

South Green Infant School

Ganels Road, Billericay, CM11 2TG

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2014

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.

- Pupils' achievement across the year groups is good. As a result, they reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- School leaders have high aspirations for pupils' academic and social development. They ensure that teaching, achievement and pupils' behaviour are consistently good and improving. Consequently, pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education in junior school.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons that meet the needs of all groups of pupils and inspire them to learn well.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are well behaved, feel safe and have good attitudes to learning.
- Governors are well informed and check the work of the school regularly. They provide sound strategic leadership as well as strong challenge and support for school leaders.
- The well-planned curriculum and many exciting enrichment activities on offer foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet sufficiently strong to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Occasionally, when the most-able pupils have fully understood their work, they are not given more difficult activities to challenge them to reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- At times, marking and feedback do not make it clear enough to pupils how they can improve their work. Therefore, they are not able to correct their work and learn from their mistakes.
- Some subject leaders do not check the work of their colleagues closely enough to ensure that they help pupils make rapid progress across their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. They also observed small-group support sessions. Seven of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, staff and groups of pupils. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at documentation including teachers’ planning, the school’s analysis of its strengths and weaknesses and resulting development plans, information on pupils’ attainment and progress, records of the monitoring of teaching and governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and behaviour and reviewed the work in their books.
- Inspectors considered the 76 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 24 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also spoke informally to parents as they brought and collected their children from school.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Ladner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This infant school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding which in this school supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is usually below average but the numbers have risen markedly this year.
- The school belongs to the Billericay Community Trust (BCT), a partnership with 13 primary-aged schools and two secondary schools.
- Since the previous inspection the governing body appointed a deputy headteacher in April 2013 to add capacity to the senior leadership team. A new Nursery building opened in November 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers challenge the most-able pupils by providing them with more difficult work
 - teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and make sure that pupils correct their work and learn from their mistakes.
- Develop the effectiveness of all subject leaders by giving them additional leadership training and more opportunities to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills and knowledge that are slightly below those expected for their age. As a result of good teaching and a stimulating learning environment, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In 2013, the proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development and being well prepared for Year 1 was above that found nationally.
- Progress across Key Stage 1 is good. At the end of Year 2, pupils consistently leave school with above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence in pupils' books shows that sometimes, when the most-able have fully understood their work, they are not given more difficult tasks which would enable them to achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Pupils' reading skills are well developed. From the start, pupils learn to understand the link between letters and sounds and develop the skills to read with expression and fluency. Although in 2013, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected level in the national phonics check dipped from above average in 2012 to below average, they are currently making good progress. The school has put in additional support for the current Year 1 pupils, with a much higher proportion predicted to reach expected national levels. The availability of a good range of books throughout the school, as well as an online reading programme with an element of competition, inspires pupils to read regularly. Home reading is actively encouraged and parents are invited to come into school and read with their children every week. Pupils who have specific difficulties are given additional support.
- Pupils make good progress in their writing. In Nursery and Reception children are actively encouraged to write. For example, when a child went to the 'shop' to buy food, the teacher encouraged her first to write a shopping list. Across Key Stage 1, pupils have targets for improving their writing and they enjoy the opportunities to write in other subjects. For instance, in history, Year 2 pupils wrote an account of the Great Fire of London.
- Achievement in mathematics is good. A good variety of resources, including 'money' and computer programmes, and good teaching across the school support mathematical learning and problem solving well. Five children in the Nursery, for instance, worked out that they could transfer sand from one pit to another by conveying it through a pipe. More-able pupils do not always move on fast enough to apply their skills to solve more difficult problems.
- All groups of pupils, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, are well supported and make similar good progress to their peers. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- In 2013, the attainment of the few Year 2 pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium funding was the equivalent of about six weeks below their peers in reading and writing and three months below in mathematics, a narrower gap than in 2012. Their standards, however, were above those of eligible pupils nationally. This was a result of additional teaching support and programmes to develop confidence and social skills. The rates of progress that they are currently making across the school compared to other pupils is increasing so that gaps are continuing to narrow.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' expectations of behaviour and work are high. As a result, learning is purposeful and

pupils produce a good quantity of quality work.

- Classrooms are well organised and attractive. Displays are used well to celebrate pupils' achievements and to help them with their learning. Recently, the school introduced 'working walls' where pupils are encouraged by their teachers to record on sticky notes what they already know about a subject and what they would like to find out. Pupils therefore feel valued and this motivates them to want to find out more. As learning progresses they record their new knowledge and understanding and celebrate their achievements.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and teaching assistants provide a wide range of activities and resources both indoors and outdoors that stimulate children's curiosity greatly and encourage them to try new things. Adults observe the children's learning and adapt their planned activities so that all children are helped to make good progress. Throughout, adults talk to, question and challenge the children to try new things and to collaborate with each other. As a result, children learn many new things and develop their social and physical skills well.
- Teachers mostly use assessment information well to plan work that is well matched to pupils' varying abilities. Teachers and teaching assistants give clear and precise instructions and explanations so that pupils know what is expected of them. In some instances, however, when the most-able have completed their work and fully understood the topic being studied, they are not given harder work to challenge them to think more deeply. This limits them from making the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers use questioning well to improve pupils' ability to reason clearly and to develop their vocabulary. For example, in an outdoor science lesson, pupils were working in groups to explore nature. Teachers and teaching assistants continually reinforced the use of the word 'habitat' when talking about the places where insects live. When one group found some snails under a sand bag the teacher asked why they would live in a habitat that is hidden. One pupil immediately reflected that the snails probably want to stay safe from birds of prey.
- Books show that pupils have made good progress since the start of the year. The recently-introduced marking policy is intended to help pupils understand what they have done well and what needs improving. In some cases, however, the guidance for improvement is not specific and clear enough and so pupils do not correct their work and learn from their mistakes. In these instances, progress slows.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They provide effective support to pupils in one-to-one and small-group sessions as well as in class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school works well to foster good and harmonious relations. As a result, pupils get on well with each other. They say that they like their teachers and relationships with all adults are polite and respectful.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They arrive punctually to lessons and quickly settle down to work. They display an enthusiasm for learning and persevere with their work. They collaborate well when working in pairs and in groups. These positive attitudes help them to make good progress. On the odd occasion when teaching is uninspiring, some pupils become restless.

