

Friars Grove Primary School

Upland Drive, Colchester, Essex, CO4 0PZ

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- All groups of pupils achieve well. Rates of progress are accelerating throughout the school.
- Teaching in the school is good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and use their good subject knowledge to plan engaging lessons.
- The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
- Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups do well.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and attend regularly. They are confident learners and enthusiastic about their lessons.
- School leaders have taken effective action to improve teaching, which has led to improved rates of progress for all pupils.
- The school has the support of the vast majority of parents who believe their children are making good progress.
- The governing body supports monitors and challenges the school well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet a high enough proportion of outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils' progress is rapid in all subjects.
- Teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to work independently.
- When teachers mark pupils' books, they do not always make it clear to them what they need to do to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 26 lessons, of which 4 were seen jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils at break times and in the dining room during a wet lunch time.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning. They also held meetings with groups of pupils on day one of the inspection.
- Inspectors held discussions with parents and carers, governors, staff, senior leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 48 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own records of parents' and carers' views.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documents, including the school's view of its own performance and plan for improvement, minutes of meetings held by the governing body and the results of a local authority review. They also looked at information about pupil progress, the data dashboard, records of monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, and documentation relating to safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Nicholas Asker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Ladner

Additional Inspector

Brian Netto

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Friar's Grove is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background, with around one fifth from minority ethnic backgrounds with no sizeable representation from any one group. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, and the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to support children entitled to free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding and as a result raise achievement, particularly for the most-able pupils in key Stage 2, by:
 - further developing marking and assessment practices so that children are clear what they need to do to improve
 - ensuring that lessons have more opportunities for pupils to be independent learners.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children join the school with skills that are typical for their age. They achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage where outcomes for children have improved steadily and are now above the national average.
- In 2012 attainment was above average in Key Stage 1, especially in reading. Key Stage 2 attainment was slightly above average in English but below average in mathematics.
- In 2013 attainment in all subjects at Key Stage 2 was above average.
- The proportions of pupils making expected progress in Key Stage 2 is rising. In 2012 the proportion making expected progress was below the national average for all subjects, but in 2013 was slightly above in reading, slightly below in writing and broadly in line for mathematics. Analysis of the school's assessment data at the end of Year 5 in 2013 shows that these proportions are on track to increase further by the end of year 6. Proportions of pupils making greater than expected progress are below the 2012 national average for reading, above for writing and broadly in line for mathematics. In 2013 they were below the 2012 national average for reading, well above for writing and just below for mathematics.
- The school regularly checks the progress of all age groups. Data provided by the school and verified by analysis of pupils' work show that progress has been improving since the last inspection throughout Key Stage 2. In some cases the progress of whole classes is outstanding because of the outstanding teaching they receive.
- The school's focus on improving progress is reflected in the online questionnaire. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded feel that their child is making good progress at the school.
- The small numbers of pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress broadly in line with that of their classmates. In 2013 all Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium achieved level 4 test results in English and mathematics which is in line with national expectations. On average these pupils were one term behind their classmates in mathematics but less than a term behind in reading and writing. The school uses additional one to one support and individual mentoring well to ensure their progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of well-targeted support and interventions from staff that are well-matched to their individual needs.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups make the same good progress as the majority of pupils.
- Although the most able pupils make faster progress than the majority of pupils, the school does not yet have consistently high numbers of pupils achieving the highest levels at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teachers are held to account for the progress of pupils in their classes with regular pupil progress meetings, which effectively identify pupils who are in need of extra targeted support.
- Since the last inspection the school has developed a broader curriculum to give pupils greater

opportunities to use and apply their mathematics and literacy skills in other subjects. Pupils engage with interesting mathematical puzzles during registration times, which are well used to improve mathematical fluency.

- The school library is well used to foster a love of reading, and the progress and challenge of pupils reading is well monitored. Pupils express themselves confidently, are articulate and take pride in their reading.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good across the school, with some that is outstanding. Teachers use good questioning skills to probe pupils' understanding and give them clear explanations. As a result pupils are able to settle quickly to their tasks and lessons are purposeful.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good, which contributes well to pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and use their good subject knowledge to teach engaging lessons. Teachers use data from frequent assessments to plan a variety of tasks suitable for pupils of different abilities. As a result, good progress is made by all pupils. However, sometimes pupils' learning would benefit from more activities which require greater levels of independence.
- Teachers plan and teach interesting and challenging lessons which meet pupils' needs well. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to work together and discuss their work. As a result pupils' confidence and ability to understand deepens.
- The staff use data well to identify pupils who need extra help. Close analysis of pupils who are falling behind enables targeted interventions to be made. Teaching assistants are skilled and well deployed in classrooms. Pupils are generally aware of the levels they are working at, especially the older pupils.
- Teachers use timed tasks well to ensure that learning progresses at a good pace.
- The standard of marking and assessment has improved since the last inspection. Teacher assessments are well moderated within the school, between neighbouring schools and by the local authority. The quality of marking seen in books has significantly improved as a result of rigorous monitoring by the maths and English subject leaders. However, pupils are not always clear what it is they need to do to improve.
- Teaching is good and in some cases outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn and as a result activities are closely matched to their learning needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has a positive atmosphere. The vast majority of pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they are happy at school. The online questionnaire reflects this with an equally large number of parents and carers reporting that their child enjoys school.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Movement around the school is calm

and orderly, and the attention of vast majority of pupils in lessons is good and they respond quickly to well-rehearsed routines. Low level disruption is minimal. As a result pupils are able to learn well.

