

Ghyllgrove Community Junior School

The Gore, Basildon, SS14 2BG

Inspection dates 20–21 November 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.

- The headteacher provides firm and determined leadership. Well supported by the senior leadership team and the governing body, she has secured improvement in pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve well from their below-average starting points and reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together very productively to ensure that disabled pupils and the many others who have statements of special educational needs all achieve well.
- Teaching is good and much is outstanding. School leaders effectively help teachers to make learning better when pupils are not doing as well as they could.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They say they feel safe and are aware of how to keep safe in a variety of situations.
- Attendance is steadily improving and is, currently, in line with that of most schools.
- The governing body is supportive of the school and fully involved in ensuring this is an improving school.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a high priority and is effective. It results in strong relationships at all levels.
- Real-life experiences gained from trips to places of interest, along with the creative and imaginative use of subject matter such as art, music and sport, are helping pupils to learn successfully.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because learning in lessons is, occasionally, not brisk enough and pupils lack opportunities to work independently when they might do so.
- Despite recent improvements, attainment in writing is below that of reading and mathematics because pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and practise their writing skills across all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons, four of which were shared with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, at play, during lunch and as they moved around the school.
- Discussions were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, members of the school council and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documentation was reviewed by the inspection team, including records of the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress, the school's own view of its performance and the school development plan. In addition, safeguarding documentation and reports from the school improvement adviser were reviewed.
- The inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire received during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents.

Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Cox

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized junior school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding allocated to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority, and some other groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average and exceptionally high in some year groups.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is high and well above the national average – more than 30% of the current Year 6 pupils joined the school during Key Stage 2.
- The school has specially resourced provision for up to six pupils with special educational needs who have hearing impairment. At the time of the inspection, the base had very few pupils on roll. Inspectors were accompanied by a sign-language interpreter for part of the inspection.
- 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?

- Further raise the overall quality of teaching so that it becomes outstanding by ensuring that:
 - all learning in lessons proceeds at a brisk pace throughout
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to develop their independent learning skills
 - pupils always have opportunities to respond to teachers' helpful marking of work.
- Improve pupils' writing skills gained in literacy lessons by ensuring that they are provided with regular opportunities to use these skills in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Good teaching leads to pupils achieving well throughout the school. Their achievement is reflected in the good quality of learning in most lessons observed and is confirmed by the work in pupils' books. All pupils achieve well, including the many disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils enter the school with skills that are typically well-below average. By the end of Year 6 in 2012 and 2013, their attainment rose, particularly in mathematics and reading, to be broadly in line with national averages. In 2013, standards in mathematics were above the national average and standards in reading were in line with the national average.
- Although improvements have been made in writing, attainment is weaker than in other areas, particularly in the proportion attaining the higher National Curriculum levels. The school has correctly identified raising standards in writing as an improvement priority and is taking action to improve pupils' skills. It is too soon to evaluate accurately the action being taken, but pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum so that they reinforce learning from literacy lessons.
- Disabled pupils and all of the many who have special educational needs achieve as well as other groups. This is because of early identification of their learning needs and well-targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants. Arrangements ensure that their individual learning needs are well provided for so that they reach the suitably challenging learning targets set for them. Parents are fully involved in all decisions and kept very well informed about their children's progress. The transition arrangements for pupils when they leave for secondary school are well organised and the teacher responsible enjoys the full confidence and support of parents.
- More-able pupils are well catered for in teachers' planning of learning and achieve well. They experience additional learning challenges by attending activities with more-able pupils at other local primary schools.
- Pupils with hearing impairment make good progress as a result of the very helpful provision made for them in and out of the special resource base. They are able to learn and make progress at a similar rate to that of other pupils.
- Pupils who join the school during term time, some of whom have behavioural difficulties, are helped to settle in quickly and make progress equivalent to that made by others. As the attainment on entry of new arrivals is, sometimes, below that of most pupils in the year group, they understandably struggle to reach the standards attained by most pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well. Many pupils who have special educational learning needs are eligible for the pupil premium and a considerable proportion of the pupils who joined the school during Key Stage 2 are also eligible. However, barriers to learning are quickly identified and the pupil premium funding is used to provide very carefully matched additional support through frequent one-to-one or small-group work. A proportion of the money allocated is also used by the school to ensure that these pupils can join in all the extra activities provided for other pupils. Access to residential activities, theatre shows and after-school activities has resulted in greater confidence, motivation and higher levels of attendance for these pupils. As a result, across the school, these pupils achieve well, but attain below others in English and mathematics. As there is such variation in each year in how long eligible pupils have been in the

school, data demonstrating that the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is narrowing do not make a reliable year-by-year comparison possible. However, during the inspection, the many eligible pupils observed by inspectors achieved well in lessons in both English and mathematics.

