

Thorpe Greenways Junior School

Greenways, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 3BS

Inspection dates	15–16 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal and senior leaders share a crystal-clear vision for school improvement. All their energy and enthusiasm is focused on making sure pupils do their best. As a result, pupil outcomes have improved and are continuing to improve.
- Teachers are wholly committed to improving their teaching and pupils' learning. The good-quality work in pupils' books in all subjects shows the impact of good teaching and assessment across the school.
- Governors are highly effective and say that the review of governance that followed the last inspection was a 'real wake-up call.' They scrutinise the work of the school rigorously, making sure money is spent wisely and has an impact on improving pupil outcomes.
- Most parents only have good things to say about the school. 'I am extremely impressed with the education my children receive. I have seen a huge improvement since the last inspection.'
- Pupils also share the school's vision. 'Our school is brilliant! We've got amazing staff, it's very safe and lessons are fun and exciting. We always try to improve!'
- Pupils are safe at the school. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and pupils speak highly of the work of the pastoral team. 'I had a problem with friendships so I talked to the pastoral team and it got sorted. I love coming to school now.'
- The curriculum is interesting and exciting and takes good account of pupils' interests. Pupils like the wide range of before- and after-school clubs and many go to the breakfast club.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is a particular strength because pupils have many opportunities to explain their ideas in lessons and think about how to improve their work.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, around the school and on the playground.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- New recording systems for assessment are not fully in place so leaders cannot readily pinpoint the progress made by the most able pupils or those who have special educational needs or disability from their starting points.
- Attendance is improving and persistent absence is reducing but at too slow a rate. Current systems, although rigorous, are not having sufficient impact.
- Pupils' special educational needs are not always accurately identified. The quality of targets in individual support plans is variable across the school, as is the tracking of these targets. There is no clear approach as to why pupils remain on the special needs register.
- The school has good systems for supporting the most vulnerable pupils but some pupil files are messy. As a result, although actions to keep pupils safe are effective, it is difficult to track the impact of these actions over time.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management of the school by ensuring that:
 - all leaders can pinpoint precisely the progress of the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs from their starting points
 - leaders check that pupils' special educational needs are accurately identified; learning targets are always focused on those needs and carefully tracked; and pupils are removed from the special needs register when this is appropriate
 - strategies for raising pupils' attendance and reducing persistent absence are strengthened and result in immediate and consistent improvement
 - record-keeping for the most vulnerable pupils is well organised and charts the impact of the effective action the school is taking over time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- This is a school that lives and breathes its values of aspire, respect, nurture and inspire. Pupils, parents, teachers, senior leaders and governors talk with great enthusiasm about each of these values and they are visible in how the school community works throughout the school day.
- The principal, senior and middle leaders have relentlessly driven improvement since the last inspection. The focus has rightly been on improving teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, all the recommendations from the last section 5 inspection have been addressed; pupil outcomes have improved and are continuing to improve.
- There are effective systems in place to evaluate the quality of teaching through both performance management and the range of evaluation approaches the school has taken on board. Achievement team meetings are very challenging and focus on pupils who are not making the progress they are capable of. These are followed up through teachers working together to come up with new teaching approaches to remedy this. 'It's become a very open school where teachers aren't afraid to share weaknesses. We help each other improve.' This coaching approach was highlighted in the monitoring inspection of the school 18 months ago and has gone from strength to strength. The pupil premium grant is used very effectively to fund these approaches ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Teachers highly value the 'two-six-two' challenge meetings. 'We bring a learning issue and explain it for two minutes then we brainstorm possible solutions for six minutes and in the last two minutes we make a plan. It really works because the issue gets sorted! Pupils make good progress.' Professional development for teachers and support staff often comes from the issues raised in these frequent evaluation meetings.
- The special needs leader can talk in great depth about pupils identified with special educational needs. However, when inspectors talked to pupils and scrutinised their work, in a few cases it was not evident that they had a specific learning disability or why they continued to be on the special needs register. There are also inconsistencies in the quality of individual support plans, in particular the precision of targets set for pupils to ensure they make progress over time.
- Senior leaders have worked hard to implement a new assessment management system but it is not fully in place. As a result, leaders cannot pinpoint precisely the progress the most able pupils or pupils who have special educational needs make from their starting points.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. Pupils are fascinated by the projects they study and are inspired to do their own research at home. One boy explained how he has found out more about geography and history because he wanted to understand the difficulties of travel 100 years ago. As well as termly themes, there are inspiring focus days or weeks. For example, during a recent enterprise week, local businesses helped pupils plan an enterprise project that would make a profit. This enabled pupils to apply their mathematics skills in calculating how to make a profit and their English skills in persuading fellow pupils and parents to spend their money. Most of the projects made a profit! Pupils have a good understanding of British values. For example, the class councils feed ideas and concerns to the elected school council, known as 'the Feds'.
- There is a wide range of before- and after-school clubs that broaden pupils' learning opportunities. Effective use of the physical education and sports premium (additional government funding) gives pupils the chance to work with specialist sports coaches and improve their skills, for example in cricket. Well-established links with an outstanding school in the London Borough of Newham enable pupils to have a strong understanding of different cultures and diversity: 'Diversity. It's just respecting different people who choose to do different things to me.'
- Most parents are impressed with the improvements they have witnessed in the last two years: 'senior leaders are focused and work tirelessly to give pupils the best educational opportunities possible. Teachers are so helpful and friendly. Although very large, the school has a close community atmosphere and everyone is made to feel welcome.'
- The parent forum is a highly effective means for the school to keep its finger on the pulse of parental questions and concerns. 'We ask questions and the principal comes back to us, just like that! If we ask for a change and the principal says "No", he always explains why. At this school the door is always open and you can come in at any time and you're listened to.'
- A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the school through text messages and Parent View about leadership, bullying, poor behaviour of a small group of pupils impacting on others, insufficient challenge for the most able pupils and homework. During the inspection these matters were rigorously reviewed and inspectors found no grounds for these concerns.

