

Stanford-Le-Hope Primary School

Copland Road, Stanford-le-Hope, SS17 0DF

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement		3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement		3
Early years provision	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards in mathematics and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling were low at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- Although standards are now rising and some pupils are making good progress, particularly in Key Stage 1, progress in mathematics remains slower than in reading or writing in Key Stage 2.
- Poorly-formed handwriting affects the progress of some pupils and the overall presentation and quality of their work.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not always provide lesson activities that sufficiently challenge the full range of pupils, including the most able.
- Although some marking of pupils' work is thorough, it does not always help to raise standards across the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by extra funding are making better progress this year, but not yet enough to catch up with their classmates, or other pupils nationally, in English and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership has improved significantly since the academy opened. Expertise from within the academy trust has given leaders greater capacity to improve teaching and learning.
- The visually impaired pupils receive good support and achieve well.
- The best teaching for any age group is in the early years. Children make good progress, particularly in developing their language and literacy skills.
- The teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) has improved. This is contributing to better progress in reading.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning, feel safe and behave well.
- The governors are well informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, and are actively challenging the school's leaders to accelerate the rate of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 20 lessons, four of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils’ written work for the current school year. They listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the vice-chair of the local governing body and two other governors, the chief executive officer and the primary consultant of the academy trust, the Director of Children’s Services at Thurrock Council and the school’s senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 42 responses to the staff questionnaire, the 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and a letter from a parent. They also took account of a survey of parents’ views conducted recently by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered records of local governing body meetings and those relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to check pupils’ progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clare Fletcher

Additional Inspector

Joanna Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stanford-le-Hope Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. There are a few pupils from the Traveller community.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is close to the national average. This is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in care.
- 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.
- In the early years, children of Nursery age attend only in the morning. Children in Reception all attend full time.
- The school hosts specially resourced provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the form of provision for visually-impaired pupils of primary age. Most of these pupils come from Thurrock. Six of the designated seven places are currently filled.
- Six Nursery places are reserved for children with complex learning and behavioural needs who are placed at the school on an observation and assessment basis. They are subsequently directed to schools that are best placed to meet their current needs. None of these places have been taken up in the present school year.
- Stanford-le-Hope Primary School became a sponsor-led academy on 1 June 2013, part of the St Clere's Co-Operative Academy Trust. This group consists of one secondary school and three schools with primary-aged children, all located in Thurrock. Each school has a local governing body, which is, in turn, represented on the board of directors of the academy trust. The academy trust's chief executive officer oversees all four schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - showing consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve by setting challenging work for all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, and making sure that they complete it
 - insisting that pupils' written work, including their handwriting, is presented to a consistently high standard
 - extending the high-quality marking evident in some classes across the school
 - giving pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in different subjects
 - giving disadvantaged pupils the extra help they need, to ensure that that the gap in attainment with other pupils in school and nationally is narrowed further.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be further improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- A strong and effective leadership structure has been established since the school became an academy. The school's capacity for improvement has increased significantly with ready access to a substantial pool of expertise across the family of schools. Consequently, the pace of change has accelerated and the school now responds to weaknesses more rapidly and to greater effect. The school's plans for improvement are driving more rapid progress, although they have not yet had a full impact upon some aspects of teaching or pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders promote positive attitudes and strong values. The school's vision and core values permeate all its work and its interactions with parents and other professionals. This contributes to the school's high expectations of pupils' behaviour and sets similarly high aspirations for teaching and learning.
- Key subject leaders such as those in charge of English and mathematics have an accurate overview of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects and are closely involved in monitoring and supporting their colleagues. They understand their responsibility to drive improvement. The formation of a group to focus on improving teaching and learning and to secure good practice is having a positive impact. Raised expectations of all staff have helped to sustain the current brisk momentum of improvement. Leaders analyse data on pupils' performance thoroughly so they have access to detailed information.
- The monitoring of teaching and other aspects of the school's work, both by the school's leaders and staff from the wider academy family, is increasingly effective. Although some weaker aspects have not yet been fully addressed, improvements have been achieved in the overall pace of pupils' learning and, in some classes, the quality of work in pupils' books. Leaders have securely established procedures for setting targets to improve teachers' practice.
- The school has prepared well for the implementation of the new National Curriculum. It has chosen to use new themes and topics to incorporate all the expected subjects. The school has maintained its existing assessment system for pupils in Years 2 and 6 to provide detailed information about pupils' progress. In the other year groups it is trying out a modified system of assessment. The school intends to review the effectiveness of the new approach by the end of the year.
- Leaders evaluate the impact of pupil premium expenditure on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in detail. As a result eligible pupils are making better progress this year, but not yet catching up with their classmates.
- Senior leaders' view of the school's effectiveness is accurate, and they are very clear about where improvement is needed. The school improvement plan is comprehensive in its range of initiatives and challenging in the timescales for action. Many actions have been achieved already, and although they have not yet had a full impact on the quality of teaching or achievement the school is clearly heading in the right direction.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used well to improve staff training and to provide sports clubs. Additional specialist staff have been engaged. Significantly more pupils are now involved in clubs and competitions. Sport, including competitive games, has a much higher profile than in the past.
- The school has welcomed the additional expertise available through the academy trust. This has enabled leaders to improve many aspects of its work, including their own skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well. Their multicultural awareness has not, in the past, been such a strong element. British values are emphasised effectively through, for example, teaching pupils about local history and the British judicial system. As a result, pupils come to understand their rights and responsibilities as British citizens. Governors have been active in establishing workshops and other activities to build parental understanding of British values, in a climate of tolerance. All these

