lessons and deliver them so that pupils' needs are well met and they make good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good in the school, and some of it is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This includes good links with different communities both within the United Kingdom and beyond.
- Leaders at all levels are ambitious for the school and plan actions that are further improving the quality of teaching. Teachers plan, observe and evaluate lessons together.
- Members of staff work well together in order to make an effective team that is bringing about improvements.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing is not as fast as that in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders have not yet refined the way they use information on pupil progress to plan actions to further improve pupils' achievement.
- Teaching does not match pupils' learning needs carefully enough to bring about rapid and sustained rates of progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons across all year groups.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 6.
- Meetings were held with pupils, a representative from the local authority and school staff, including senior leaders and subject leaders. A meeting was also held with four members of the governing body, including the Chair.
- School documents were also looked at, including safeguarding, information on pupils' achievement and school improvement plans.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 95 parents through the Parent View website. The views of staff were looked at through 55 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Peter Lacey-Hastings, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Gutmann	Additional Inspector
Jane Richmond	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Great Totham Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Very few pupils are learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those from families in the armed services.
- All pupils are educated on site. The school does not use alternative provision to support any of its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the way leaders at all levels interpret and use information on pupil progress so they can plan actions that will increase rates of progress further by:
  - analysing pupils' achievement in more detail across all year groups to identify how pupils can make faster progress, especially in writing
  - looking at pupils' books to check more carefully which areas of learning need to be improved.
- Improve the teaching of writing further so more of it is outstanding by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan work that consistently matches pupils' abilities to help them make more rapid progress
  - reviewing the teaching of writing through the school and giving pupils more time to write in lessons in order to increase rates of pupil progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- In the two years prior to this academic year, children joined the school with skills and capabilities that are in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress so that, by the time they finish the Reception Year, they are above national averages. They make good progress, especially in their mathematical skills.
- Children currently in the Reception class joined the school below age-related expectations. They are also making good progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils start Key Stage 1 with above-average skills and capabilities. They continue to make good progress and perform well in their assessment at the end of Year 1 on phonics (linking letters with sounds). In these assessments, pupils' results are above the national average.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is good and has consistently been above average since the previous inspection. This is the case for reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment is higher in reading than in writing or mathematics but, in all subjects, pupils' attainment is good.
- Over the last three years pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics has been approximately six months above other pupils nationally. For writing it has been approximately one term above other pupils nationally.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 attain well and make good progress. Their attainment is higher in reading, but across all subjects they make good progress from their starting points in Year 3. Over 50% of pupils make better than expected progress in reading and mathematics and nearly 40% make better than expected progress in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational are improving their rates of progress compared to other pupils in the school. Gaps in attainment are beginning to narrow between these pupils and other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who are eligible for the additional funding through the pupil premium also make similar progress to other pupils in the school. The impact of well-planned actions is leading to improvements in the achievement of these pupils. As a result, these pupils are now approximately two terms behind other pupils as opposed to three terms. However, they represent a small proportion of pupils which makes exact comparisons difficult.
- Pupils are able to link letters and sounds in order to read common words and unknown words. They also use other skills such as picture clues and context clues in order to get meaning from what they are reading.
- Pupils generally make good progress in writing across year groups. However, work is not consistently matched carefully enough to different abilities and all pupils sometimes do work that is too similar. This means progress in writing is not as quick as in reading or mathematics.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan lessons well, based on their accurate evaluation of how well pupils have done in previous lessons. They know the learning needs of their pupils, so that work is well matched to

different abilities. However, in writing, these evaluations do not always lead to activities that accurately reflect the different abilities of pupils.

