

Cann Hall Primary School

Constable Avenue, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO16 8DA

Inspection dates	16–17 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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Cann Hall is a good school. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- The uncompromising determination of the executive headteacher and head of school has driven extensive improvements and fully addressed the areas identified for improvement.
- The school continues to develop at a fast pace because of the relentless drive of school leaders.
- Leaders have successfully created a culture of high expectations for all. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are both good.
- The effective governing body is equally ambitious for all pupils to benefit from a good education. They say they want 'learning without ceilings'.
- Skilled subject leaders ensure standards are rising in the subjects they lead. This, again, is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability thrive because provision is tailored to each individual's needs.
- Teachers use the checks they make of pupils' progress to plan activities precisely matched to each pupil's next steps in learning. As a result, learning is neither too hard nor too easy.
- Skilled learning support assistants form effective teams with the teachers they support.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They respond very positively to the numerous excellent opportunities they are given to have a say in how their school is run.
- In lessons and around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that staff care for them well.
- Early years provision is good. Children make very good progress and enter Year 1 fully prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- The relationship with parents is strong; parents recognise the recent improvements in the quality of education provided for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not of a universally high standard in all classes.
- Some activities do not enthuse and engage boys. Consequently, their progress dips in these lessons.
- A few teachers do not expect pupils to present their work to the best standard they can.
- In some classes, pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills and write at length.
- Attendance of pupils is improving but it is not yet good, with some groups of pupils attending less well than others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further share good practice within the school to bring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment up to the standard of the best, so pupils make sustained and consistently good progress, by:
 - ensuring that teaching interests and engages boys fully in their learning
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and the way they present their work
 - providing pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their writing skills and develop the stamina to write at length.

- Seek further ways to intervene effectively and further improve pupils' attendance so that persistent absence is reduced and all groups of pupils attend equally well.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Cann Hall Primary provides a good-quality education for its pupils. School leaders, including governors, and staff share a strong determination to see the school build further on this solid foundation.
- In a short period of time, the outstanding leadership of the executive headteacher and head of school has driven rapid improvement in all aspects of the school. Changes already made have led to significant improvement, particularly in the quality of teaching, pupils' personal development and their achievement.
- The ambition of 'aiming high, changing lives' is embedded in the attitudes of staff and pupils alike, and provides the foundation on which the school's success is based. A lot is expected of everyone, but with it they are given the tools to succeed. A culture of high expectation has been established.
- Skilled subject leaders use their good knowledge and understanding to positive effect. The school uses an effective mix of 'tried-and-tested' approaches with innovations based on recent research.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability is highly effective. Each pupil receives the right support because their needs are accurately identified. Parents particularly praise the way extra help is tailored to each pupil's needs. This contributes well to ensuring pupils enjoy equal opportunities and benefit from all the school offers.
- The school is inclusive. One pupil said, 'We have a new boy. He says he really enjoys our school. Anyone who comes new from another country fits in like a "piece of a puzzle", really well.'
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. While the key skills of English and mathematics remain a strong focus, pupils enjoy a wide range of exciting and interesting learning opportunities. Pupils increasingly develop skills that enable them, for example, to solve problems. Even so, some activities do not yet promote boys' high achievement. Interesting visits, knowledgeable visitors and interesting clubs enrich the curriculum.
- Assessment is accurate and used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. School leaders regularly check that pupils make good progress, and hold teachers to account if they do not.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In particular, pupils collaborate very effectively, take responsibility and care for one another. Assemblies are seen as special occasions when the school comes together as a community, for example to celebrate one another's achievements.
- Pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain is promoted well. Staff teach British values, such as individual liberty and mutual respect, through everyday activities. The school's core values, such as 'responsibility' are understood by pupils who practise them in their daily lives. Pupils' opinions are sought and considered when staff make decisions.
- Leaders target the use of pupil premium funding (additional government funding) effectively. Good-quality extra help promotes the good academic achievements of these pupils. Funding also ensures no pupil misses out on wider opportunities, such as visits.
- Sport is a strength of the school. The primary school sports funding is used effectively, for example to offer a wider range of sports, including tag rugby. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the part exercise plays in healthy living and well-being. One pupil told inspectors, 'Sport helps you forget your worries for a while.'
- Effective links with the partner school enable staff to share expertise and learn from one another. The multi-academy trust also provides beneficial support and expertise. The local authority, too, provides useful guidance.
- Links with other local schools are equally beneficial. Pupils participate in many activities, and staff work together, for example to check their assessments of pupils' progress.
- Links with local high schools are particularly strong. Pupils enjoy and benefit from the opportunity to use facilities, such as science labs. One school sends learning support assistants to work with vulnerable pupils prior to their transfer, and help ensure a smooth transition.
- The relationship with parents is strong. Parents like the fact that staff are available at the school gates each morning. Parents said that the school had improved in the recent past. Nearly every parent responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, would recommend the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is effective. It benefits from the wide range of expertise and experience individual governors bring to the group, for example to improve transition to secondary school.
 - Governors work very closely with leaders and staff to maintain the strong impetus of improvement and ensure the school provides a good-quality education for pupils. They are ambitious and passionate

