

Tilbury Pioneer Academy

Dickens Avenue, Tilbury, Essex RM18 8HJ

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by leaders and governors, has brought significant and sustained improvements in pupils' behaviour, and in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, pupils' achievement is now improving rapidly.
- Leaders, governors and trustees have a successfully created a shared vision that focuses sharply on school improvement.
- Staffs meticulously track the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. They provide swift and timely support for those who need to catch up. Current pupils are making good progress from their various starting points.
- Leaders have rapidly improved the culture of reading throughout the school, most notably among early readers. As a result, pupils' achievement, including those who are disadvantaged, is now higher than the national average.
- Leaders provide highly effective training for all staff. The quality of teaching and learning has improved markedly as a result.
- Children in the early years are confident and happy. They learn well in a safe and secure environment.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are happy, confident, courteous and well mannered.
- Pupils have access to and achieve well across a broad range of subjects. Leaders provide many enrichment activities which enable pupils to be involved in their community as well as experience life further afield.
- Pupils demonstrate high aspirations for their future and have a good understanding of modern Britain. They are able to talk about other countries and religions linking to the society around them.
- Pupils' achievement in writing has improved rapidly in English. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise these skills consistently across the wider curriculum.
- Although most pupils are making good progress in mathematics, the most able pupils are not sufficiently supported to deepen their knowledge so that more reach the highest standards.
- The most able are not consistently provided with timely support and guidance that allow them to deepen knowledge and apply their skills as quickly as they could.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should ensure that pupils are routinely given more opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - providing more opportunities in mathematics to deepen pupils' understanding through tasks, so that more pupils achieve the higher standard
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged to deepen their knowledge and apply their skills as soon as they are ready, so that their progress is accelerated.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, trustees and governors have successfully improved standards since the inspection of the predecessor school. School leaders and trustees successfully communicate a clear vision where raising pupils' outcomes is at the centre of all they do.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that is tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. Consequently, there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' language and vocabulary skills which is proving to be effective in helping pupils' express their thoughts and ideas well.
- English, mathematics and science leaders monitor and evaluate how pupils are achieving and use this information effectively to inform their actions to develop teaching further. Leaders have already identified that other curriculum areas require the same rigorous monitoring and work is already under way to ensure that pupils make equally good progress in other subjects, as well as English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly. A key factor is that leaders are holding teachers to account for the progress and outcomes pupils achieve. Rigorous pupil progress meetings and performance management processes ensure that teachers are fully aware of the progress of their pupils and are able to use this information accurately to plan effectively to meet their needs.
- Leaders are meticulous in reviewing all aspects of teaching and learning. They are quick to identify strengths, and address concerns if they arise. In addition to regular monitoring and meetings, leaders ensure that teachers share their practice to strengthen its consistency and quality in all classes.
- Leaders carry out thorough analysis of the progress pupils make, identifying where a pupil is in danger of falling behind in specific areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers use this information to plan learning and provide additional support for pupils who are not making enough progress or need to catch up.
- Leaders are successful in recruiting appropriately qualified staff and working hard to retain them. Teachers, including those appointed from overseas, work in an environment that promotes high aspirations for pupils and a strong focus on professional development. Teachers value the support they receive from the trust and school leaders.
- A large majority of parents consider that the school has improved significantly over the last 18 months. Parents commented on the strength of the leadership team, particularly the headteacher. Many parents expressed the view that the school 'goes the extra mile' to ensure that pupils achieve well and enjoy school.

- Leaders promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects well. Leaders provide many other opportunities to enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils visit London, take part in science weeks and experience 'deep learning days' where they focus on a particular topic. The use of the school's chosen 'positive progress programme' helps pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, to build confidence, self-esteem and social skills.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport premium grant to develop staff confidence, skills and knowledge, resulting in better teaching in physical education. Pupils participate in a wide range of high-quality sports with their peers from other local schools. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the purpose of physical education. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the variety of sports on offer and value the after-school clubs, which are well attended.
- Leaders prepare pupils to be good citizens. The school's core values, reflected in 'the Pioneer way', are at the heart of the school community. Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to demonstrate the seven core values throughout school life. For example, the school choir performs to the elderly in the community.
- Leaders, including governors, are acutely aware of the complex barriers to learning that many of their vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils face. Funding has been used effectively to improve attendance. Leaders, including governors, review the impact of the large amounts of additional funds and adjust the support effectively to improve pupils' achievement.
- Special educational needs funding is used effectively to support pupils in class, in small groups and individually. Many pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have improved attendance and make good progress, in spite of the complex difficulties they have.
- The academy trust provides effective support to school leaders. It has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and the areas that require further improvement. It knows where pupils' outcomes are not as strong and provides appropriate challenge to school leaders.

