

Gosbecks Primary School

Owen Ward Close, Shrub End, Colchester, CO2 9DG

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- The headteacher, supported by the assistant headteacher and senior leaders, has instigated very significant changes to many aspects of the school. These have had a substantial impact in raising achievement for all groups of pupils.
- Regular tracking of how well pupils are doing shows that the majority of pupils are now making good and sometimes better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Rigorous checking of the quality of teaching and well-focused training opportunities, have helped staff improve their performance so that teaching is now good and has a positive impact on learning.
- Previous gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others have closed rapidly because of the effective additional help given to these pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also achieve well because of such well targeted support.
- Governors are very effective partners in leading and challenging the performance of the school. They are extremely supportive, pro-active and committed to further improvement.
- Relationships throughout the school community are excellent. Parents are pleased with improvements in the school and their children's progress. They and their children say that the school is a safe place.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and really enjoy the wide range of subjects they study. Pupils work very well together and are polite to all. Behaviour in class and around the school is good.
- Children learn very well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make at least good progress in all areas of their learning. They are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils are not consistently stretched by the work set or the questions asked so that they all reach the levels they are capable of.
- Not all targets set by the school are sufficiently ambitious to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, four of which were seen together with the headteacher or assistant headteacher. Inspectors observed pupils moving around the school, in the dining room and at break and lunchtimes, and in two assemblies. They listened to pupils read and examined work in pupils' books.
- Discussions were held with pupils, phase and subject leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at a range of documentation, including the school's data about the progress of pupils, leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, improvement plans, safeguarding policies, behaviour and bullying incident logs, and records relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors took account of the 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to a large number of parents.
- Inspectors also considered 38 questionnaires completed by staff working at the school.

Inspection team

Nichola Perry, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Keelan	Additional Inspector
Chris Ingate	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Gosbecks Primary School is larger than the average-sized school.
- Most pupils are White British. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding given to schools for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- 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?

- Accelerate further pupils' rate of progress and raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - reviewing and updating school targets more regularly so that they take account of pupils' current progress and attainment and challenge everyone to achieve even more
 - routinely setting work in lessons which is more demanding, particularly for the most-able pupils, so that they are not being held back by doing what they can already do
 - ensuring that questions asked by staff are sufficiently probing and enable pupils to think more deeply about their own responses and the subjects being discussed.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's skilful and aspirational leadership has resulted in rapid improvement. Everyone involved with the school, including governors, parents and the pupils themselves, is fully committed to the headteacher's vision for the school. The school's mantra of 'being the best you can be' can be seen and heard in all aspects of school life.
- All leaders ensure that those for whom they are responsible respond positively and effectively to initiatives for improvement. Regular and rigorous checking of staff performance against the *Teachers' Standards* and pupils' progress has led to considerably improved teaching. All staff are quick to acknowledge how wide-ranging training opportunities provided have helped them to improve their own practice.
- Staff and governors understand very well the school's assessment procedures and ensure that parents and pupils themselves know how well each pupil is doing. The school has a clear way forward for future assessment, which places increased focus on the performance of higher attainers. Current targets have successfully raised achievement to good, but are not sufficiently ambitious to ensure that everyone, including the most-able pupils, makes outstanding progress. However, the school's self evaluation is highly accurate, which has contributed strongly to moving the school on rapidly since its last inspection.
- Strong emphasis is placed on teaching English and mathematics. Progress in these subjects has been further strengthened by the effective ways in which the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is woven into all the subjects. These activities make the learning both interesting and motivating for all pupils. This is particularly the case in writing, where pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their learning.
- There is a good emphasis through subjects and teaching on ensuring that pupils develop a keen spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn about their own heritage and that of others. A focus on living in modern Britain is given greater priority through the revised and rich curriculum. There are particular strengths in pupils' social and moral development. This is because all adults model such attributes very effectively so that pupils have first-hand examples of how to conduct themselves.
- Pupils derive great benefit and enjoyment from a range of additional activities, including those funded through the sport premium funding, such as 'boot camp' or dance sessions, so that their skills, health and well-being are being well promoted. The physical education specialist employed by the school using the additional sports funding provides weekly sessions for all classes. This is benefiting pupils and helping to improve class teachers' knowledge and skills.
- Additional, focused sessions have been effective in raising achievement for disadvantaged pupils, those who find learning difficult or those who have special educational needs, and have ensured these pupils achieve as well as others. Leaders' more recent focus on ensuring that the most-able pupils reach the highest levels they can, including those entitled to the additional funding, is already paying off. More pupils for example reached the higher levels in mathematics in 2014. The appointment of a learning mentor has been very successful in improving disadvantaged pupils' attendance so that they can learn as well as others.
- The local authority has provided an appropriate level of support for this previously requiring improvement school so that it now has good capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is now an effective partner in the leadership of the school. Governors meet very regularly, have well-developed links with senior leaders and see at first hand the work of the school. They understand published information about pupils' progress and attainment and are kept well informed about any variations on this. They rigorously challenge leaders about these and the performance of the school. Governors have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and the areas