- All safeguarding procedures are in place and meet requirements. Staff have a very good understanding of what to do and who to report to if there is a concern. Staff are well trained and record incidents very carefully, but some pupil files, in particular for the most vulnerable pupils, do not give a clear overview of the impact of the effective action the school has taken over time.
- There are good links and effective liaison with all local secondary schools and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The school's website was not compliant before the inspection as the school information report explaining the school's offer for pupils who have special educational needs was incomplete. During the inspection the school's senior leaders began to correct this.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are fully involved in setting the strategic direction for the school. They all take part in testing out school improvement through half-termly, sharply focused visits to the school. 'We learned a lot from the review of governance and we don't take everything the school says; we check it out for ourselves.'
 - Governors have evaluated themselves effectively. They know the skills they have and those that need to be added to the governing body through recruitment of new governors.
 - Governors keep a very careful eye on how the budget is allocated and that expenditure gives value for money, especially the pupil premium grant and the physical education and sports premium.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- All teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan interesting projects and activities for pupils. For example, in a music lesson, pupils really enjoyed learning about a galliard because they were able to design their own dance moves to match the lively 16th-century tune.
- Teachers across the school have a good understanding of how to question pupils effectively. For example, they give pupils sufficient time to think before they answer and the types of questions they ask are designed to enable pupils to think more deeply. Teachers do not accept a pupil's first answer if it is not carefully considered. They rightly expect pupils to explain precisely what they mean or why they have a particular view.
- Throughout a lesson, teachers ask pupils to look at their work and think about how they could improve. They give immediate feedback to pupils so they can make changes while it is fresh in their minds, rather than waiting until the next day or after their book has been marked. This constant self-reflection also contributes to pupils' strong spiritual development.
- All pupils receive a good level of challenge, including the most able and pupils who have special educational needs. For example, in mathematics lessons, teachers focus on making sure all pupils grasp a new idea before moving on. Those that grasp ideas quickly are expected to apply their new knowledge and understanding by teaching it to another pupil and by applying it in a different type of activity, showing they have truly mastered the idea.
- 'Learning partners' is a particularly effective strategy used by all teachers in the school. It is part of pupils' routine in every lesson to turn to their partner, when asked to do so, to talk about a question or a new idea. As a result, pupils learn to express their ideas clearly to another person and solve problems together.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well in lessons by good teaching, the opportunities to talk to their learning partner and, in some cases, by a teaching assistant specially trained to support their needs. Consequently, work in their books indicates they make good progress from the start of the year.
- Occasionally teachers plan too much content to cover in a lesson. This leads to teachers rushing through parts of the lesson so pupils get overexcited or cannot follow new ideas effectively and lose concentration.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils at Thorpe Greenways are constantly thinking about what makes them a good learner. Teachers

support this very well by showing them 'what a good one looks like' so they are clear about what is expected of them in lessons.

