

# Edwards Hall Primary School

Macmurdo Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 5AQ

**Inspection dates** 10–11 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- School leaders have helped teachers develop their skills, so that teaching is consistently good and improving.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is rapidly improving across the school. Their attainment is above if not significantly above national averages in these subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Around the school they show considerable care and responsibility. They have extremely positive attitudes and this helps them to be very successful learners.
- This is a harmonious and happy school where pupils say they feel safe. The overwhelming majority of parents agree.
- A strong focus on creativity within the topics that pupils study provides them with a stimulating and rich experience. These topics make an exceptional contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors are well trained and provide effective challenge and support for the school. Strong leadership and effective partnerships ensure that this school is rapidly improving.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in reading and writing is not as strong as in mathematics. There are missed opportunities for pupils to read more widely, for example non-fiction.
- Pupils' writing and use of vocabulary in subjects other than English are too limited, especially in Years 3 and 4.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 21 lessons or part-lessons. Nine observations were shared with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of other short visits to classrooms.
- Inspectors heard pupils read. They looked at work from each year group, much of this with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan and records on behaviour, safety and attendance. They also considered information on individual pupils' progress, anonymised records of teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.
- Inspectors met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. They also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 78 responses to the on-line Parent View survey. Written comments from 35 members of staff and two parents were also considered.

## Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Eyley

Additional Inspector

Susan Cox

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just above average.
- The headteacher supports three primary schools in Southend-on-Sea. The deputy headteacher is a trainee additional inspector.
- The school is part of a project led by a National Leader of Education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several new appointments of staff, including a teacher responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage and a business manager. A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in September 2013, along with three new governors.

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

- Raise achievement in reading and writing across the school so that pupils achieve at least as well as they do in mathematics, by:
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to read more widely, including non-fiction
  - ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write in depth in subjects other than English, making better use of vocabulary, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2013 the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national averages. At the end of Year 6 they were significantly above national averages in reading and mathematics, as well as in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test. Standards have been above or in line with national averages for over three years in both key stages. Year 1 pupils attained above the national average in the phonics (linking letters and the sounds they make) screening check.
- Pupils' progress is accelerating. In 2013 their progress was above that normally expected, particularly in mathematics. The school's assessments show that this trend is continuing across all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Despite these improvements, lack of breadth is a limitation on pupils' reading, particularly with regard to non-fiction; and they rarely write at length using specific vocabulary in subjects other than English. Even so, the gap in performance between reading and writing and mathematics is closing, particularly at the higher levels.
- Children join the Reception classes with skills typical for their age. However, the variation in pre-school experience means that many have skill levels which are below that found typically in literacy and numeracy. They make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 those levels are above those typically found.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 in 2013 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. However, across the school these pupils are given expert support so make good progress and by the time they reach Year 6 any gaps in attainment with their peers are closed.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also achieve well. They benefit from expert support in small groups from well trained teaching assistants. They are well looked after and cared for. This is a mark of the school's determined efforts to ensure equality of opportunity for all.
- The progress of more-able pupils is now accelerating, having not been as strong in recent years. They are given regular opportunities to extend their learning and attain higher levels, especially in mathematics.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and is improving rapidly. The very positive climate for learning ensures that the teaching proceeds with little or no interruption.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Activities are organised so that children make good use of the stimulating environment which includes an extensive and well equipped outdoor area.
- Teachers are given excellent support from teaching assistants. On occasions they take it in turns to lead the learning. Expert questioning and good subject knowledge helps pupils of different abilities understand the activities and move forward in their learning.

