

Crays Hill Primary School

London Road, Crays Hill, Billericay, CM11 2UZ

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's excellent leadership has inspired staff and pupils to do their best during the short period she has been in post.
- The school has made good improvements, particularly in teaching and achievement, since the last inspection.
- Governors take an increasing role in supporting the school and holding it to account.
- Pupils achieve well. Teaching is consistently good and much is outstanding.
- The school is highly effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Arrangements for supporting pupils, including those who return from travelling and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are excellent, and ensure that no one is left behind. All groups of pupils make good progress.
- Pupils are very positive about the school, and this has a positive impact on their progress. The school is a safe and happy community; behaviour is good and pupils enjoy learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough to ensure that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils are not always given enough guidance on how to improve their work. There are too few opportunities for them to correct their work to show they have understood.
- The attendance of some pupils is not yet regular enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 16 lessons or part-lessons. All of the teachers were observed.
- All of the lesson observations were shared with the headteacher. Short visits were made to observe the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Pupils' work from each key stage was looked at with the headteacher in order to check pupils' progress and how well the books were marked.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, the school's records of monitoring, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and attended an assembly.
- The inspector met with different groups of pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to a group of parents. He also spoke to members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Written comments from all 18 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Classes are organised into four classes, a Reception class, and three mixed-aged classes.
- Almost all the pupils come from Irish Traveller backgrounds. All of the pupils speak English as their first language.
- Over half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning needs.
- National test results at the end of 2012 cannot be compared to the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. This is because fewer than the 11 pupils required to make such comparisons meaningful took the tests.
- Nearly half of the pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. This was in October 2012. A deputy headteacher was appointed in April 2013. Only two of the teaching staff have remained with the school since it was last inspected.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in mathematics across the school so that so that pupils achieve as well as they do in reading and writing by:
 - increasing the amount of outstanding teaching so that pupils make quicker gains in their learning
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to attempt more complex mathematical problems by using and applying the key skills they have learnt previously
 - making sure that marking consistently provides pupils with clear guidance on their learning to enable them to work at a faster rate
 - making sure that pupils are given more opportunities to respond to marking so that they can demonstrate that they have acquired the new skills.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are regularly absent by working in partnership with parents, the local authority and other agencies.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception class with skills that are well below those typical for their age. They settle quickly into routines, and lively and varied activities help them acquire skills quickly. For example, during the inspection children were able to explore how fast vehicles travelled down a chute. They achieved well because the teacher used carefully prepared questions to help them develop their own ideas of how to organise the chute and compare different types of vehicles.
- Although attainment has been low for the last three years, the small numbers in each year group mean that comparisons with national averages are not meaningful. However, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is rising, and all pupils achieve well. Their skills in reading and writing are better developed than those in mathematics in most classes.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress relative to their starting points. Their needs are assessed on a regular basis so that the right sort of support can be given.
- Pupils who join the school at other than the usual times make good progress as careful and well targeted induction arrangements are in place. They are well supported through small group work, and quickly catch up with their classmates.
- Pupils make rapid gains in their reading as a result of consistently good teaching of the links between letters and the sounds they make. They work in mixed age groups according to their ability, and quickly gain confidence in new words and sounds. Lively and engaging teaching helps pupils to sustain their concentration for extended periods.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. However, across the school, all pupils make good progress including those eligible for the pupil premium funding. Money has been well targeted to ensure that pupils are taught in small groups and that all staff are suitably trained particularly in the teaching of reading. Some make rapid progress as a result.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and there is much that is outstanding. Teachers and other adults use a wide range of questioning skills to engage the pupils, and learning often proceeds at a fast pace.
- Teachers provide high quality demonstrations of pronunciation for pupils to develop their language skills. For example, one group quickly learned new words through questions around the story of Tom Thumb. Another group read with increasing confidence and expression, showing a good understanding of the text being read. A more able group were able to write historical diaries, expertly recalling facts about the effects of the plague in London to support their ideas.
- All adults contribute to providing pupils with access to a wide range of reading material. Pupils quickly learn to read and tackle new words, even tricky ones. Lively and vibrant displays around the school and in all classrooms contribute strongly to the positive climate for learning.

