

Hare Street Community Primary School and Nursery

Little Gross Field, Harlow, Essex, CM19 4BU

Inspection dates

24–25 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders have maintained the school's strengths since the last inspection and successfully addressed its weaker areas. Teaching has improved due to a successful focus by teachers on what best helps pupils to learn and achievement has risen as a consequence.
- Standards improved to above average in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils, including those funded by the pupil premium, now make good progress.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and provide effective support for pupils. As a result, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress, especially at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. They enjoy strong relationships with all staff. They say they feel extremely safe and parents agree. This makes for a happy and cohesive learning community.
- Procedures for keeping pupils safe, and teaching them how to remain safe outside of school, are exemplary.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils show considerable respect and care towards each other. They get on well together regardless of their backgrounds.
- The school makes exceptional provision for pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their work or underachieving.
- Children in the Early Years make good progress so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Boys, including those who are the most able, do not achieve as well as girls, especially in writing at Key Stage 1.
- Occasionally, adults talk across one another in some Key Stage 1 classes, causing some pupils to be distracted. As a result, their progress slows.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 30 lessons or part-lessons. Five 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 and looked at written work from classes in Year 1 and 2 as well as in the Early Years Foundation Stage, much of this with the headteacher. Pupils' work in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 was also examined.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan and records on behaviour, safety and attendance. They also looked at information on individual pupils' progress and 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, a representative from the local authority, and the school's consultant adviser.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 33 responses to the online Parent View survey. Parents also submitted 13 comments using the Parent View website. Written comments from 44 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto , Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Caroline Stone	Additional Inspector
Helen Morrison	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average. They come from a wide range of backgrounds. An above-average proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils 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 pupils who have additional special educational needs support is average. The proportion of pupils supported through a statement of special educational needs is high.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club that are managed by the governing body.
- The school uses 'Aspire Academy' to support a small number of pupils through alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded the leadership team and has made significant changes to the outdoor environment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in writing, especially for boys, including the most able boys in Key Stage 1, so that gaps with the girls are narrowed, by making sure that:
 - work matches the capabilities and interests of all pupils
 - pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their writing
 - teachers check that pupils have understood the advice given to them in marking, and follow up anything they need to improve upon
 - all adults work together in all classes so that pupils are not distracted by too many adults speaking at the same time.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is well supported by the leadership team and an experienced group of governors. Teachers and teaching assistants on the whole work well together and support the school's ambitions to improve further. Staff morale is high as a consequence.
- Leaders, including governors, have begun to put in place ways of assessing pupils so that they can better track their progress. Teachers have a better understanding of what helps pupils to learn more quickly. This helps them gain an accurate picture of how well the school performs in comparison to national standards.
- Leaders have worked with an external consultant on improving teaching. This has led to much more consistency in the quality of teaching, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2. Teachers plan together well so that they can learn from the best teaching in the school.
- Teachers who have additional responsibilities make an effective contribution to improvements in the school. They check that teaching is improving and that assessments are accurate to gain a clear picture of performance in the areas for which they are responsible. Systems have been introduced to make sure that checks are made on the performance of all staff. This helps to ensure that they maintain high standards in their performance, and that pay awards are closely linked to the progress made by the pupils that they teach.
- The school has used some of the pupil premium funds so that an additional teacher can provide extra support. This has had a significant impact on the achievement of eligible pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Much work has been done to develop the new curriculum. This is based on the school's commitment to promoting values shared by the school community. Every chance is taken for pupils to learn about the wider society in which they live. Together with a wide range of visits and after-school clubs, the topics and themes make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of additional sports equipment and after-school clubs. The purchase of a multi-gym through the primary sports premium is helping pupils to appreciate the importance of healthy and active lifestyles.
- The local authority rightly regards the school as providing a good education, and so only provides limited support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are expertly led by the Chair of the Governing Body, who is experienced and has excellent first-hand knowledge of the school. Her leadership helps governors to support and challenge the school, and to have an accurate view of how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools. Governors reflect well on their own strengths and limitations in order to make the most of the skills they offer. Their strong commitment to equality of opportunity is reflected in the purposeful use made of the pupil premium, which is helping to narrow gaps in achievement. Governors ensure that support is given to pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable so they also achieve well. They check that only the best teaching is rewarded. They ensure that systems to keep pupils and staff safe are robust, and that other statutory duties are fulfilled.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show respect and care for each other. Many willingly take on extra responsibilities around the school, through the school council, helping younger pupils in the playground as play leaders, or acting as library monitors.