- Teachers keep pupils engaged through regular checks on learning, and adapting the activities to best meet their needs. Routines are well established in all classrooms and all teachers expect the best from all of the pupils. As one pupil said, 'The teachers are good because they push us to our limits'.
- Teachers provide regular opportunities in English for pupils to write in different ways and for different purposes. However, these opportunities are too infrequent in other subjects. This means that pupils are not developing their skills by writing in depth and using subject-specific vocabulary, particularly in Years 3 and 4.
- The teaching of phonics helps pupils quickly learn the basics of reading. Pupils enjoy reading and many apply these skills well. Sometimes opportunities are missed to widen their reading so that they acquire more ideas which can help them to improve their writing.
- In mathematics, teachers use different strategies to help pupils develop their calculation skills. Skilful questioning helps pupils to use and apply their mathematical vocabulary in different contexts. For example, more-able Year 6 pupils applied their knowledge of theories about sequences and ratios as the teacher challenged them with a mental mathematics game; as a result pupils learnt how to apply their knowledge of number to solve complex problems.
- Teaching is often inspirational, and helps pupils to reflect deeply on the topics they are studying. This is evident in particular during philosophy for children (P4C) lessons. Pupils in Year 3, for example, discussed 'what we mean by art'. Probing questioning and well-chosen visual examples of art helped the pupils rethink their original ideas. As a result they deepened their understanding as well as acquiring skills in formulating arguments and weighing up evidence.
- The school's efforts to improve marking and feedback to pupils have been highly effective. Pupils enjoy being 'tickled pink' by the comments made when they achieve well, and respond positively to the 'green for growth' highlights which tell them what to do next to improve their learning. Over a short period, this practice has contributed to consistently good achievement across the whole school.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They say that teachers make learning fun and they show an excitement in learning new skills. Well established routines in lessons mean that no time is wasted. Pupils arrive to lessons ready to learn, and show a willingness to apply themselves.
- The pupils are rightly proud of their achievements. This is reflected, for example, in the care they show in the presentation of their work. Additionally, they show great respect for their learning environment; they particularly enjoy the vibrant and stimulating three-dimensional displays within the 'creative' corridor and the corridor of 'inspiration'. These feature stunning work completed by the pupils and inspiring words from famous scientists, artists and other experts.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of bullying, and agree that incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. Support for families on matters such as cyber-bullying has helped the pupils develop effective ways of keeping safe. There have been no exclusions for over three years. As a result this is a happy and friendly place. As one pupil put it, 'we are happy because everyone here smiles'.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have clear ideas about personal safety and regular opportunities to learn from experts helps them to apply this knowledge. For example, Year 6 pupils were better informed about road safety and travelling safely to secondary schools following a session led by an external speaker. This also eases their transition to the next phase of learning.
- Pupils love coming to school. This is reflected in their above average and rising attendance.

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

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership, and have high aspirations for the school. They are well supported by those teachers who hold additional responsibilities, and by governors. As a consequence the school has successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The school goes from strength to strength.
- The school has robust systems for checking how well pupils are doing, and the effectiveness of teachers. Teachers have responded positively to the support given to them and as a result staff morale is high. As one said, 'the training and support which staff are given is exceptional'.
- The pupil premium funding is used well. Funds are spent in different ways to meet the needs of families and children whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Good use is made of expertise from outside the school to help meet these needs. This ensures that these pupils do not miss out on after-school clubs and visits, for example. Pupils' needs are assessed early and support is well targeted. As a result, these pupils achieve well, and by the time they leave Year 6 gaps in achievement with their peers have been closed so they do not fall behind.
- Pupils say they are inspired by topics and themes that contribute to a rich and stimulating curriculum. Topics are brought to life, as when the Year 3 pupils visited a local business to find out how it worked; the manager was impressed by how well the pupils had prepared their questions. These sorts of experiences make a strong contribution to the pupils' exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One commented on the school's 'positive, welcoming and friendly feeling'.
- The school benefits from different partnerships. A project led by a National Leader of Education is helping to raise ambitions. Good support is also provided within the local network of schools. Teachers are able to visit schools where there is outstanding practice.
- The sports fund has been used to strengthen the teachers' skills in sport and physical education. Expert coaches and teachers from other schools are used to help widen the pupils' experience of different sports, and increase their participation in competitive team games. Pupils also benefit from the emphasis placed on healthy lifestyles.
- The local authority has recognised the rapid improvements made at the school so have reduced the amount of support it provides. It has commissioned the headteacher to support three other primary schools with the area.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors have undertaken training which is helping them to improve their contributions to the school's improvement. For example, training in performance management helps them to hold leaders and teachers to account, and ensures that only high performance is rewarded. They take their responsibilities very seriously, and ensure that all statutory requirements, including those related to safeguarding, are met. The school website has all the required information. Governors are familiar with the data about pupils' achievement. Their financial knowledge and expertise has benefited from the recent appointment of the business manager. This means that they know how the pupil premium and the sports premium are spent and the impact these and other funds are having on the pupils. They have a good understanding of how the school works in partnership with other schools to improve the quality of teaching and how this has raised achievement across 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134861
<b>Local authority</b>	Southend-on-Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	442078

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	359
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janice Price
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jim Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 February 2013
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