that still need improvement if they are to become an outstanding school.

- Governors manage the performance of the headteacher effectively and ensure that pay and promotion are rigorously linked to teachers' effectiveness. They have fully reviewed their structure and performance and have undertaken a wide range of additional training to ensure better understanding of their responsibilities, practice and performance.
- Governors ensure that resources are well spent and are fully involved in decisions regarding additional sport funding and the pupil premium funding, and analysing their impact on pupils' learning and progress. They also ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and exclusions are now rare. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons, around the school, in the dining room, assembly and outside. They talk about their school with pride and say they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is now consistently above average. Pupils are well motivated by stimulating lessons and are keen to learn. Only a few pupils, when they find the work too easy, lose their concentration in lessons. Pupils say that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical.
- The school focuses very strongly on developing good social and moral values from the Reception classes upwards so that pupils learn well how to be polite to each other and to adults. Pupils are tolerant and accepting of difference and recognise that some pupils have difficulties which cause them to struggle with their learning or behaviour. Pupils work very well together in pairs or small groups. The school is calm and pupils are able to learn without disruption.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about learning and say they enjoy the different subjects and the range of activities provided. They particularly enjoy it when their teachers set them harder work because they are keen to achieve well. Pupils understand well how they are progressing and how to improve further. Pupils enjoy additional activities; for example, those funded through the sport funding, and understand the benefits of such activities to their health and well-being.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school is a safe environment and much attention is paid to ensuring that pupils are kept safe and well cared-for in all aspects of their learning and development. Pupils have a good understanding of risk and say they feel safe. The many parents spoken to during the inspection and the large majority who completed the Parent View questionnaire also feel that their children are safe and are pleased with what the school provides for them.
- Pupils say that although bullying has happened in the past, it is now rare and that staff always listen to them. Pupils show good understanding that bullying may take many forms, such as internet bullying or because of gender, faith or other differences and demonstrate a ready tolerance and respect for individual differences and diversity. Pupils value the playground charter and the role of the playground ambassadors in helping younger pupils play together and diffusing any conflict which may arise.
- The school provides extremely well for pupils with a wide range of behavioural, learning and health needs. Leaders, teachers and the learning mentor work very closely with parents and this is highly valued by all concerned. The school makes good use of a wide range of external agencies and partners to ensure best possible advice and support for pupils and their parents. This approach is having a very positive effect, helping pupils, some of whom have very significant emotional difficulties, to think about their feelings and improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Significant improvement in all aspects of teaching has led to rapid improvement in the rate of progress for pupils whatever their starting points or needs. The school has been especially successful in improving pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils' self-esteem is high because they now believe that they can achieve well. In the Reception classes children quickly become confident learners because they are given many opportunities to make choices about their own learning.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements. They speak enthusiastically about how they have improved. They

value teachers' comments about their work and act upon what their teachers are saying. Learning is reinforced effectively when pupils are involved in assessing their own and each others' work, which is helping them to develop a more critical eye about their own and their classmates' progress.