- The school is a harmonious community where pupils play and learn well together. Parents' views were summed up by the comment made by one, 'My child has flourished whilst attending Hare Street. She has a good relationship with her teachers and peers.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe because the school teaches them how to look after themselves. They are particularly vigilant about how to be safe when using computers or mobile phones. Parents agree that the school places a high priority on keeping pupils safe. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind are provided with additional support and care, and are extremely well looked after. As a result they achieve as well as their peers.
- Pupils have a well-informed understanding of bullying. They say that bullying is rare and they have every confidence that the school will help resolve any minor problems.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and look forward to lessons. This is reflected in their improved attendance, which is above the national average.
- Most spoken to and of those who responded to the Parent View survey are confident that their children behave well and are well looked after.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The school's focus on improving teaching has led to teaching which is consistently good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use humour well to engage pupils' interests. This was evident in a Year 4 class who were exploring the legend of the founding of Rome. Effective questioning by the teacher and helpful hints enabled pupils to recall the main characters from the story and the main elements of the narrative. The pupils' attention was rapt as the teacher used his knowledge of the legend to engage their interest. They enjoyed his sense of humour as he helped them explore the different characters and themes in the story.
- Teachers help pupils to recognise familiar words and use a range of ways to tackle new words. As a result, reading levels have improved. Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and to make the most of the school and local libraries. Pupils who find reading difficult are given the chance to read to the dog that is brought in for a weekly visit. Many say that this helps them focus on reading without feeling any stress. The volunteer who brings the dog helps the pupils with any unfamiliar words.
- Writing is usually taught well. Pupils are given opportunities to write in different styles in subjects other than English. They are taught the basics of grammar and punctuation. Pupils in Year 2, for example, were able to confidently use speech marks, and practised speaking in different voices to demonstrate how to write dialogue successfully.
- Teachers engage pupils in problem solving so that they can apply their mathematical skills in different situations. Pupils in Year 3, for instance, applied different methods to help them solve mathematical problems written in words rather than numbers. Effective questioning helped them to determine what the question was asking so that they could choose the most suitable method. This ensured that they successfully developed their mathematical language and skills.
- The most-able pupils are usually set work at the right level of challenge, particularly at Key Stage 2, so they are made to think carefully before moving on to the next piece of work. The high expectations set by all adults are helping these pupils to achieve the higher standards.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn well because they enjoy a rich and attractive classroom and outdoor area. Adults help them to have a go, explore and try out new skills. They develop the ability to concentrate and show resilience, and this prepares them well for the transition to Year 1.
- Pupils at risk of falling behind are well supported by a team of experienced and skilled teaching assistants, who ensure that pupils make up any work missed or help them learn new concepts with which they are struggling. The support is very effective in helping pupils to make up the ground lost so they are quickly

working with their classmates again. However, in some classes a small number of pupils are distracted by too many adults talking at the same time. This slows the progress of some pupils, especially boys.

- In Key Stage 1, teachers do not expect the best work from boys, including the most-able boys. Work is not always set at the right level and does not always capture their interest. Marking does not always make it clear what pupils need to do to improve their work. Teachers do not always check that pupils have understood their written comments or that boys have made the correct responses. As a result, some boys make less progress than girls.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen across the school. Progress is accelerating for all groups of pupils, and gaps in achievement are closing. In 2013, standards were broadly in line with the national averages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 1 achieved above the expected level in the screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Gaps in achievement for disadvantaged pupils widened between 2012 and 2013 in English and mathematics. In 2013, the gap in reading for pupils in Year 6 was around one year with their peers, and about eight months for pupils nationally. The gap in writing was around two years with both groups. In mathematics the gap was around 18 months for both groups.
- All of the gaps reported above improved markedly in 2014. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics improved to above average, with all pupils reaching at least the levels expected. The gap in attainment between pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium and others was negligible as their progress was accelerated. The work in pupils' books from across the school shows that such progress is now firmly embedded.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given intensive support. As a consequence, many make progress in line with their peers. Most are given one-to-one support and this helps them to acquire the skills and knowledge that others in the class also achieve.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced different ways to teach phonics. Pupils enjoy reading, are given many opportunities to read and are often set homework which encourages them to read. By the end of Year 6, they read widely and speak with confidence about their favourite authors.
- The most-able pupils achieve well and their progress is accelerating. Teachers usually set work which is at the right level for them, and they respond with enthusiasm to extra challenges. Sometimes the work fails to capture the interests of boys, so their progress slows, particularly in writing at Key Stage 1.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers. Their specific learning needs are assessed quickly so that support is provided at the right level.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding as in Key Stage 1 boys do not achieve as well as girls, especially in writing. Boys' achievement however compares well with national patterns, and in 2014 the gap with girls closed.

The early years provision is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills below those typical for their ages. The Early Years is organised so that children can mix and join together in some activities. As a result, the younger children settle quickly and make good progress.
- All children engage well in a rich and stimulating environment, including a large outdoor area which has a range of equipment. Children use this equipment and other resources to quickly gain confidence in their physical development, and also in their ability to communicate. Relationships with adults are strong, and

the children mix well across the different ethnic groups.

- The teaching of phonics is particularly effective so that children quickly learn to recognise familiar words. Activities are organised so that boys take an interest. For example, several boys focused well on the pirate ship, and in forming letters to help them think about the topic.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths within the Early Years and what can be improved. They have an accurate view of how well the children are doing. In 2014, the proportion of children making a good level of development was above the national average.

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	133255
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	448595

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	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Pailing
Headteacher	Timothy Voss
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2009
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