

Gordon Primary School

Golfe Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 1SU

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher, along with other senior leaders, governors and the local authority, has worked rapidly to address the decline in standards since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are now making good progress from their starting points. This means an increasing proportion are working at the expected standard for their age.
- Pupils who have lower starting points need to make even more rapid progress to catch up. This does not always happen, as support for them is of variable quality.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. This supports the good progress that they make.
- A good proportion of disadvantaged pupils reach the expected standard in English and mathematics. However, too few reach the higher standard.
- Children get a good start to their education in the early years because teaching meets their needs well.
- The work of senior leaders is extremely effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Many middle leaders are new to their posts and their leadership skills need to be developed further for their work to have an equally positive effect on the subjects that they lead.
- Safeguarding is a high priority for leaders and governors. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe. Parents agree that their children feel safe.
- Attendance rates have improved considerably and are now in line with national figures.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They show kindness and respect for others and take care of the school's environment.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the curriculum is fit for purpose and fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop middle leaders further, so that they have a strong effect on the quality of teaching in their subject.
- Make sure that all support staff are as good as the best, so that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and pupils who are at the early stages of learning English make accelerated progress to catch up.
- Ensure that there is always a good level of challenge and clear guidance for most-able pupils, so that an increasing number reach greater depth in their learning, especially the most able disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new leadership team quickly identified what needed to be done to address the dip in standards which had occurred since the previous inspection. Leaders and governors have a very clear view of what needs to be done next in order to build on the rapid improvements seen so far this year. Parents are very positive about the school and the changes that have been made.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised considerably. Staff have embraced this, and their practice has improved accordingly.
- The system for monitoring the quality of teaching is comprehensive. Leaders give staff precise points for their development and follow these up assiduously.
- Leaders have provided highly effective training opportunities that meet staff's needs. This has further improved the quality of teaching.
- Staff at the early stages of their careers feel well supported.
- Leaders ensure that the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is used to improve outcomes for pupils, for example by enabling staff to undertake specialist training in teaching gymnastics, an area of PE that they felt less confident in.
- The pupil premium funding has been used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils do as well as their peers in reaching the expected standards for their age in reading, writing, phonics and mathematics. Leaders are aware that they must now extend its use to ensure that more disadvantaged pupils achieve greater depth in their learning.
- Leaders foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. In assembly, pupils have opportunities to reflect on important themes, such as making the right choices. Pupils learn about significant cultural events, for example Holy Week and Easter, Holocaust Memorial Day, and Diwali. Many of the stories that pupils study involve a moral dilemma and teachers encourage debate and discussion.
- The curriculum is enhanced by trips to places of interest, often significant historical sites, such as the Tower of London. Each new topic begins with a 'stunning start', which sparks pupils' interest. For example, Year 3 dressed up as though in ancient Egypt to kick off their topic 'Exotic Egyptians'.
- While the curriculum is broad and balanced, standards had dipped in many foundation subjects, as well as in English and mathematics. Moreover, the curriculum now needs to be extended to cover the whole of the key stage 2 national curriculum as the school grows. Middle leaders have a vital part to play in extending and developing the curriculum for their subjects. They understand what needs to be done for pupils to reach high standards. However, many of them have only been in post for a short time, so their roles are not fully developed.
- Leaders take every opportunity to challenge stereotypes. For example, alongside studying the work of Kandinsky and Gauguin, pupils learn about contemporary Black British artists such as Stephen Wiltshire, work which makes great demands on pupils' drawing skills.

- The local authority has provided the school with excellent support during the recent, extended period of change in senior leadership and the uncertainty associated with this. It worked closely with governors to put measures in place to ensure that the school could get back on track so that outcomes for pupils improve.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and are very clear about what improvements are needed. They were instrumental in putting in place the interim leadership arrangements to ensure that the dip in standards and in quality of teaching was rectified as quickly as possible.
- There has been some turnover in the governing body recently. When recruiting new governors, the existing governors were careful to find members with useful skills. In this way, governors are confident that they make a strong team that can perform its duties to a high standard.
- Governors place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. The chair of the governing body makes regular visits to check that all safeguarding procedures and records are in place, and that all training is up to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have put in place robust measures for vetting staff and volunteers prior to employment. Procedures for administering first aid and medication, when necessary, are well organised. Training is kept up to date. For example, staff undertook training in the 'Prevent' duty earlier this year. Staff were confident in answering inspectors' questions about safeguarding, including about radicalisation.
- Staff are vigilant in spotting and reporting concerns. The new leadership team has ensured that it is very clear who leads on safeguarding in the school. There are now posters in prominent places. Pupils say that they know who to go to if they have any worries. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and parents echo this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Good teaching leads to pupils making good progress. Teachers plan lessons well to meet pupils' needs. They pre-empt potential difficulties and explain concepts clearly so that pupils understand what they are learning.
- Effective use of the behaviour management system results in a conducive atmosphere for learning. Routines are well embedded so that lessons run smoothly. Pupils are keen to learn, so focus well.
- Teachers have a good grasp of how well pupils are doing. They offer helpful advice during lessons so that any misconceptions are tackled quickly and effectively.
- Teachers encourage pupils to contribute in lessons, and often use those contributions as examples. In a phonics lesson on adding suffixes, a pupil suggested the verb

