

Elm Park Primary School

South End Road, Elm Park, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 5UA

Inspection dates 24–25 January 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Require improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although many pupils are making better progress than previously, progress is still variable at Key Stage 1 and 2, especially in writing.
- Teaching does not consistently provide enough guidance on how pupils can improve their writing skills and other aspects of their work.
- Some lessons are not planned well enough to meet fully individual pupils' needs. Sometimes lessons move at too slow a pace to hold the pupils' interest.
- Leaders do not always ensure that assessment information is used effectively to secure good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Phase leaders do not make enough checks on pupils' progress or on teachers' marking.
- Although governors are committed to the school, they have not sufficiently challenged leaders and managers by holding them to account for those groups of pupils making less than consistently good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are well behaved and willingly take on many roles and responsibilities in the school. They are confident and proud of their school.
- In Reception, children make consistently good progress in all learning areas and their behaviour is consistently good; pupils eligible for pupil premium funding also make good progress.
- Leaders and managers have worked hard to create an inclusive atmosphere and have accurately identified some key areas for development.
- Teaching assistants deliver effective sessions in linking letters and sounds. They are especially successful in helping pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress in reading.
- The curriculum has engaging topics that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 18 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. The team also spent time in Reception classes observing the quality of teaching and support that is given to children.
- The team had several meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to gain an accurate evaluation of the progress that pupils make throughout the school.
- Meetings were also held with the Assessment Inspector from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered parents' and carers' views of the school through discussions and the 90 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). There were also discussions with pupils and staff. The team had lunch with the pupils and listened to them read.
- The team examined a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation. They looked at attendance figures, pupils' work, the school's improvement plan and behaviour records.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Janice Willims, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Colin Lower | Additional Inspector |
| Velia Hartland | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than the average-sized primary school; the proportion of girls on roll is below the national average.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage there are two Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from ethnic backgrounds other than White British is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is in line with national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A reducing number of pupils join the school at different points during the year.
- The school is formed from the amalgamation of two primary schools. In the past there has been some staffing instability.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least good by:
 - ensuring there are consistently challenging activities, especially in English and mathematics lessons, that fully meet the individual needs of all learners
 - ensuring there is always a brisk pace to lessons, with activities that are interesting and engaging
 - ensuring that in all lessons there is an emphasis on pupils' learning activities without too much time taken up by teacher-led activities
 - ensuring that marking consistently gives pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Speed up pupils' progress in writing by:
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to work independently on extended pieces
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to use a wide vocabulary and a range of punctuation to make their writing interesting and creative
 - ensuring that individual pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their writing skills.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is always used effectively to monitor pupils' progress and that where additional support is needed, it is promptly put in place
 - ensuring that phase leaders consistently check that marking provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work
 - involving governors more in the work of the school so that they can effectively hold leaders accountable for pupils' progress
 - undertaking an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is not consistently good throughout the school, especially in writing, but also in reading and in mathematics. This is because of weaknesses in the quality of teaching and previous instability in staffing.
- Children enter Reception with knowledge and skill levels below expectations for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress in Reception because teachers effectively use assessment information on children's earlier learning to carefully plan for their learning needs.
- Over the last three years, pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 has been consistently below the national figures because many children do not start in reception but join the school later, throughout Years 1 and 2. In the 2012 Year 1 linking of letters and sounds check, pupils attained lower than the national figures. However, the school's current data shows pupils in Year 1 making good progress in reading.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been regularly similar to the national average in English. The 2012 test results showed most pupils made good progress in mathematics and slightly slower progress in English, especially writing.
- Although many pupils are making better progress than previously in reading and mathematics, groups of learners make variable progress, especially in writing. In some year groups, pupils whose first language is not English and those who join the school at different points during the school year make good progress, while in others, their progress is either steady or slow because the feedback given to them does not always have comments that relate to their targets for improvement.
- In writing, boys and girls in different year groups make inconsistent progress because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to work independently. Likewise, there is insufficient emphasis on using a variety of words and various punctuation marks to create more interesting pieces.
- Most pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially at Key Stage 2. The focused small group support that the funding provides has resulted in the gaps narrowing fastest in mathematics, with all pupils achieving higher average point scores than in English.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not make consistently good progress in writing and mathematics across year groups. They make good progress in reading, especially at Key Stage 2, because they receive good guidance in lessons, including effective support from teaching assistants with linking of letters and sounds.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because teaching is not consistently good; some lessons lack sufficient challenge and pace, and teachers talk for too long. On occasion there are missed opportunities to allow pupils time for self-assessment, or to undertake checks with their peers.
- In Reception, children make consistently good progress in all learning areas because teaching is creative and sustains their interest. Teaching activities create an atmosphere of interaction and appropriate challenge. As a result, children are always engaged in the many activities.
- The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is improving because 'talk partners' are used effectively to discuss topics and secure understanding before answering questions. In a Year 1 lesson, the work was well matched to pupils' abilities and the activities were engaging.
- At Key Stage 2 some lessons incorporate repetitive tasks that lack challenge and pupils have to sit for too long without contributing to their learning because some teachers talk for too long. There is a lot of time wasted in some lessons because teachers use activities to find out what

pupils know rather than examine pupils' prior knowledge and use information from previous pupils' assessments to effectively plan for the needs of all learners.

