

Thameside Primary School

Manor Road, Grays, RM17 6EF

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. They enter the Nursery attaining below the national expectations for their ages. By the time they leave the Reception, many children meet the expectations for their ages in each area of learning.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils are, currently, making good progress and are reaching broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils were seen to be making good progress including in English and mathematics.
- The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is good. Teachers manage behaviour well and have good relationships with pupils. They have high expectations for what pupils can achieve and provide stimulating activities to motivate them to learn.
- Behaviour is good in all years. The school's efforts to keep pupils safe are effective.
- The headteacher is well supported by the senior team. Together they are rapidly transforming and improving the school to ensure teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress. They enjoy the full confidence of staff and nearly all parents.
- Governors are providing good oversight of the school's work and are contributing effectively to improvements in teaching and learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The marking of pupils' work does not always make clear how they can improve it.
- Pupils are not always told how well they are using their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics, so they do not learn how to improve these skills in all lessons.
- Subject leaders are not rigorously checking and evaluating the quality of teachers' marking and the accuracy of the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed nearly all teachers. Twelve of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, analysed children's work in the Early Years Foundation Stage and that of pupils in other year groups jointly with senior and subject leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the special educational needs coordinator, four members of the governing body and the chief executive of the academy trust. Meetings were also held with three different groups of pupils and informal discussions took place with different pupils at playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views. They talked to a small number of individual parents when they brought their children to school. They considered 32 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and took account of 350 questionnaire returns from the school's most recent survey of parents' views. Inspectors also analysed 57 returns to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's strategic and operational plans, self-evaluation summary, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding policies, attendance figures, records of behaviour and information about pupils' progress since academy status was gained.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Paul Wilson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thameside Primary School opened in September 2012 as an academy, sponsored by St Clare's Co-operative Trust, following the closure of former infant and junior schools. The headteacher joined the school when it opened as an academy.
- The school is larger than most other primary schools, and the number of pupils is steadily rising.
- Approximately two thirds of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, and a high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for those who are in care, is well-above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- During the current academic year, a significant proportion of pupils joined or left the school, other than at the usual times.
- As a new academy, the school had a monitoring visit by the Department for Education in April 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate the few remaining weaknesses in teaching, increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise achievement by making sure:
 - pupils always know how to improve their work from the marking of their books
 - pupils are always told how well they are applying their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics, so that they learn how to improve their skills in all lessons
 - subject leaders rigorously check and evaluate teachers' marking and assessment of the progress made and standards reached by all groups of pupils within subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. Few children reach the expectations for their ages in the areas for learning when they enter the Nursery. Their skills in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development are particularly low. They make good progress and by the end of Reception many reach the expectations for their ages in each area of learning.
- In 2013, the performance of Year 1 pupils in the national phonics check (sounds and the letters they represent) was in line with the national average. This represented good progress for these pupils from their below-average starting points. Current Year 1 pupils are building on this success and are on course to exceed the 2013 national average. Pupils are learning phonics well from good teaching and using these skills effectively in their reading and writing. They are encouraged to read widely and often.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils are currently reaching the latest national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Their performance is a considerable improvement from the low attainment of Year 2 pupils in 2013.
- Attainment is rapidly rising and current pupils are achieving well by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 from their below-average starting points on entry. In 2013, the school's first set of results at the end of Key Stage 2 were below the national averages in all subjects and progress was not good in writing and mathematics. The school has taken effective action to raise attainment and, currently, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The schools' reliable data tracking pupils' progress and attainment show current performance well ahead of 2013 results.
- More-able pupils and those of average attainment are achieving particularly well with many on course to reach Level 5 or higher in the Year 6 national tests in 2014. Their performance is impressive, given these pupils' below-average starting points at the end of Year 2.
- Those pupils who arrive at other than the usual times of admission are effectively assessed and supported on entry so that they can be helped to make good progress from their starting points and they do so.
- The attainment of pupils eligible for additional funding (pupil premium) is, currently, in line with that of other pupils. The attainment of the current Year 6 pupils has improved from that of Year 6 in 2013, who were approximately nine months behind their classmates in reading and a year behind them in writing. Attainment in mathematics in 2013 was better than in pupils' other two subjects. The proportion of eligible pupils making good progress has increased, particularly in writing, from what it was in 2013. The gap between the progress of eligible pupils and that of others is, currently, narrowing in writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are making good progress. These groups are well supported by teaching assistants in reading, writing and mathematics. Those at an early stage in learning to speak English quickly learn the language, and are able to access the full range of learning opportunities available in mainstream lessons.
- Pupils are increasing their levels of fitness and improving their health and well-being in

exercising more from good use of primary sports funding. The school's 10 sports clubs, which are partly funded by additional national support, are oversubscribed and are having a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of learning and reflected in better attendance at school.

- Pupils are applying their skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics well to make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, they do not know how well they are developing their writing and mathematical skills because they are not always provided with written feedback on their use of these skills when their work is marked.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is good. The school's accurate and thorough checks on teaching and the work in pupils' books show that teaching has improved rapidly over the last two years and is, currently, good throughout the school.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Relationships among pupils and staff are good.
- Teachers encourage pupils to try their hardest and do their best. They have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. These expectations are reflected in the challenging tasks pupils are given, shown in their books and in lessons observed. For example, in physical education lessons, pupils were constantly challenged to improve their skills of throwing the javelin and completing a relay race. They acquired these new skills quickly and securely. In discussion, pupils said that teachers make learning enjoyable and well-planned practical activities stimulate learning and motivate them to succeed.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils' learning. They help pupils to understand the work in hand, particularly in overcoming language difficulties. As a result, those who receive additional support through additional funding, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those who enter the school other than at the usual times, all make good progress.
- Assessment of pupils' progress and attainment is generally used well to enable teachers to move pupils' learning forward. Pupils know their targets for improvement, which are often referred to in lessons. However, teachers do not consistently make clear to pupils what they should do to improve their work to hit their targets when books are marked.
- The teaching of basic skills of communication, reading, writing and mathematics is good across the school. Teachers provide good opportunities to promote pupils' use of literacy and numeracy across different subjects. However, pupils are not always informed of how well they are using their writing and applying their mathematics skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils do not improve their use of these skills as well as they could.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and enables children to gain new knowledge, skills and understanding in each area of learning. They gain especially in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's own close checking of behaviour and inspectors' observations confirm this standard. The vast majority of parents and all staff agree with inspectors that behaviour is good. Most pupils also think that behaviour is typically good in

school. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Assembly, playtime and lunchtime are orderly occasions.

- Relationships are good. Pupils respect adults and listen carefully to the views of others. They show kindness and consideration to one another.
- Pupils rightly say that bullying is rare and, should it occur, it is usually dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils are increasing their awareness of different types of bullying.
- Pupils typically have good attitudes to learning. For example, the quality of presentation of their work in their books is mostly good. Pupils look after their books and take pride in their work.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders make school premises secure and staff are only appointed following careful checking on their suitability. Pupils learn how to use the internet safely. In discussion, pupils said they felt safe and, for example, were able to identify dangers of social-networking sites. Pupils move around the school and use equipment safely. They abide by the rules of safety in sports and in practical subjects and play safely together.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage stay safe and are happy at school. Staff work strongly as a team and closely with parents to ensure children's well-being and safety. The overwhelming majority of parents think that their children are safe in school.
- Attendance has risen rapidly from below average in 2013 to be, currently, above last year's national average. Leaders are very successful in persuading parents and pupils of the importance of regular attendance. Consequently, pupils arrive punctually and well prepared for lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- The inspired leadership of the headteacher, with good support from the leadership team, has resulted in a strong drive for improvement among all the staff. Leaders ensure that staff morale is high and parents have increasing confidence in the success of the school. The recent review by the Department for Education confirmed the impact of leadership on ensuring much improved progress and standards for pupils, as reflected in inspection evidence.
- The school uses its accurate self-evaluation effectively to identify priorities for improvement. Leaders base their view of the school on their accurate knowledge of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Data on pupils' performance, the regular scrutiny of pupils' books and lesson observations enable leaders to evaluate accurately the quality of education and pupils' standards.
- Subject leaders participate in activities to check the quality of education and how well pupils are benefiting. However, subject leaders' action is not rigorous enough in checking and evaluating teachers' marking or in assessing the progress made and standards reached by all groups of pupils within subjects.
- Systems to manage the performance of staff are thorough. Objectives to improve performance closely link teaching standards to pupils' progress. Any underperformance is overcome through training and, if necessary, change of staff. As a result, inadequacies in teaching have been eradicated and few weaknesses remain. Newly qualified staff receive very good support to quickly become good teachers. The well-directed sense of purpose of staff was reflected in their

overwhelmingly positive responses in their questionnaire returns about leaders and the school.

- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. It ensures that additional funds for disadvantaged pupils are used to narrow any gap in eligible pupils' achievement with that of other pupils. Additional (pupil premium) funds are used well to help eligible pupils improve their literacy and numeracy when needed. They are also funded for school trips and physical education kit, enabling them to participate fully in all the school offers.
- The school has made good use of its funds for promoting sport. It has built up a wide range of well-supported lunchtime and after-school clubs and its equipment for physical education. The funding is also used to provide specialist teaching of physical education by qualified coaches. This action is leading to much increased participation in sports by girls and boys alike, and an increase in the range of sports and competitions available for pupils. The funding is also used to provide specialist teaching of physical education by specialist teachers and qualified coaches.
- Leaders have developed a range of subjects which is matched well to pupils' learning needs. There is a strong emphasis to develop literacy and numeracy, but support for pupils' learning of these skills is not reinforced well in subjects outside English and mathematics. There are wide opportunities for enriching learning through a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Residential visits and trips to places of interest, visitors to school – such as story tellers – also make learning interesting for all pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. For example, there are helpful opportunities for reflection and the celebration of success in assemblies. There are many opportunities for working together in lessons and supporting one another in the playground to support social development. Pupils learn about moral issues and how to appreciate other faiths and cultures through religious education, art and music.
- The academy trust is ambitious for the continued success of the school. Its contribution has involved effective measures, such as three days of trust support for improving attendance, which has resulted in a rapid improvement in attendance figures. The trust rigorously checks on the school's work and challenges it to move it forward, for example, in improving the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is providing good support and challenge for leaders and the school. Governors make visits focused on specific aspects of the school's work. They contribute effectively to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, and oversee arrangements for the management of staff performance. These actions reflect governors' strong commitment to the success of the school. They have a realistic view of the quality of teaching from their own activities and the analyses of staff performance they receive from leaders. They use published data on pupils' attainment and progress, together with the school's own data, to challenge the school's performance and influence priorities for improvement. For example, governors have successfully overseen the eradication of weak teaching and a rapid improvement in practice since 2013. They have a good knowledge of how the school is using additional (pupil premium) and primary school sports funding and the difference the funding is having on pupils' lives and achievement. They ask pertinent questions to ensure the school is providing value for money. Governors ensure that all requirements for safeguarding are met. They regularly review policies and check the procedures for vetting staff and visitors to the school. They make sure that all training in safeguarding is up to date.

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	138581
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	440023

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	578
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Fall
Headteacher	Christina Pumfrey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01375 372188
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