'launch', which led to imaginative and sophisticated sentences about astronauts.

- One of the strengths of the teaching of writing is that work is linked either to pupils' current topic or to a text that they are very familiar with. This gives pupils sound underlying knowledge on which to base their writing, enabling them to focus on developing their grammar and vocabulary. During the inspection, pupils were writing about the events in Pompeii. They were so immersed in the subject that their descriptions were extremely vivid.
- Pupils encourage and support each other to do their best. One pupil wanted to use a simile in his Pompeii writing. His classmates were happy to help. After some discussion, the final piece read: 'His tears were clear like the sky on a summer day.'
- Teachers provide helpful resources to develop and enrich vocabulary, which pupils use well. When thinking about how their character might feel, pupils consulted the emotions posters on the wall and correctly used words like 'apprehensive' in their writing.
- Teachers use similar strategies in mathematics. They provide pupils with practical materials, such as shapes to touch and cubes for counting. There is a strong emphasis on using mathematical language correctly. These strategies support pupils' progress.
- Some of the teaching for pupils who need to catch up is highly effective. However, not all staff who work with these targeted groups are as skilled. This means that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils at the early stages of learning English do not always make the more rapid progress they need to enable them to catch up with their peers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. They follow instructions well. The good routines teachers have established help pupils to become well-organised learners. Pupils listen to each other's suggestions during lessons and collaborate well to improve their work. They are keen to do their best, and they use resources, such as thesauruses and word banks, to great effect.
- The extensive building work limited the development of pupils' physical well-being for a short period. There was restricted access to outdoor space, and most after-school clubs had to be suspended. The PE and sport premium is being used to redress this. Leaders are clear about what needs to be done. They have updated existing resources, purchased items suitable for key stage 2 and identified pupils whose fitness levels need improving. Clubs will start again now that the building is complete.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe. They have a good understanding of online safety. Police and fire officers come and talk to pupils about how to stay safe both in and out of school. Pupils appreciate this, and say that they feel safe.
- Pupils say that there may be some occasional bullying in school, mostly name-calling. None of the pupils who spoke to inspectors had experienced it themselves. They all

had faith that, should anything concern them, they could go to an adult to sort it out.

- Leaders regularly reinforce the school's values and show how these link to fundamental British values. Pupils understand, for instance, that they have democratically elected the school councillors, who now have a duty to improve the school on their behalf. In this way, pupils are well prepared for becoming responsible citizens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school, in the playground and in the dinner hall. They show consideration for others by holding doors open and looking after younger children in the playground. They listen to each other and teachers with respect. They are keen to contribute when asked, for example in lessons or in assemblies.
- Staff have high expectations of behaviour and use the school's behaviour system to reinforce these. Pupils are keen to make sure that their card stays on green all day and that they strive to reach gold. Staff praise pupils for showing the desired behaviours, for example for sitting up nice and straight in assembly, or for listening well in lessons. This praise encourages others to follow the positive example that has been highlighted, and so creates a ripple effect.
- Pupils show that they know the value of the school's property. They tidy up sensibly, for example by lining up thesauruses on the bookshelf with care. Routines are well established so that the classroom remains tidy, with no learning time lost.
- The standard of presentation of pupils' work has improved dramatically over the course of this academic year. Books are now neat, and work, both in books and for displays, is well presented. Pupils clearly take great pride in their work.
- Pupils who have particular behavioural needs are set specific targets to work towards. Staff support these pupils and their families to ensure that they understand how to improve their behaviour. This positive approach works well. No pupils have been excluded in the last few years.
- Attendance figures had been in the lowest 10% nationally for at least three years. Too many pupils were persistently absent. The new leadership team has reversed this trend with great success. Absence rates have declined significantly and are now in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Looking back at pupils' work completed in September and October 2017 in their writing and mathematics books, it is clear that standards had dropped, particularly in key stage 2. The new leadership team tackled this as a matter of priority.
- Current work in books shows that pupils are now making strong progress from their starting points, which is enabling the majority of them to catch up and reach the expected standards for their age.
- Although the progress of all pupils has improved, those who are further behind, for

example pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or those who are at the early stages of learning English, do not always make the more rapid progress needed to reach expected standards for their age. This is because the quality of support they receive is variable.

- Pupils who have been at the school since Reception do well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. They use their phonics skills confidently in their reading and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils do well and reach the expected standards in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. Their outcomes are often in line with or above those of other pupils nationally. However, too few of them achieve greater depth in their learning, especially in writing. This is because the challenge and guidance teachers give them does not always extend their learning sufficiently. Leaders are now addressing this by ensuring that teaching stretches every pupil. Work seen during the inspection showed a number of disadvantaged pupils working at the higher standard for their age, but leaders acknowledge there is more to do.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get a good start to their education. Adults track children's learning carefully and match activities to their needs. The environment both indoors and outdoors is highly conducive to learning, with opportunities for reading, writing and mathematics threaded throughout. This leads to children making good progress from their starting points. Those who have less developed skills when they join the school are given targeted support to help them make the extra progress needed to catch up.
- Adults are skilled at introducing children to new ideas and encouraging the use of related vocabulary. For example, during the inspection, staff had set up a very well-resourced hospital area with its own ambulance. Children were seen taking photographs of an accident scene before rescuing the doll and bandaging her head. The doctor noted on her clipboard that the patient needed three painkillers. These, and similarly stimulating activities, ensure that children are highly engaged in their learning and give them a real purpose to write and count.
- Leaders provide a well-thought-out curriculum with overlap between the different areas of learning. For example, children were building castles, painting beanstalks and growing beans to consolidate their work on the traditional tale 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.
- Safeguarding is equally effective in early years as it is in the rest of the school. Leaders check the condition of the equipment and the cleanliness of the outdoor play area regularly. When they take children out on trips, staff assess any potential risks so that they can be well prepared.
- Children play well together, sharing resources, waiting their turn and following instructions. Systems and routines support this. For example, to ensure that there is the appropriate adult-to-child ratio in the outdoor area, only 10 children from each class are allowed out at any one time. Children know that they have to put their name on the chart if they want to go outside. They feel that this system is fair.
- Children are confident learners who make choices about their own learning. They are encouraged to be independent and rise to the challenge well. Inspectors saw children helping themselves to construction materials, tidying up responsibly and putting on

their own coats skilfully.

School details

Unique reference number	102808
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10049012

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Middleton
Executive Headteacher	Penny Martin
Telephone number	0208 4782977
Website	www.gordonprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	admin.gordon@redbridge.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 November 2012

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and most speak English as an additional language. The proportions of both groups are much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slightly lower than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly lower than average.
- Far more pupils arrive and leave at times other than the start of the Reception Year than is the case nationally. For example, 16 new pupils have joined Year 4 this academic year. Many of these new arrivals are at the very early stage of learning English.
- The school has been through several turbulent years, with staff changes at senior leadership level, changes in the governing body, long-term staff sickness, an extensive

building project, and the transition from being an infant school to becoming a primary school with key stage 2 classes. At the time of this inspection, the substantive headteacher was on long-term sick leave. The governors and the local authority have put in place an experienced headteacher, acting in an executive capacity for two and a half days per week, and another experienced associate headteacher who is full time.

- The early years consists of one Nursery class that operates in the mornings and two full-time Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited every class at least once to see learning across a range of subjects. They also looked at work in pupils' books.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior leaders, staff, governors, including the chair and the vice-chair and several parent governors, and the head of the local authority's school improvement team.
- Inspectors attended assemblies, listened to pupils read, and spoke to pupils formally and informally around school, in the playground and during lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 10 free-text comments, as well as the results from a recent survey commissioned by the school. They also spoke to parents informally on both mornings of the inspection. Thirty-four responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, attendance figures, logs of behavioural incidents, the school's evaluation of its own performance, development planning and information about pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sheila Cohring	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Pratt	Ofsted Inspector

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