

Hamilton Primary School

Constantine Road, Colchester, CO3 3GB

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress because of excellent teaching, and are extremely well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' attainment in all subjects at the end of Year 6 has been significantly above average for the last five years. The 2014 results were particularly high in mathematics, reading, writing and English grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make outstanding overall progress.
- Engaging topics and teachers' very good subject knowledge promote pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers promote pupils' literacy skills particularly well, and reinforce them in different subjects.
- Pupils' work is thoroughly marked with clear guidance about how to make it even better. Occasionally pupils do not follow the advice given.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They say they are proud of their school and feel very safe in it, and that someone is always available to help them. Their parents agree.
- High attendance levels testify to pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- The headteacher, governors and all staff have focused successfully on keeping achievement and teaching at the highest levels.
- Subject leaders, together with governors, monitor and evaluate work in their areas very effectively.
- Governors bring a wide range of helpful skills and experience to their work. They know the school in depth, and use this knowledge very successfully to drive improvements.
- The school is introducing a new and even better curriculum, with an emphasis on exciting topics and a spirit of enquiry.
- The school promotes all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors collected evidence about teaching and learning by observing 20 lessons, looking at pupils’ work and discussing it with them to check on their understanding and attitudes to learning. They also looked at pupils’ work with senior and subject leaders. Four of the lessons seen were observed together with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors also observed a variety of activities to support individuals and small groups of pupils, and listened to two groups of pupils reading. They attended two assemblies.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, staff and two groups of pupils.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of the 80 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to an inspection questionnaire from 29 staff. They also considered the school’s own surveys of the views of parents and pupils, and spoke to parents in the playground.
- The inspectors looked at the school’s evaluation of its own work and resulting development plan, data on pupils’ attainment and progress, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, a wide range of policies and procedures, the arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils, and much additional material provided by the school.

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sarah Warboys	Additional Inspector
Paul Abeledo	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The early years provision consists of two full-time Reception classes.
- The school is part of a local cluster of six primary, junior and infant schools which share good practice and some training opportunities.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs, at around 6%, is below the national average.
- The large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, at around 7%, is below the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils routinely respond to the guidance given by teachers in marking, in order to improve their attainment and progress even further.
- Promote numeracy across the curriculum at least as effectively as literacy.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's very clear, determined leadership lies behind the ongoing drive to improve teaching and achievement and maintain very high standards. Working effectively with the senior leadership team, staff and governors, he has set the bar for what he expects pupils in the school to achieve. He has communicated those aspirations effectively so that all staff share his goals. Consequently, attainment is high, pupils' progress is outstanding and the school has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement.
- Senior leaders have created a climate in which subject leaders can lead developments in their subject areas. They carry out extensive checks on teaching, progress and pupils' classroom work. They benefit from regular training to update their skills and understanding, and work alongside governors to implement and assess new approaches.
- The wide-ranging curriculum is adapted to match the interests and abilities of all groups of pupils. This ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and to thrive. Pupils speak very positively about the range of visits, visitors and theme days. High-quality displays help to inspire pupils' work. The curriculum promotes excellence in areas like sport and music. Careful guidance ensures that pupils are well informed when they enter the school and as they move on to the next stage of their education.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to use their imagination and expand their horizons, for example through visits to a Hindu temple, and hearing about Chinese New Year from Chinese parents. The school's code of conduct is based on the fundamental values which underpin British society and has a clear focus on tackling discrimination of any kind. It helps pupils to understand the world around them through a clear set of moral and social values. These core values help to ensure that pupils' learning, behaviour and safety are outstanding.
- Leaders use the national primary school sports funding very well to improve pupils' fitness and sporting skills, and to encourage teamwork through sport. Pupils' success in many competitions demonstrates the high aspirations they have to become fit, healthy, high-achieving sportsmen and women. Use of the funding is regularly reviewed to provide more activities for all groups of pupils.
- The performance of staff is continually and rigorously monitored to ensure that pupils make rapid progress and that teachers assess and develop their own skills. Priorities are carefully linked to the school's development plan. Staff promotion up the pay scales is not automatic, and has to be earned.
- Links with the local authority, which offers help and support whenever needed, are very good. The school is used by the local authority to promote and demonstrate best practice in classroom and management skills to other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is outstanding. Governors bring a wide range of useful skills and experience to their roles. They review those skills continually to ensure that their work covers all areas of what the school provides for its pupils. For example, they are fully trained in safeguarding and safer recruitment to ensure that related procedures are highly effective and meet all national requirements.
 - Governors use their very well developed understanding of performance data, together with detailed reports from senior staff, to challenge leaders about the attainment and the progress of different groups of pupils. As one said, 'We are not shy in asking questions.' Governors know about the quality of teaching through visits, interaction with parents and pupils, and paired monitoring with staff. This helps them to ensure that any underperformance is quickly addressed and good teaching rewarded.
 - Pupil premium spending is monitored carefully and adjusted whenever necessary. Governors get a detailed breakdown of the individual progress and results of disadvantaged pupils, which is another indication of the school's determination to provide equal opportunities for all its pupils.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They behave exceptionally well when at play, at lunch and as they move about the school. They have highly positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' response to the school's code of conduct is exemplary. Pupils' pride in the school is shown by their smart appearance in their uniform, their readiness to promote the school and its values, and their courtesy to visitors and staff alike.
- Very strong personal, social and health education and well-planned assemblies help pupils to understand how they are expected to behave. This results in an ethos of mutual respect and tolerance in a school which has just celebrated its centenary of promoting these traditional British values.
- Staff make sure that any rare incidents of poor behaviour are followed up and dealt with quickly. Very occasional inappropriate behaviour in lessons is addressed effectively, for example with a reminder not to spoil learning for other pupils.
- Attendance is exceptionally high. There is no difference in the attendance of different groups of pupils. Pupils are punctual. The school deals very quickly with any concerns about attendance so that pupils' learning is not interrupted in any way.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe, and the very large majority of parents say they agree. Child protection procedures are followed rigorously. The school takes any issues which arise very seriously. For example, security on entry to the school premises was carefully and thoroughly monitored before deciding on a new school gate.
- Staff carry out comprehensive risk assessments and review them regularly to ensure that children are protected. Visitors are carefully monitored and staff are comprehensively trained in safeguarding.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They understand the different forms that bullying may take, such as name-calling and cyber-bullying, but say they feel safe because 'people really care about you'. This care for each other was also evident on many occasions during the inspection in the way that pupils looked out for each other's welfare and were ready to help others.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding in all key stages, and this leads to pupils' outstanding overall achievement. Teachers' extremely good subject knowledge, probing questions, continual checks on pupils' understanding and engaging presentation of topics like the history of toys ensure that pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and hold regular progress meetings. Appropriate training is readily available for teachers and support staff, and through sharing of best practice with local schools, to update and improve the classroom skills of the staff. Consequently, teaching is consistently outstanding across a wide range of subjects including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Reading is taught extremely well. Pupils have access to a wide range of reading materials and are eager, capable readers who continually want to read more. As one said with great delight, 'I'll be a free reader soon!' Pupils read regularly at school and are supported well in the development of reading skills by parents and carers at home.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. Their needs are diagnosed quickly and their individual academic targets are continually modified to ensure that both support and challenge are having the desired impact. Support staff know the pupils well and skilfully encourage their