- In lessons with a strong focus on developing pupils' writing skills, there are sometimes too few opportunities for pupils to write independently and pupils are not given enough guidance in using more complex words or a range of punctuation. As a result, pupils make slow progress in writing throughout the school.
- Teaching assistants provide good guidance in linking of letters and sounds so that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make best progress in reading.
- In the good lessons seen, visualisers were used effectively to model pupils' work and create opportunities for pupils to discuss and improve the quality of their work. The classes were well managed and pupils were motivated to learn and acquire knowledge quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in most lessons and around the school. In lessons that do not effectively meet the needs of all learners, pupils can very occasionally become restless.
- In Reception, behaviour is consistently good because there are good relationships and the activities and discussions engage and challenge the children. As a result, their communication skills are always developing and they become confident learners.
- At break and lunchtimes, pupils play well together with lots of interactive and imaginative play. There is good supervision to ensure pupils are safe and secure.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and behaviour is good. There are good relationships between staff and pupils; every child is treated equally and there is a caring and inclusive atmosphere in the school.
- Pupils are very knowledgeable about internet and railway safety; they confidently explain the disadvantages of drug and alcohol abuse. They are aware of the different forms of bullying and say if it does happen, it is dealt with effectively by the teachers and staff.
- Although attendance is below the national average, most pupils enjoy coming to school and they take great care in keeping each other safe.
- Pupils have many roles and responsibilities in the school that develop a wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills. There are digital researchers who help with the use of tablets and research applications that relate to a particular topic. Digital leaders share their excellent information and communication technology (ICT) skills and knowledge with different classes and with visitors. As a result, pupils are very confident in using the most recent technology and software; they meet weekly to share knowledge and improve their skills.
- Pupils have other roles that encourage them to become mature learners who assist and participate in numerous duties. These include prefects, lunchtime monitors and 'pupil voice' members.
- Most of the parents and carers interviewed and those who responded to Parent View say their children are safe and well looked after by the school. The majority of the parents who responded to Parent View agreed that the school deals effectively with bullying if it occurs.
- Most parents, carers and staff say that pupils' behaviour is good and is consistently well managed.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because self evaluation is over-generous and lacks rigour. Leaders insist that all pupils can achieve highly regardless of their background but have not made it very clear to teachers how much progress pupils are required to make as part of systems for managing staff performance, to ensure pupils make consistently good progress.

- The school has worked hard in addressing issues around slow pupil progress, but is yet to ensure all groups make equally good academic progress.
- Senior leaders do not consistently use assessment information to best effect, so that additional support can be provided promptly when needed.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly but have not always ensured that all leaders and managers have a consistent approach when providing written feedback from lesson observations. Phase leaders have not been fully effective in key aspects of their roles. Checks on pupils' progress and on the quality of marking are not always regular enough.
- Although there have been staffing instabilities and issues with the amalgamation of the predecessor schools, leaders have now created a stable workforce, with all staff contributing to pupils making at least steady progress.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have improved the curriculum with topics that are engaging and interesting. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is promoted through topics that focus on the emotional growth of learners. In some lessons, 'partner talk' is used to create a sociable and inclusive atmosphere where pupils discuss their thoughts and listen to each other's opinions. Pupils also study different cultures in history and art lessons; they study different countries, and research and celebrate various artists or performers from cultures and time periods.
- Leaders have worked closely with the local authority to improve their assessment and tracking systems. As a result, teachers are now more involved in analysing and discussing pupils' progress data. However, they do not always use this information to plan well for the needs of all learners in classes where there is a wide range of abilities.
- The pupil premium funding has been used effectively to provide targeted support for vulnerable pupils in English and mathematics through small group support sessions. Consequently, most pupils in receipt of the pupil premium make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The funding is also used to subsidise or fund additional curriculum opportunities for pupils within and outside of normal school hours.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance requires improvement because governors do not provide a sufficient level of challenge to school leaders. They receive pupils' progress information but do not effectively challenge leaders and hold them to account for the rate of pupils' progress. Although governors know that one of the school's priorities is to ensure that 'teaching is consistently good or better across the curriculum', they have relied on information from leaders and the local authority, without fully challenging the assertion that teaching and the achievement of pupils are good. As a result, governors are over-generous in their evaluation of how the school compares with other schools nationally. Governors are aware of how teachers' performance is managed, but have not held leaders accountable for ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels secure good progress for all pupils.. The headteacher has modelled types of questions governors should ask and they are beginning to develop a greater awareness of how to challenge leaders. Governors are involved in many activities in the school. Some governors organise and operate after-school clubs and activities for pupils. Many governors have attended different training courses regarding their roles and responsibilities. Governors monitor the spending of the pupil premium funding and ensure that effective support programs are in place for vulnerable pupils. They also keep a close eye on the school budget. They have ensured that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 102272 |
| Local authority | Havering |
| Inspection number | 404814 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 400 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Leslie Graves |
| Headteacher | Victoria Knox |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11–12 May 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01708 451463 |
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