Governance of the school

- Governors are effective. They are dedicated and committed to improving the lives of the pupils. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school's performance.
- The trustees and governors check closely on all aspects of the management of the school and provide effective challenge. Governors' meeting minutes show that they hold school leaders to account for the impact of additional spending on the progress pupils make.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and know staff and pupils well. School leaders ensure that the governors are informed about new initiatives and governors' visits focus carefully on specific aspects related to the school improvement priorities, particularly the welfare of vulnerable pupils.
- The school makes effective use of resources provided centrally by the trust. Leaders

and teachers across the trust share best practice to develop teaching and leadership skills. The school also has access to specialist provision resources to support vulnerable pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on newly appointed staff. Leaders ensure that staff undertake regular training so that their knowledge of child protection procedures is up to date.
- The school's records show that there are far fewer incidents of poor behaviour than in previous years. Incidents are thoroughly documented and appropriate actions taken. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they know whom to speak to if they have concerns. Pupils say they feel listened to, and concerns are dealt with quickly. Many parents agree.
- The school's effective pastoral care ensures that pupils' welfare is a high priority. A review of child protection cases demonstrates that there are effective links with external agencies and staff take appropriate actions to secure pupils' welfare. Staff are particularly vigilant regarding vulnerable pupils.
- Senior leaders have worked successfully to improve pupils' attendance. Procedures for ensuring good attendance are rigorous and non-attendance is followed up immediately. Attendance is now in line with the national average.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved and continues to do so. There is a strong culture of support and development among the teaching staff, who are continually seeking to improve. As a result, all teachers are developing their subject knowledge well in English and mathematics, improving their skills so that they can better meet the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They update the school's 'universal provision map' effectively with key information about individual pupils' vulnerabilities and barriers to learning. As a result, teachers know their vulnerable pupils well and plan to meet their needs appropriately.
- The teaching and learning of reading are key priorities. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics and reading throughout the school. Teachers provide pupils with many different and interesting ways to improve pupils' comprehension skills and to answer questions about their individual books. Pupils enjoy these lessons and complete their 'book blog' enthusiastically. Pupils, particularly boys, are keen to speak about their books and the progress they have made.
- Teaching in mathematics is effective. By the end of Year 4, pupils are confident when recalling their multiplication facts and have many opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in a variety of different ways, using appropriate resources. They are increasingly skilled at explaining their understanding and methods. However, teachers do not consistently provide the most able pupils with enough activities that require a more complex skill, so that more reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations of handwriting and spelling. In Year 1,

for example, the work in pupils' books demonstrates that letter formation, writing structure and spelling are consistently good and of a high quality. However, teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to extend their writing skills in subjects other than English.

- The teaching of other curriculum subjects is effective. Pupils can speak clearly and enthusiastically about the topics they have studied in subjects such as geography and religious education. In science, pupils develop their investigative skills through practical work as well as learning about complex topics such as the digestive system.
- Pupils are extremely reflective about their learning and have many opportunities to check and improve on their work during the lesson. Pupils apply the school's chosen methods for editing work diligently. Pupils know what they need to do to improve and pupils' work shows that they respond well to teachers' comments, moving the learning on at a good rate.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in class by teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching assistants use effective questioning to help pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are a key focus for the school. Before- and after-school provision, in the form of mathematics clubs, is well attended and parents value the support provided on the school's website for their children. Trips are organised so that pupils extend their knowledge and further their skills. However, during observations of daily lessons, the degree of challenge was not enough to ensure that most-able pupils used the time effectively to make the progress of which they were capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils relish the responsibilities that are on offer, such as those of school council representative and anti-bullying ambassador. They take these roles very seriously and perform them sensibly and well.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they enjoyed learning and spoke enthusiastically about subjects such as religious education. They talked with admiration and respect about their classmates who have different religious backgrounds and experiences to themselves.
- Selected pupils take part in the schools, 'positive progress programme' to extend their learning and develop their personal and social skills. This year, these pupils developed team-building and cooperation skills while building dens in a nearby woodland area. As a result of the school's work, pupils' well-being and needs are provided for effectively.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet and other technology. They learn about strategies to keep safe during assemblies and also in lessons. School leaders