- Expectations are high and activities are made interesting so that pupils are engaged and motivated to learn. Pupils are encouraged to be independent learners; other adults encourage this through skilful open-ended questions. Support staff also provide pupils with appropriate help when this is needed.
- The purpose of lessons is made clear and pupils know how they can show they are making progress. From this, pupils assess their own work and share their work with others for peers to assess. For example, in a lesson on note taking, pupils had the opportunity to review their own work and that of others. However, this is not always clear enough in writing tasks.
- Good teaching in the school means that pupils have a positive attitude to learning, are able to work well together and apply themselves to the task at hand.
- Pupils have learning targets to help them see where to improve. However, teachers do not always ensure that work is matched precisely enough to pupils' targets and different abilities.
- Intervention and support is carefully used to meet the learning needs of pupils. This takes place both in the classroom and in withdrawal groups. This is used flexibly so that teaching is able to meet the different needs of pupils at the time they need support.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils are typically very courteous and polite to each other, and to all adults in and around the school. In the playground, pupils behave well and use the outdoor environment well. In lessons and around the school, pupils' behaviour is outstanding; for example, when pupils come into the hall for assembly, when they take part in assembly and when they leave.
- Older pupils provide excellent role models for younger pupils. Year 6 play leaders encourage co-operation and positive play. Pupils themselves say, 'If you are alone someone asks you to join in.'
- Behaviour in lessons is typically outstanding. This is because pupils respond to the behaviour management used by staff that promotes a very positive atmosphere in lessons. Pupils engage all the time in their work and talk is always linked to learning.
- Pupils say they know how to keep safe and are very aware of rules and routines that help them. For example, they can explain in detail the reasons why they need to be careful on icy surfaces around the school. The school council is also involved in regular health and safety walks with staff.
- Incidents of bullying are extremely rare and only two have been recorded over the last year. Pupils know clearly about different forms of bullying such as internet bullying and prejudiced-based bullying. Fixed-term exclusions are very uncommon and there have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff support evidence from the inspection that behaviour is outstanding. Of the 95 parents that responded to the Parent View, all agreed that the school ensures that pupils behave well.

- Attendance is high at over 96% and pupils are punctual coming to school. This is because the school works hard and has systems in place to encourage pupils to come to school; for example, there is an attendance officer who checks on why pupils are absent and follows up longer absences.

## **The leadership and management are good**

- Leaders and managers know the school well and plan actions that are effective in maintaining pupils' good achievement. They are ambitious for the school to become outstanding. Accurate self-evaluation leads to actions that are continuing to bring about improvements. These actions are rightly directed on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Teachers' performance targets are linked to the quality of teaching and to pupils' achievement. Pay progression for teachers is also related to how well they perform against these targets.
- Teaching is monitored and where lessons are less than good, actions are taken to both support and challenge teachers to improve their practice. Key leaders review lesson plans, carry out lesson observations and analyse information on pupils' achievement. Actions are planned from these evaluations to improve teaching. For example, teachers from different year groups work together to plan, observe and evaluate lessons in order to review their teaching and make it better. However, leaders do not consistently use detailed evaluations of information about pupils' achievement to plan actions that will bring about rapid and sustained rates of progress.
- The range of subjects and activities is well planned and gives pupils opportunities to develop key skills through a thematic approach to learning. For example, a wild meadow has been created to support subjects such as science.
- Subject leaders devise actions plans for their subjects and create links across different subjects to make lessons more interesting and meaningful for pupils. For example, during cold weather, Year 6 pupils looked at a formula to convert temperatures from Fahrenheit to Celsius.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils have a greater awareness of different cultures, both within the United Kingdom and beyond. For example, there is a link with a school in Newham and pupils from each school have met. There is also a direct link with a school in Gambia.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. This includes the correct checks on adults working with pupils, and regular health and safety checks around the site.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school well, want to improve it further and hold leaders to account for the effectiveness of the school. For example, they know how much is received through the pupil premium, what is it used for and how effective it is. They agree to the use of the pupil premium to help fund school trips and for support staff such as teaching assistants, and a health care worker and attendance officer. The governing body also has an effective committee structure, including an executive committee that is made up of the chairs from other committees. Expertise is used well; for example, those with financial expertise help to ensure that the finances are well managed. Governors hold the headteacher to account by setting performance targets that link to pupil progress and seek challenging performance targets for other staff. Pay progression for the headteacher is also linked to these performance targets.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115244
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	403260

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	427
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Gilbert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Keith Bannister
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 October 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01621 891091
<b>Fax number</b>	01621 893334
<b>Email address</b>	admin@greattotham.essex.sch.uk



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