about the school, as reflected in this typical statement, 'This school does not believe it is ever going to get *there*, because it will never settle for where *'there'* is.'

- The governing body is efficiently and effectively led. Governors know their individual roles, and what is expected of them. They have a clear code of conduct which they adhere to fully.
- Checks on the progress of pupils are analysed closely to ensure pupils do well, and to question and challenge leaders if they do not.
- Governors oversee the performance of staff, including teachers, rigorously. Decisions about pay increases are based on a good range of evidence.
- Governors help the school achieve good value for money through their thorough oversight of the school's finances.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders and governors ensure all staff training is up to date and that the school fully complies with the latest safeguarding guidance. Governors and school staff are fully aware of their duty to keep pupils safe. Leaders know who to refer to if they have any concerns. The school clearly explains to parents its role in safeguarding their children, and works closely with parents to ensure that their children are well supported and safe from harm. Nearly all parents responding to Parent View agree their children are well looked after and feel safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good overall. In particular, academy and school leaders have driven improvements in the use of assessment information, the clarity and usefulness of teachers' feedback to pupils, and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers willingly embrace opportunities to improve their teaching, for example through training and advice from school leaders. Staff morale is high because teachers know they will be given the training and coaching they need to meet the high expectations that school leaders have of them.
- Relationships between pupils themselves, and with the staff who teach them, are positive. As a result, interruptions to learning are rare.
- Teachers' accurate assessments ensure they recognise when pupils struggle, and need more practice, or understand and are ready to move on. For both groups, teachers plan the precise activities pupils need to maximise their learning.
- Teachers use a variety of questions effectively. For example, open-ended questions probe, clarify and extend pupils' learning.
- Teachers follow the school's marking policy closely. One parent said that marking gave her child and herself a very clear understanding of what to improve, and how. She said it helped her greatly to support her child's learning.
- Learning support assistants make a strong contribution to learning. They receive similar training opportunities, and the same robust checks, as teachers. As a result, they support pupils effectively.
- Teachers deploy learning support assistants very effectively. Every moment of their time is used productively. For example, if a group of pupils struggles to understand, a learning support assistant will go over the activity again. If a group grasps the idea quickly, pupils will be given harder work.
- Teachers promote pupils' collaborative learning effectively because the curriculum includes many opportunities for pupils to work together. As a result, pupils discuss their learning and develop their wider skills in spoken language. Consequently, their speaking and listening skills are good.
- Reading is taught well. Staff teach phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) effectively right from when children first start in the early years. For example, they learn to 'sound out' unknown words. This strong foundation develops well as pupils learn more advanced skills, such as to predict what particular characters in a story might do next.
- The teaching of writing skills is much improved since the school was previously inspected. Leaders and staff recognised that key skills, such as spelling, were relatively weak and changed their teaching to improve them. This has been effective. However, insufficient opportunities are provided in some classes for pupils to apply these skills and develop the stamina to write at length.
- Mathematics is taught well. Following the previous inspection, school leaders quickly introduced improvements, including an identical approach to the teaching of calculation skills throughout the school. As a result, pupils' understanding builds methodically from year to year.
- Homework is used to practise basic skills, such as reading. Staff also encourage pupils to research new topics, and think of what they particularly want to learn. In this way, pupils see that their work in school

enables them to pursue their interests. As a result, they are motivated to learn.