- Pupils are polite and courteous. They show respect for adults and for each other. For example, in one Year 4 lesson visited during the inspection, the pupils listened attentively whilst one pupil presented a fictional weather forecast he had written for Australia. This was followed by a polite round of applause.
- Pupils work well in lessons and show maturity when they have the opportunity to discuss their work. However, opportunities to develop their independent learning skills are not always evident in lesson planning.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school, and observations of playgrounds and the dining room during the inspection saw well-managed behaviour. The playgrounds are safe and offer pupils a variety of lunchtime activities which helps to manage behaviour. The overwhelming majority of parents or carers who responded to the online questionnaire agreed that their child feels safe in school.
- Pupils are able to clearly explain what constitutes different types of bullying, which is regularly revisited through the school's PSHE programme. They are aware of the dangers of cyber bullying and were not aware of any racist incidents occurring. Year 5 and 6 pupils interviewed during the inspection were not aware of any homophobic bullying.
- There are few reports from the pupils of poor behaviour or bullying, but the online questionnaire shows that a minority of parents and carers do not think that bullying is effectively dealt with by the school. Class records of bullying incidents are maintained and show that bullying is rare.
- Attendance is consistently high and above the national average, and there are below average numbers of fixed term and permanent exclusions.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team have effectively focused on increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and as a result pupils' progress has improved significantly.
- The leadership team have an accurate picture of teaching and learning. In lessons jointly observed with inspectors, school staff made accurate judgements and were able to identify appropriate points for improvement. Teachers are held to account for pupil progress through termly meetings which also help to identify pupils who are not making enough progress.
- There has been some disruption to staffing which has been well managed by senior leaders. Teachers appointed to the school in September 2013 have been monitored by senior staff, are teaching well and feel that feedback they receive helps them improve.
- Senior leaders have worked effectively to implement improvements since the last inspection. In particular there are improvements seen in the quality of marking and assessment. However, pupils are not yet well informed enough about what they need to do to improve.
- During the inspection inspectors saw many good cross-curricular lessons, which gave pupils the opportunity to use and apply their developing literacy and numeracy skills. Opportunities are

taken both in and out of school hours to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

- The school's view of its own performance is accurate, and agrees with the local authority's view of the school. It clearly identifies the strengths of the school and has appropriate points for improvement. The school plan for improvement has a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and as a result achievement.
- The senior leadership team manages the performance of teachers well which has a positive impact on pupil progress. Each teacher is accountable for the progress of the pupils in their class and the school does not allow teachers to progress through the salary structure unless pupil progress targets are met.
- The school works effectively to include every pupil and to involve parents in the learning of their children. Parents are frequently invited into school for consultation evenings and to attend community events. Governors also attend parent consultation evenings as a way of interacting with the parent body.
- The local authority has a good relationship with the school and has provided support to the school through a two-day review. There are termly monitoring visits from advisory staff. The local authority has moderated teacher assessments as accurate. It regards the school as steadily improving due to the sharp focus on improving teaching and pupil progress.
- The school has used pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well at end of Key Stage assessments. There are a wide range of support and intervention activities to ensure accelerated progress. In some cases, pupils supported by pupil premium out-perform those who do not receive such support. However, the school needs to publish an analysis of the impact of these activities on the school website.
- The school has used primary sport funding to recruit a specialist physical education co-ordinator, with the aim of increasing participation in competitive sport through links with local sports clubs. The co-ordinator will also be leading professional development for staff.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. Governor and staff training are up to date.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Governing Body is well informed about the school's effectiveness and offers a good level of challenge to the senior leadership. The allocation of financial resources is rigorously monitored and challenged.
 - Governors involve themselves well with the day-to-day life of the school. They regularly visit the school to hear children read and have a programme of regular curriculum monitoring visits. Governors provide written feedback from these visits which is discussed in full Governing Body meetings.
 - The Governing Body is closely involved with the management of teachers' performance. It is clear in its role of checking the performance of staff and the links to salary and progression.
 - Governors take a strategic view for the future success of the school, and have been instrumental in developing after-school clubs and facilities.

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	114761
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425216

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rod Goody
Headteacher	Helen Dudley-Smith
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2012
Telephone number	01206 843683
Fax number	01206 855085
Email address	admin@friarsgrove.essex.sch.uk

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