- Teachers have a secure understanding of assessment and generally use the results well in their planning. Regular meetings with phase and senior leaders ensure that each pupil's progress is constantly tracked so that no-one is allowed to fall behind. Additional sessions are rapidly put in place to help any pupil who is seen to be struggling so that they can learn as well as others. The school has been successful in the use of additional funding to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils so that they become confident and successful learners. Support staff are skilled in prompting and encouraging pupils so that they are not held back as a result of their special educational needs or circumstances.
- The most-able pupils have made rapid progress since the previous inspection. This is because assessment is now accurate and activities are more interesting and most provide a greater level of challenge. Pupils recognise that the work set is now harder and say that they greatly enjoy it. However, some pupils spoken to would welcome greater challenge. This is borne out in some lessons and in pupils' books, where planned work does not always recognise that these pupils are increasingly working at a higher level than in the past.
- Pupils respond well to teachers' questioning which now provides an increased level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers are excellent advocates in helping pupils to become brave in their responses; for example, when they model how to cope when seeking ways of spelling a tricky word, or simply making a mistake. As a result, pupils have become confident speakers because they are not fearful of 'being wrong'. Teachers are starting to probe pupils' answers further, particularly those of the most-able pupils, by expecting more detailed responses and explanations. This is not yet routinely happening across the school.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points, which are generally below those typical for their age. Children in the Reception classes make good progress because they are consistently well-taught. Proportions of pupils reaching expected levels for their age in all three subjects are continuing to rise, as are those exceeding expected levels. This is because the range of activities, the accuracy of assessment and teachers' expectations have all risen significantly since the previous inspection, particularly in mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. School data and assessments, work seen in pupils' books, and observations confirm that progress is now good in all year groups, leading to a continuing upward trend in attainment. There was a dip in attainment and progress for Year 6, particularly in mathematics, in 2013 because a few underperformed in the tests, despite higher achievement earlier. However, the attainment and progress for pupils in the 2014 national assessments has improved in all three subjects and achievement for all other year groups in the school reflects this too.
- Pupils are developing their reading skills well. In 2013 too few pupils reached the required standard in the Year 1 phonics assessment. However, phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) and guided reading are now taught and managed effectively so that Year 1 pupils in 2014 exceeded national expectations. School assessments show that current Year 1 pupils are on track to achieve equally well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good use of their growing knowledge of phonics to help them interpret unfamiliar words and understand text so that attainment in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 is continuing to rise.
- Older pupils make use of a good range of strategies to improve their reading. Pupils read regularly and are developing an enjoyment of reading for both learning and leisure. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have a good level of expertise and are highly focused on ensuring pupils learn well and develop into confident, accurate and fluent readers.

- The school has worked effectively to develop good provision and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Close tracking of pupils' progress with additional small-group or one-to-one tuition, plus well-focused support from additional adults in lessons, is contributing well to closing the gap between these pupils and their classmates. School assessment data show that a higher proportion of current pupils are on track to exceed expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the key stage.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to help close the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils by providing a range of additional sessions and one-to-one tuition for eligible pupils. However, in 2013, in reading and mathematics they were around five terms behind their classmates and they were two terms behind them in writing. The test results in 2014, the data the school holds about pupils currently in the school and lesson observations show that eligible pupils now are making much better progress and are on track to reach similar standards to their classmates in all three subjects by the end of Year 6.

The early years provision

is good

- Effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children get off to a good start to their education. Children make at least good progress in acquiring basic skills in all areas of learning so that proportions reaching a good level of development, typically expected for children of this age, are increasing. Effective transfer arrangements ensure that learning in Year 1 builds on the good learning and progress children make in the Reception classes, for example, as a result of more effective and systematic teaching of phonics.
- Children settle quickly and are happy because they are given varied and interesting activities to do which take good account of their interests and excite their curiosity. Robust and accurate assessments are used effectively to plan activities which provide a good level of challenge. Learning journals are beautifully maintained and demonstrate wide-ranging evidence of children's achievement. Parents value these highly, as well as the communication with the staff, and are delighted with what the school is providing for their children.
- Children learn in a bright and motivating environment with access to a vibrant outside learning area. Resources for learning inside and outside are excellent, which means that children learn equally well in either area. The learning areas are safe and enable children to be adventurous in their play activities such as when they are racing to build the highest wall or watching the displacement of water when adding different sized objects to the container. Behaviour is excellent and children co-operate extremely well together, with some good examples of sharing seen in lessons.
- Adults support, encourage and challenge children very effectively and know when to stand back so as to allow them to develop into confident learners who are able to work on their own and discover things for themselves. Children who are less sure of themselves or who find learning difficult are helped to join in with activities so that they can learn equally well.

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	114742
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	442017

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil McCusker
Headteacher	Jayne Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2012
Telephone number	01206 575407
Fax number	01206 369856
Email address	admin@gosbecks.essex.sch.uk

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