- From the start of the Reception Year and throughout the school, pupils wear their uniform with pride. They behave well around the school and take care of the environment. They eat lunch in an orderly fashion. Occasionally there is some boisterous behaviour in the small playground but pupils report that supervising adults quickly deal with any problems.
- Pupils value the opportunities offered to them to take responsibility, such as serving on the school council, or being lunchtime and assembly monitors.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children follow established routines, play and share well together and happily tidy up at the end of sessions.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and their parents confirm that pupils feel safe in school. Pupils know that if they are experiencing any difficulties or have any concerns they can approach an adult who will help them.
- Pupils at this school are at the early stages of understanding the various forms of bullying, including cyber bullying because they are so young. They know how to stay safe, for instance, when using the internet or crossing the road. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that when it occurs, it is dealt with promptly and effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably assisted by the new deputy headteacher, provides a clear steer for the school. All leaders, including the governing body, have ensured that the school continues to provide a good education for its pupils. Consequently, with their above average academic attainment, good behaviour and positive attitudes pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Through good systems of self-evaluation and improvement planning, all leaders, including governors, have begun to understand what they need to do to move the school to its next stage of development and to become outstanding.
- Senior leaders carry out frequent and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This is supported by strong performance management systems for teachers and other staff who are held to account for the progress of their pupils. Leaders give staff clear guidance on how to improve. Teachers welcome the sharp feedback and feel supported to improve by leaders and through a good training programme. The role of some subject leaders in checking the quality of teaching and how it impacts on pupils' learning is not yet well developed.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that all staff across the key stage work in unison and plan together for the needs of all children. As a result, children settle quickly, gain confidence and thrive in a happy and purposeful indoor and outdoor environment.
- Through the BCT partnership, senior and middle leaders, as well as other staff, have opportunities to learn from and contribute to best practice in both teaching and leadership across the schools. The headteacher and deputy headteacher deliver national leadership training programmes to leaders in these schools. Currently there are no participants from this school. In addition, as part of their work with the trust, the school trains beginner teachers on a School-Based Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programme.
- The curriculum is well planned to make learning engaging and fun. For instance, Year 1 is currently working on a theme of 'under the sea' which is being used to promote learning across

a number of subjects, including writing, reading and mathematics. Pupils excitedly told inspectors about the recent visit of a deep sea diver to the school and they are looking forward to visiting the seaside shortly. The curriculum also encourages pupils to develop good attitudes to learning, behaviour and safety.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through additional opportunities, such as visits to local places of interest to do bug hunting, visitors such as theatre companies, the 'smart' thinking programme where pupils discuss and consider moral dilemmas and an array of activities such as music, art, dance and drama.
- The school has used some of the new primary sports funding to acquire the services of external experts both to deliver sporting activities to the pupils and to train staff in the teaching of physical education. The additional opportunities have increased participation in sport so there are now two gym clubs and recently there was a good uptake during the holidays for the new fencing club. These additional opportunities and the many sporting clubs the school already offers ensure pupils' better physical well-being.
- The local authority knows the strengths of this good school and provides appropriate and effective support as necessary. This year, for example, they have helped the inclusion leader by supporting her with catering for the needs of the many additional statemented pupils and those with behavioural difficulties who have recently joined the school.
- The school works well with parents to help them support their children's learning, for instance, by running workshops on how early reading and mathematics are taught in school. Most parents who responded to Parent View, or who spoke to inspectors, were very positive about all aspects of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led by its experienced chair. Governors made it a key strategic priority to improve Nursery provision through the building of a new, well designed and appointed Nursery. Additionally, they appointed a deputy headteacher last year to add capacity to the senior leadership team. Governors check all aspects of the school with rigour, including the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They use an external consultant to verify progress information and the quality of teaching. As a result, they understand how the school's performance compares to that of all other schools. Recently, governors held a meeting with all staff to explain their roles and responsibilities. From this year, individual governors have been linked to classes and make termly visits, for example, to talk to staff and pupils, sit in on lessons and look at books. Governors are therefore well able to offer both support and challenge to school leaders. Finances are well managed. Governors know, for example, how the use of the pupil premium funding is closing gaps in achievement and how the school sports funding is broadening opportunities and increasing participation rates in sport-related activities. Governors use the headteacher's appraisal to set clear expectations for improved teaching and achievement and these expectations drive the performance management of teachers and other staff. Governors ensure that there is a clear link between pupils' achievement and teachers' pay progression. The school's safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements.

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	115039
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	431246

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Horspole
Headteacher	Stephanie Ireland
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2009
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