- While teaching overall has improved greatly since the previous inspection, there remains a lack of parity between classes. Where teaching is particularly strong, some pupils make very rapid progress and achieve outstandingly well. However, there are not enough opportunities to share the best practice with all staff. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not of the same level across the school. For example, teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work vary greatly. In most classes, boys do well because teachers plan activities with them in mind. For example, teachers plan topics about 'superheroes' or wizards and witches to interest boys and 'hook' them into learning. However, some activities do not sufficiently cater for how boys learn and their progress dips.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection appreciated that staff are very approachable. They like, for example, that staff are always willing to explain if parents do not understand their children's homework. Nearly all parents responding to Parent View feel their children are taught well at Cann Hall Primary.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View feel their children are happy at school.
- Pupils' excellent understanding of the school's 'core values' is the bedrock on which the very positive and harmonious school community is built. In assemblies and lessons, pupils regularly discuss these values, such as 'courage' and 'perseverance', to deepen their understanding. As a result, they practise them in their everyday lives at school.
- Staff strongly promote and encourage positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are eager learners who apply themselves with great enthusiasm during lessons. They show sustained interest in their lessons and are keen to contribute, share ideas and do their best. One pupil said, 'The changes made have been for the best. We are better prepared for life. In the past when I struggled I didn't ask for help because I was embarrassed. The school has taught me it is OK to ask for help.'
- Pupils embrace the outstanding range of responsibility they are given. For example, they observe lessons, make notes on their peers' behaviour and when they see the core values being practised, and feed back to the teacher afterwards. In this and many other ways, the school leaders give pupils a very meaningful voice in their school. Pupils in turn recognise this and respond very positively.
- Pupils want to improve so they respond positively to their teachers' feedback. They and their parents like the improvements made since the previous inspection, particularly how clearly the next steps in their learning are explained.
- Pupils appreciate the recognition, in class and assembly, when they demonstrate the core values, key learning skills and good attendance. They willingly celebrate each other's achievements.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' key learning skills and gives pupils many opportunities to practise and hone them. For example, they learn to work together, to listen to one another's views and respond to them thoughtfully.
- Pupils' thorough understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe is promoted through many varied lessons and activities. Their good knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet is reinforced through outside expertise. Their parents benefit, too.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is much improved since the previous inspection, largely because the school's strong focus on promoting the core values has significantly changed pupils' attitudes. Nearly every parent responding to Parent View believes the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. A similar proportion agrees that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. The small number of pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour are catered for well. Exclusions are a last resort and given for appropriate reasons. In such cases, the school works closely with parents to try to avoid repetition.
- Pupils learn and play together well. The strong emphasis on sports, and teamwork, fosters pupils' understanding of the benefits of working together.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their personal achievements. However, some pupils do not present their work in a tidy and legible fashion.
- The care staff provide for pupils is exemplary. Staff are very clear that this level of care is essential for all pupils to thrive, especially those who are vulnerable or anxious. Pupils are confident that should they face any problems or worries there is always a member of staff to go to who will help them to sort things out.