activities are preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain.

- The school endeavours to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- The school works hard to establish good links with parents, providing opportunities for them to learn about their children's education. Links with other schools allow teachers to share good practice.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements. They are well established and effective. All staff are trained to the expected levels.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good. New members with relevant skills in education, management and finance have been recruited to the local governing body since the school became an academy. All governors are now better informed about the school's work and the pace of improvement. They are closely involved in school improvement, monitor progress carefully and hold leaders to account more fully.
- Governors are firmly focused on one key aim: improving achievement through securing the best quality teaching. They evaluate the school's performance in relation to schools nationally and have a good awareness of the quality of teaching. They have a good understanding of data about the performance of groups of pupils and make sure the management of teachers' performance is effective and staff pay increases are closely linked to pupils' achievement. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance.
- Governors are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. The local governing body, together with senior leaders, ensures that all statutory duties are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, particularly where the teaching is lively, challenging and engaging. Pupils take on jobs around the school and this gives them a strong sense of taking responsibility.
- The behaviour observed during the inspection was impeccable. The school's records show that there are occasional behavioural incidents, and a small number of pupils have difficulty in controlling their own behaviour. This is sometimes troubling for other pupils. However, the school uses well-established systems, supported by well-trained staff, to deal with such incidents. Exclusions are rare.
- Attendance has improved steadily and is now broadly average. Effective systems ensure that pupils attend frequently. The education welfare office is resourceful in locating absent pupils and ensuring that their attendance improves.
- Most pupils take a pride in what they are doing. However, their written work indicates that their enthusiasm sometimes wanes and in such cases the quality of their work deteriorates.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site and premises are secure, and both staff and pupils are protected by thorough risk assessments. Health and safety review procedures are also thorough. Staff are fully checked prior to appointment.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have considerable confidence in the adults who look after them. They are well informed about road safety and are aware of the need to be alert when on their own.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils are equipped to keep themselves safe. Staff ensure that pupils are vigilant about spotting the dangers of internet abuse and cyber-bullying.