- Parents who expressed a view were confident that their children were achieving well, a view endorsed by inspection findings.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. Teachers have established strong and supportive relationships with the pupils who are, consequently, keen to learn. The teachers all demonstrate good subject knowledge, use questioning skilfully to gauge and guide pupils' learning and use engaging and motivational resources to encourage pupils' enjoyment of school.
- The quality of teaching is not outstanding because there are occasions when the pace of learning slows, frequently after a brisk start, and teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves and develop independent learning skills.
- Most teaching is enthusiastic and often inspiring. For example, the teacher's enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on solving problems by converting units of length inspired the pupils to reach high standards. They were fully engaged in their learning and rose to the teacher's high expectations and the challenging tasks they were set. No time was wasted. The teacher's skilled questioning probed understanding and developed pupils' skills and knowledge very well. Pupils learned at a rapid pace and were highly productive. They knew how well they were doing and were able to review their own and others' work accurately.
- Teachers use assessment information to plan tasks that interest pupils and respond to pupils' different levels of understanding. In each lesson, tasks are devised for groups of pupils with different abilities, including additional, challenging activities for the more able.
- Pupils have a good understanding of their learning because teachers take care to discuss the learning objective for each lesson with them. They frequently link learning to the pupils' individual, current, targets for improvement. Marking is thorough and up to date but pupils are not always given enough opportunities to respond at length to teachers' marking.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. Skilled teaching assistants give extended support to pupils who need additional help to understand and complete their work. The pupils who have hearing impairment have the benefit of specialist teaching and are well supported in and out of the specialist resource provision.
- Teachers have a clear focus on teaching pupils to read. Regular, daily phonics (the links between letters and sounds) and guided reading activities help pupils to achieve well in reading from their starting points when they enter the school. The teaching of writing has been a priority during the current year, and improvement has been made. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their new writing skills in writing extended pieces of work in different subjects – for example, in history or science.
- Parents who expressed a view agree with inspection findings that their children are taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around school is typically good and often exemplary. Pupils know what is expected of them and are fully aware of the rewards and sanctions which underpin the whole-school systems to manage behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They say they like coming to school and their recently improved levels of attendance demonstrate this. They appreciate the opportunities to take part in the wide variety of before- and after-school clubs, educational visits and competitive sport offered by the school.
- Visitors are welcomed with warmth and courtesy. Pupils look after each other and respect their friends' opinions both at play and in lessons. They cooperate sensibly and maturely when working with a partner in lessons and listen carefully to their partner and to teachers.
- Pupils are confident that if they are anxious about a personal matter that they cannot sort out themselves, an adult will be on hand to help. Older pupils readily accept responsibilities such as helping to solve minor disagreements between younger pupils in the playground and operating equipment in assemblies. Hearing-impaired pupils enjoy the social benefits of school along with other pupils.
- They assert that behaviour is 'usually good' and that bullying is very rare and dealt with effectively by teachers. A number of pupils at risk of exclusion from their previous schools for behavioural issues joined during the key stage. All have settled in very well and made very good progress.
- Pupils feel happy and safe in the school. They can describe how to keep safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. They would recommend the school to others.

The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership and management have ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has overseen a successful focus on improving the quality and consistency of teaching and raising pupils' achievement across the school. Key strengths and areas for improvement have been identified with the full support of the governing body and local authority. Links have been developed with the adjacent infant school to further enhance pupils' transition to the junior school.
- The school has effective systems in place to determine how teachers are rewarded. Teachers' performance is directly linked to pupils' achievement and other key areas for improvement in the school development plan.
- The school thoroughly evaluates its performance. It ensures that its action plan carefully matches priorities to the action needed. Effective leadership ensures that actions have a clear impact on achievement and teaching and have led to improvement of these priorities. The school's track record shows strong capacity to move further forward. Senior leaders carefully track both pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, and use this information to ensure that planning for improvement is founded on good evidence and accurate data.
- Staff are well motivated and demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to

improving the school. The introduction of a daily half-hour 'basic skills' lesson across the school promoting punctuation, spelling and grammar skills has been particularly effective and is demonstrating clear improvements in pupils' competence in these skills. The school's results in the new spelling, punctuation and grammar tests for Year 6 in 2013 were in line with national averages.

- Leadership and provision are good in the hearing-impaired unit and outside it when pupils are involved in other activities. Effective teaching and highly-trained learning support assistants help pupils overcome barriers to their learning.
- The school provides good personal care for each pupil. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are warmly welcomed into the school and are particularly well cared for. The learning mentor and pupil-support worker work with small groups and with individual pupils to improve their confidence and self-esteem. Discrimination is not tolerated and the school ensures all pupils have the same opportunities to succeed.
- Leaders below senior level contribute well to the school's success. They competently lead their areas of responsibility and use the training they receive to enhance their management skills.
- Safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and are secure and rigorously applied.
- The school has positive relationships with parents and members of the local community. Its good links with a wide range of partners contribute considerably to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being.
- Provision to encourage pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on school values, such as friendship, in assemblies and in social education lessons.
- The local authority has supported the school well in raising the quality of teaching and levels of attainment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides strong support and challenge for leaders and managers in order to ensure that the school continues to improve and move forward. Governors are rigorous in checking that safeguarding systems are secure and that they meet all current regulatory requirements. The governing body has been effective in overseeing the arrangements for relating teachers' pay to their performance in enabling pupils to achieve well. Governors play a fully active role in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement-planning processes. Governors gather, check and discuss a wide range of reports about the school as well as visiting regularly to see for themselves how the school is operating and being led. As a result, they have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They understand the data on how well pupils achieve, and the comparative performance of the school in relation to schools nationally. Governors know what the pupil premium is spent on, and they require leaders to account for the impact on the personal and academic development of those pupils. Governors challenge leaders to account for the school's performance overall. They constantly ask probing questions and know what is happening in the school.

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	114914
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425221

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Moloney
Headteacher	Judith Gibbon
Date of previous school inspection	08 November 2011
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