efforts without doing too much work for them.

- More-able pupils make outstanding progress because teachers encourage them to take their interests forward and to think about the broader implications of what they are discussing or writing about. For example, in a Year 4 class, discussion of the recent probe visit to a comet led pupils to consider a broad range of questions such as what incredible things they could do, the purpose of gravity and what emotions landing on a comet might stir up.
- Staff work very effectively to ensure that reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills are taught well. Links are made across different subjects to reinforce literacy, as seen in a Year 2 lesson which linked healthy eating with art and personal choices about what we eat. Leaders are aware that mathematical skills are not reinforced to the same depth as literacy skills in other subjects.
- Pupils take pride in their work and ensure that it is always neatly presented. Teachers mark books regularly, paying close attention to spelling and punctuation as well as indicating how the work could be improved. However, pupils do not always respond to the detailed marking so that errors are eliminated and progress is even more rapid.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment is high and their progress is outstanding as they move through the school. This is being maintained year on year.
- The majority of children enter the Reception classes with skills and understanding in line with those typical for their age. Skills in communication and language are slightly less developed than other areas. Children make rapid progress and enter Year 1 with levels above those expected for their age.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Reading is slightly stronger than writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1, but all are well above average. Current school data indicate that the present high levels of attainment are continuing.
- Year 1 phonics screening test results are above the national average. A small number of pupils do not reach expected levels and retake the test in Year 2. The majority then pass the test and all make at least good progress from their original starting points.
- Attainment has been high for a long time in Key Stage 2. Standards in mathematics are slightly higher than in reading and writing although all skills, including grammar, spelling and punctuation, are very well developed. The school is building on its work in mathematics by looking at how to further develop practical mathematical skills across the curriculum. All groups of pupils have regular opportunities to read and write.
- The most able pupils achieved outstanding results in 2014. They reach the very highest levels because the school raises its expectations of pupils continually as soon as they reach their original targets. All groups of pupils want to do well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good, and frequently outstanding, progress. This leads to gaps with other groups being closed by the time they leave Key Stage 2 due to work on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. Good links with specialists in this field and staff training mean that pupils' needs are very well met. The school provides extra tuition for all pupils whenever appropriate.
- 'Year ahead' meetings ensure that parents and pupils understand what is expected in the next year of study. This helps to ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress because their needs are identified quickly and they are supported effectively. The disadvantaged pupils

who left Year 6 in 2014 were ahead of others in the school by on average a term in reading and mathematics, and half a term in writing. They were three terms ahead of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, and about half a term ahead in writing.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make outstanding progress in Reception. Most reach a good level of development in all areas of learning, and about a third exceed the levels expected nationally for their age. Disadvantaged and disabled children and those who have special educational needs all make rapid progress. As a result, children enter Year 1 with knowledge and skills that are above average, extremely well prepared academically, socially and emotionally.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Relative weaknesses in communication, language, reading and writing are addressed quickly because staff carry out detailed assessments that pinpoint children's needs and skills. Adults organise many activities for children to practise their skills. The area is very well resourced, colourful and stimulating. It supports children's development extremely well.
- Adults actively promote good behaviour. Children respond extremely well to careful guidance, which ensures that they are kept safe. Close links with pre-school settings and with parents and carers ensure children settle quickly to school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed extremely well. Staff analyse information on what children know and can do thoroughly and meticulously to quickly identify and address any gaps in learning. Consequently, children achieve very well and remain engaged by the many activities on offer.

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	114706
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	449402

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sonali Watson
Headteacher	Clive Reynolds
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2008
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