- Assemblies and personal, social and health education sessions promote pupils' understanding of bullying well. Pupils are aware that bullying may take different forms. A few pupils feel that minor issues, including name-calling, do occur from time to time, but say that staff always respond if pupils feel concerned.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers in some year groups do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This affects the rate of pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics. Sometimes, teachers do not take sufficient account of the full range of pupils or provide sufficient challenge for the most able. The pace of lessons is occasionally slow, and in such cases pupils have insufficient time to complete their work.
- Pupils' written work is not always produced to a high standard. While there are examples of high-quality written work, particularly in Years 5 and 6, this is not consistent across the school.
- The school has effective systems to check pupils' progress and provide additional support where it is needed. However, these are not consistently implemented across the school.
- Pupils' work, particularly in writing and mathematics, is marked thoroughly in some classes, but less comprehensively in others. Older pupils often respond enthusiastically and at length to the guidance teachers provide.
- The pace of learning has improved in the last four terms. More effective teaching of phonics and early reading skills has supported better progress overall for the younger pupils. This is providing a much more secure foundation for later learning. However, some older pupils did not benefit from these recent improvements and still need to catch up rapidly in Years 5 and 6. In mathematics, pupils have not had a full range of challenging opportunities to sharpen their skills by solving problems in different subjects.
- With effective leadership, the support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils has improved, so that these pupils now make similar progress to their classmates. Overall, learning support staff are well deployed and effective in supporting learning. Pupils who have visual impairment achieve well because of the particularly good teaching and support they receive.
- Pupils make better progress when work is challenging. Pupils in Year 2 successfully extended their knowledge of food chains in science. The teacher introduced new information about herbivores and carnivores at regular intervals to keep pupils' enthusiasm and interest alive. Pupils devised their own food chains, using technical vocabulary appropriately. The pace of learning was quick, helped by good levels of challenge for different groups of pupils.
- Homework contributes well to pupils' learning. Teachers set tasks and mark them regularly.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2014 was below average overall, but low in mathematics and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Progress in mathematics was significantly weaker than in reading or, particularly, writing. Although attainment in mathematics in Year 6 is on track to be higher in 2015, pupils' progress in mathematics in the current year remains slower than in reading or writing.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils requires improvement. In 2014, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged Year 6 pupils and others in the school was around five terms in writing, four terms in mathematics and three terms in reading. They were six terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and between three and four terms behind in reading and writing. The figures were affected to some extent by the late arrival of several eligible pupils to Year 6 with relatively low prior attainment. School data show that some disadvantaged pupils are currently making more rapid progress than the others, particularly in Key Stage 1. Consequently the gaps in attainment are narrowing, but have not yet closed enough in Key Stage 2.

- Too many pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4, have poorly formed handwriting. This has a significant impact upon the overall quality of their work and is not improving rapidly enough.
- Raised expectations and a greater focus upon the systematic development of basic literacy skills, particularly reading, resulted in good progress and attainment in the early years in 2014. This year, children are continuing to achieve well.
- Improvements in the teaching of phonics in the early years have underpinned better outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in 2014 was above the latest national average. Greater priority is now given to the teaching of reading. Younger pupils mostly have secure skills in reading.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are on track to attain broadly average standards in 2015. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also making at least the progress expected. However, the rate of progress is generally more rapid in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. Current Year 6 pupils are already attaining at higher levels than in the last school year. This suggests that standards in 2015 are likely to be broadly average, with more consistently good progress, particularly in writing.
- The most able pupils are now being challenged more effectively than they were. Even so, their progress requires further improvement as they are not always stretched enough, particularly in mathematics.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified. They mostly receive appropriate support. In general, they make broadly similar progress to that of other pupils. However, the visually impaired pupils are better supported and make good progress.
- The achievement of the few Traveller pupils is variable. Some attend regularly and are working at least at the levels expected. Others have more erratic attendance and weaker basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Good leadership of the provision for pupils with visual impairment ensures that its work is closely monitored and evaluated. Almost all of the pupils involved achieve well, with some working at levels above those expected for their age. Achievement is sometimes adversely affected because pupils' needs are complex, requiring frequent medical appointments. This also affects their overall levels of attendance.

The early years provision is good

- The early years provision has improved more rapidly than the rest of the school. More effective teaching, particularly of language skills, together with sustained good leadership and management, have ensured that children make better progress. On leaving Reception, they are well prepared for entry to Year 1. By 2014, the proportion of children reaching standards typical for their age had improved to above average.
- Most children enter Nursery with skill levels below those typical for their age. Staff focus particularly on promoting children's personal, social, communication and language skills. This work is sustained when children enter Reception. Children, including those who have special educational needs, are challenged to achieve well.
- Recent whole-school initiatives to improve the teaching of reading have been particularly effective. Children now acquire a secure knowledge of sounds and letters and basic skills in reading and writing. Although less extensive, they also have regular opportunities to undertake practical mathematical activities.
- The early years is a stimulating environment to learn in and children are generally engaged well by the activities provided. These support their growing knowledge of the world and their personal development well. Children have positive attitudes to learning. They select resources with confidence and sustain concentration well.
- Staff ensure that children behave well, although noise levels occasionally escalate when children are not

engaged in directed or supervised activities. They are safe and well looked after. The school makes every effort to engage with parents and encourages their involvement in their children's learning.

- Staff know individual children well. Detailed checks and regular observations provide good information about children's progress. These are recorded in thorough portfolios of evidence for each child.

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	139566
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	449862

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dawn Mummery
Headteacher	Linda Moore
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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