- Pupils say that instances of bullying are rare and that staff are very helpful in ensuring that any issues are resolved amicably and quickly.
- Attendance is much improved since the previous inspection. However, although the gap is closing to the national average, current attendance remains slightly below that figure. School leaders' important changes, such as rewards for high attendance, are largely effective. Although the vast majority of parents have responded positively to the school's efforts, a small but significant group of pupils are frequently absent. These pupils, often the most vulnerable, continue to miss significant amounts of schooling, fail to benefit from the good quality of education provided, and fall further behind.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. The strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching has led to good progress. Gaps in pupils' learning, which hinder their progress, have been identified and plugged. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to Parent View agree their children are taught well and make good progress.
- The school's checks on progress, and the quality of work in pupils' books, show that the vast majority of pupils now make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in the school generally learn in three terms what they are expected to learn in four terms. In 2015, for the first time, the school reached the government's floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- These improvements are the result of leaders taking very effective action so that pupils make faster progress. This has a positive and cumulative effect. For example, improvements mean that the proportion of children leaving the early years with a good level of development is much higher than previously. In 2014, it was four in every ten children; in 2015, it had increased to six in every ten. This stronger foundation gives pupils a more advanced start for teachers to build on in Year 1.
- The proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was broadly average in 2014 and 2015.
- The inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' progress reported at the previous inspection mean that, even though teaching is now good, it has not been so over time. This particularly affects older pupils who have been at the school longer. As a result these pupils have a legacy of lower standards.
- In reading, standards have improved since the previous inspection because phonics is taught more effectively, giving pupils a good grounding. Pupils are introduced to many more good-quality reading books that they can immerse themselves in and get ideas they can use in their own writing.
- Writing standards have also improved since the previous inspection. Key skills, such as the use of punctuation, are good. As a result, pupils have the 'tools' to write. However, opportunities for pupils to use these skills and develop the stamina to write at length are limited.
- Mathematics, too, is improved. Better teaching, based on high-quality training in aspects such as reasoning, means pupils' progress benefits because they apply what they know to new problems.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress similar to, or better than, their peers. School leaders ensure these pupils receive extra help closely tailored to their needs.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability make very good progress, although often from lower starting points. The assistant headteacher for inclusion regularly checks the help they are given to see that it is working, and changes it if not. Year 6 pupils receive high-quality extra support. The teacher responsible gets to know pupils and teaches new ideas and concepts using examples based on their interests. As a result, they are motivated to learn.
- The most able pupils make good progress. Right from Reception, accurate checks on their progress enable teachers to plan activities that precisely match the next steps they need to take in their learning. No time is wasted; rather than listening to their teachers talking to the rest of the class, they often do harder work with learning support assistants.
- Boys generally make good progress. However, the progress of some, particularly in writing, dips if the activities they are given do not enthuse or interest them.
- Physical education is a strength of the school. The vast majority of pupils take part enthusiastically and the school provides a wide range of opportunities. For example, in Year 5 pupils learn to sail.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. A small but significant proportion of pupils have particularly low skills in speech, language and communication.
- Children make good progress during the year. As a result, the proportion reaching a good level of development by the time they enter Year 1 has risen sharply since the previous inspection and, in 2015, was broadly in line with the national average. The school's checks and inspection evidence suggest that the proportion will be similar this year. This increase is due largely to the effective actions of leaders.
- The effective use of checks on children's progress ensures all children do well. Children with speech, language and communication needs benefit from specialist expertise. The most able have 'challenge boxes' of harder tasks that they use to practise and deepen their understanding.
- The curriculum includes a good range of activities across all areas of learning. For example, staff plan many and varied opportunities for children to use and apply their knowledge of number through interesting activities, both inside and outside.
- Many school approaches begin in Reception and build through the school. For example, short daily 'maths meetings', when children practise key numeracy skills, are beneficial. Children, including boys, say they enjoy these activities to practise what they know and use their knowledge to figure out problems.
- Children's attitudes to learning are generally positive. They concentrate and persevere to complete interesting tasks.
- Children behave well. They respond positively to staff and each other. They are confident, cooperative learners. No time is wasted because they move quickly from one activity to another.
- Teaching is good overall because excellent leadership has eradicated the shortcomings highlighted by the previous inspection, and put in place approaches that meet the needs of children. For example, staff use every opportunity to promote key skills, such as phonics and number. Questioning, too, is used effectively to encourage children to think more deeply. However, adults do not check sufficiently that boys engage in their learning, particularly in reading and writing. Nor do they use boys' interests, such as in the construction area, to promote these basic skills.
- Learning support assistants make effective contributions to children's learning. As elsewhere in the school, accurate assessment of children's needs is used to plan activities closely matched to the precise areas they need to learn.
- Outstanding leadership has created a daily structure that fully supports children's learning and the systems and procedures to enable staff to be effective. For example, extra lessons after school target specific skills children need to master to reach a good level of development.
- Staff prepare children fully for the Reception classes. They work closely with children's parents and settings they attend to get to know new children, their interests and needs. As a result, children settle quickly and get off to a good start. Transition to Year 1 is equally smooth.
- Relationships with parents are very strong. Parents enjoy the weekly opportunities to find out how they can help at home, look at their children's work, and make their own contributions. Annotations by staff enable them to clearly see the good progress their children make.
- Provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection. In particular, planning much more clearly identifies what precisely children are to learn. As a result, learning is purposeful. The balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning is better, too. Staff ensure children's safety with constant vigilance and regular reminders to children themselves.

School details

Unique reference number	138911
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10011872

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Whitworth
Executive headteacher	Stuart Ellis
Telephone number	01255 420 603
Website	www.cannhall-essex.frogprimary.com
Email address	head@cannhall.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 June 2014

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school has three Reception classes and two classes in every year group from Year 1 to Year 6.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is broadly average. This is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is part of the CHANGE Partnership Multi-Academy Trust
- The executive headteacher has overall responsibility for both schools. Governors of both schools serve as trustees of the partnership.
- The head of school has day-to-day management responsibility for Cann Hall Primary School.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms. Some observations were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher or head of school. In addition, the inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils in other activities and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, other leaders, teachers, and governors.
- The inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The views of 49 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents.
- The inspectors looked at a range of school documents and information. These included the school development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. They also looked at arrangements for and records of safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

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