- The pastoral team has a good knowledge of pupils. Consequently, pupils are very confident that if they have any sort of personal problem, issue on the playground or behaviour problem in the classroom, the pastoral team will help to resolve this rapidly and effectively. For example, pupils say there is hardly any bullying in the school. If they are being bothered by another pupil, the pastoral team steps in at once.
- Nurture is part of the school's values, and pupil premium grant (also used to fund the pastoral support team) has been used very effectively to make sure those pupils eligible for this additional funding, with social, emotional and mental health needs, are able to stay in school with minimum recourse to exclusion.
- Pupils take pride in their work and in their school. As a result, classrooms are kept clean and tidy as are other areas of the school. Pupils' work in their books is mainly set out neatly and carefully.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding because all adults in the school ensure pupils understand what safety feels and looks like. For example, internet safety is taught in computer lessons and pupils know how to keep safe if there is a fire due to regular and effective fire drills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There is very little disruption in lessons and pupils say that behaviour in class, around the school and in the classroom is usually good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to participate in lessons. They listen attentively and follow well-understood routines. This contributes to their good moral development.
- The learning partners strategy provides an opportunity for pupils to understand how to work collaboratively and contributes to pupils' good social development.
- Given how much pupils enjoy coming to school and enjoy learning, it is surprising that attendance remains below average and there are still too many examples of persistent absence. The school has good systems in place to deal with these issues, for example visiting pupils' homes to check why they are not at school, but these approaches are not working consistently or effectively enough.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Over the last two years, national data for pupils at the end of Year 6 indicates that pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics for all pupils has seen the most significant improvement because the school has focused on improving teaching and learning in this subject following the last inspection.
- There is also very little gap between the expected progress of disadvantaged pupils and all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school could not provide an overview of pupils' current attainment or progress because the new assessment management system is not fully in place. Senior and middle leaders and teachers frequently check progress in books and can talk authoritatively about pupils' good progress from their starting points. However, they do not have a summary overview to show the proportions of pupils who are below, at, or above age-related expectations, particularly for the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. As a result, inspectors carried out a comprehensive scrutiny of all pupils' writing across the curriculum (in order to check the school's judgements), reading for the disadvantaged higher achievers and progress in all subjects for pupils with special educational needs. Evidence gathered assured inspectors that all pupils are continuing to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Evidence gathered in lessons, in the wide variety of displays of pupils' work, through conversations with pupils, as well as through work in their books indicates that pupils also make good progress over time in subjects like art, history, geography, design technology and physical education.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils read widely and are fluent, confident readers who can talk about the plot and characters in the book they are reading. Year 6 pupils have a sophisticated understanding of how authors use different means to develop their characters. For example, one pupil was able to explain why a character was ugly on the outside because she had ugly thoughts.

- Most lower-ability readers continue to learn successfully through systematic, synthetic phonics (the sounds letters make). Only one of the pupils who read to inspectors was not able to sound out and combine letters in simple words.

School details

Unique reference number	114777
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10011818

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	473
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenni Nash
Principal	Ashley Eastwood
Telephone number	01702 468057
Website	www.greenways.southend.sch.uk
Email address	office@greenways.southend.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average. The proportion of those who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet the requirements on the publication of information about special educational needs or disability on its website.
- The school is part of a hard federation with Thorpe Greenways Infant School.
- The school is joining the Learning in Harmony Academy Trust from September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning and parts of lessons. Most observations were carried out jointly with the principal, vice-principals and assistant vice-principals.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their learning in lessons and their safety in the school. In addition, inspectors spoke with pupils about learning and safety throughout the two days of the inspection.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 3, 5 and 6.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, vice-principals, and assistant vice-principals, subject leaders for pupils with special educational needs, literacy, numeracy and senior teachers responsible for other curriculum subjects. In addition, inspectors held meetings with representatives from the local authority, the chief executive of the Learning in Harmony Trust, school improvement partners and the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, school policies, curriculum planning and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed a large sample of pupils' books.
- Inspectors evaluated 60 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and 57 free text messages. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and to the parent forum.

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