- Pupils are taught basic calculation skills very effectively. Regular practice and small group or one-to-one support enables pupils to consolidate these skills. For example, Year 1 and 2 quickly identified patterns when adding numbers in a different order. However, opportunities for pupils to investigate problems and apply their skills to real life situations are too infrequent.
- Good use is made of outside staff, such as the sports coach, to extend the pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 quickly developed their cricketing skills as a result of an effective demonstration by the coach and his quick corrections of any mistakes. Pupils enjoyed their successes as they applied these skills in different situations.
- Pupils' work is generally marked thoroughly. In literacy, pupils are given detailed guidance on what they do well, and what their next steps in learning are. However, marking is not as consistently good in mathematics. Pupils are not always given opportunities to respond to the guidance to show they have understood or move on to the next stage in learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning, and show interest and enthusiasm in teaching, which actively involves them in their learning. Their behaviour in lessons is often outstanding, though at free times, the behaviour of a small minority can be boisterous.
- Pupils are kind and considerate towards each other. They say that they feel safe as bullying is rare and adults are always around to help them deal with minor disputes. They show an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example from cyber bullying. Though mostly from the same backgrounds, they are very welcoming to others and do not tolerate any racism or prejudice.
- Pupils' social and emotional needs are met in every way possible. This includes support from a trained counsellor, one-to-one support, where this is needed, and small group work. As a result all pupils are well looked after and feel safe. Parents agree that the school is warm and welcoming.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their learning. For example, the mothers and toddlers group helps children prepare for the Reception class. During the autumn term in 2012, the school supported a small group of pupils of Year 7 age prior to them going on to secondary schools. This has helped to strengthen relationships with parents.
- The below average attendance rate is largely due to the extended periods of travelling undertaken by most of the pupils. The school has excellent systems for tracking attendance which is improving, though there remain too many pupils who are regularly absent.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher's relentless focus on raising expectations has led to a continuous improvement in the quality of teaching. This can be seen particularly in the consistently good and often outstanding teaching of phonics.

- The headteacher and governors make sure that the school's performance is checked regularly. Information about pupils' progress is shared, and takes account of the varying rates of attendance to make the data more meaningful. Leadership roles are shared. Self-evaluation is robust and based on a wide range of ways of checking how well the school is doing. Consequently staff morale is high.
 - Teachers and assistants are held accountable for the progress of the pupils. Arrangements for checking teachers' performance and effectiveness are robust and closely linked to salary progression and the awarding of additional responsibilities.
 - Pupils learn about different cultures and historical periods through topics which bring together different subjects and themes. Often this starts with memorable experiences, such as the visit to Sea Life Adventure Aquarium in Southend-on-Sea, which stimulated pupils' interest in underwater creatures. As one pupil said, 'The best thing about the school is the reading, and the trips, like the one to sea world.' Similarly the topic on the Vikings helps the pupils to develop a range of skills as well as understanding different ways of living. These striking experiences make a strong contribution to the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The school effectively promotes equal opportunities through its attention to individual needs. This ensures that the school community is harmonious and inclusive.
 - The school commissions support from the local authority when need arises, for example in partnership with other local schools teachers meet to compare their assessments of the pupils. Much of this has enabled the school to confirm its accurate self-evaluation. Teachers also work closely with the local authority's Ethnic Minority Achievement Team which is located on the school site. They support the school with expert advice on working with families from traveller backgrounds. Relationships with parents are strong.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors make use of their considerable business experience and knowledge of the school to offer effective support and challenge in equal measures. They play a strong role in improving the school's links with parents and the local community. They have an excellent appreciation for the unique nature of the school, so are familiar with how well pupils make progress in relation to their starting points and are aware of the need to improve their attendance. They have provided school leaders with effective support through some recent and difficult staffing changes, and their understanding of the quality of teaching, and what is being done to improve it, is good. They make the most of training opportunities offered by the local authority and the school. They also help to ensure that all statutory duties, including robust procedures relating to safeguarding, are in place.
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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

Unique reference number	114810
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	411702

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Lang
Headteacher	Hayley Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2009
Telephone number	01268 521914
Fax number	01268 526826
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