provide valuable information for parents and pupils on the school website so they can access relevant information at home.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning have significantly improved over time. All adults use a consistent and effective approach to dealing with behaviour and pupils respond well. Pupils are ready to learn in lessons and low-level disruption is rare. As a result, there is improved attendance, and parents have more confidence in the school leadership to promote good behaviour.
- Pupils walk around the school calmly and sensibly. They are polite and respectful to adults and each other. The school is an extremely happy place.
- Leaders and teachers provide effective support for pupils who find some aspects of school challenging. Short sessions in the school's nurture group provide pupils with skills to manage feelings and friendships to solve problems. This has had a positive impact on pupils' well-being and pupils are better equipped to learn when in class. Attendance for some vulnerable pupils has improved significantly. The school works effectively with vulnerable families to provide advice and support. All staff monitor absences very closely and are quick to identify and follow up any drop in a pupil's attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Attainment for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2016, including disadvantaged pupils was broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, this academic year, more pupils are making accelerated progress and are on track to reach the national standard and greater depth. Pupils are well prepared for their final two years in key stage 2.
- The school's drive to improve the teaching of phonics has led to an improvement for all pupils. The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, that met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 in 2016 exceeded the national expectation. This high standard is set to continue.
- Outcomes in writing in 2016 show an improving picture on 2015. The school's information and evidence in pupils' work for 2017 show further improvement, with more pupils expected to achieve both the expected standard and at greater depth.
- The proportion of boys who achieved at the higher level in mathematics was below the national average at the end of Year 2. Boys in Year 3 are making good progress, with a larger proportion on track to achieve at the higher level.
- The school accurately identified that not enough pupils, particularly the most able pupils, achieved at the higher level in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Provision to accelerate the progress of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils is in place. Current information shows that more pupils are on track to achieve greater depth in reading and mathematics as a result.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making improved progress from their starting points. These pupils make accelerated progress in key

stage 2 where adults' high expectations and precise teaching are making a difference.

- Disadvantaged pupils in the school are currently making good and better progress. Outcomes for 2016 were particularly positive in phonics. Although in 2016 disadvantaged pupils did not achieve well in reading and mathematics, currently the school's assessment information demonstrates that a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils are achieving well in reading and mathematics, with some working at greater depth.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are confident and happy. They are eager to start learning and are enthusiastic about their activities. The early years leader has successfully adapted the environment to meet the needs of the children, ensuring that speaking and listening are at the core of all learning. Displays promote a language-rich environment and adults skilfully question children using a range of teaching strategies effectively to promote children's language skills and development.
- The proportion of children in early years who achieved a good level of development in 2016 was broadly in line with national figures. Attainment in other areas was below national, particularly in aspects of communication and language and number. However, from their lower starting points, for many children this indicated good progress. Current data shows that a much higher proportion of children are on track to achieve a good level of development, and improved achievement is evident in other areas of learning.
- Children enter Reception from a wide range of providers, including the school's own Nursery provision. Leaders ensure that children settle quickly and well. They follow routines happily. Children behave well and are safe in a warm and friendly environment.
- Early years teachers apply a consistent approach across all classes when teaching reading and writing. Children join in readily when retelling stories, showing their understanding well. Teachers use precise language and a good range of vocabulary so children improve their communication and language skills rapidly.
- Leaders have carefully planned the early years environment to meet the needs of the children. The Nursery provision outside space provides children with a variety of resources to engage in outside play. Children particularly enjoy the garden area. Children learn about plants and during a lesson seen, adults skilfully questioned children on the conditions needed for beans to grow. Children responded with interest and enthusiasm.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for parents and carers to be involved with their children's learning. Parents receive additional information to help support learning at home. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the children's workbooks through homework activities. One parent commented, 'There is always a great atmosphere within the school when we are invited in for activities.'
- Children are well looked after in the early years and adults know the children well. Parents speak positively about the teaching their children receive. One parent wrote, 'Since joining the nursery, my son has come on leaps and bounds. The nursery

teachers are fantastic with the children.'

School details

Unique reference number	140832
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10031332

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynda Pritchard
Headteacher	Dan George
Telephone number	01375 488420
Website	www.theglc-pioneer.org.uk
Email address	admin.pioneer@theglc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2014 following the previous inspection.
- The school is part of The Gateway Learning Community Trust.
- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are currently only two year groups in key stage 2. The school has a morning and afternoon Nursery, three Reception classes and two classes in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.
- The majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the

national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed pupils learning in all classes and considered the work in pupils' books to assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time.
- Most observations of learning were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team held meetings with governors, members of the trust and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the monitoring of teaching, the management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents and the school's website.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils across all year groups about their learning.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made regarding the recruitment of new staff.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- The inspector took account of 35 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 19 text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bridgette Gough

Ofsted Inspector

Dominic Carver

Ofsted Inspector

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