

Earls Hall Primary School

Carlton Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 0QN

Inspection dates

26–27 June 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 headteacher has high expectations for staff and pupils and provides strong leadership.
- Leaders have created an inclusive environment. They provide a wide range of learning opportunities that help pupils develop into confident and well-rounded learners who thrive. They are well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Leaders have developed a rich, creative curriculum that engages pupils' interests and inspires them to learn.
- Governance is a significant strength of the school. Governors bring good levels of knowledge and experience and hold school leaders to account effectively.
- Teaching across the school is of a consistently good standard and some is highly effective. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and typically use assessment well to plan next steps in pupils' learning.
- Good leadership of early years ensures that children achieve well and make a good start in their education.
- Pupils are well cared for. They are respectful of one another. Pupils work well together in their classes and enjoy playing together outside lessons. Consequently, pupils are happy at school and their attendance is good.
- Not all teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and gain an understanding of what pupils are learning. This slows the progress pupils make, especially the most able pupils.
- Assessment in the wider curriculum other than English and mathematics is not fully embedded. This means that leaders of other subjects do not have an accurate picture of pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not set targets that are ambitious for some groups of pupils. Consequently, too few middle prior-attaining pupils attain greater depth from their starting points.
- Teachers do not insist that pupils' handwriting is formed carefully and that they present written work that is legible and of a consistently high quality.
- A large majority of parents and carers say that pupils are well behaved at school. However, some parents are not confident about how effectively leaders tackle poor behaviour.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders so that they monitor the progress of pupils more closely in subjects for which they are responsible
 - using the existing tracking system to set challenging targets so that middle prior-attaining pupils' achievement is raised
 - improving communication with parents and carers to ensure that they better understand how staff manage pupils' behaviour.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and ensure that pupils make strong progress by:
 - teachers using questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and checking on the progress that they are making more effectively
 - teachers having high expectations of how pupils present their written work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has successfully managed the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. He has established a culture of high ambition and a clear vision. All staff, and governors, share the school's vision to 'celebrate, challenge, achieve'. They are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership within the school and are proud to work at Earls Hall. Staff are committed to providing pupils with the best possible opportunities to learn.
- The leadership team is accurate in its assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Leaders' plans set clear priorities that are tackled systematically and result in improving the quality of teaching. For example, leaders identified the need to improve pupils' mathematical reasoning skills. Through training of staff in the use of 'convince me' activities, pupils are regularly set questions to challenge and deepen their thinking.
- Senior leaders rigorously check on the quality of teaching across the school. They identify any particular weaknesses and ensure that teachers receive support. They assiduously follow up to check that the support is effective. Consequently, teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Leaders have developed an exciting curriculum that deepens pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils enjoy the opportunities of working with external experts in history, geography and music. Evidence from pupils' work shows that pupils develop and apply skills across a range of subjects.
- The curriculum develops their understanding of the local area and pupils learn to appreciate the opportunities provided by their surroundings. For example, one pupil discussed how he was grateful to a local benefactor who had provided land for a community park. He knew this because he had recently studied the history of a large house that once existed on that piece of land.
- Subject leadership teams draw expertise from both key stages. They check teachers' planning and monitor the work pupils do. However, leaders do not track pupils' progress closely enough in different subjects. They do not have an accurate view of how well different groups achieve in their areas of responsibility.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn to respect their own community through their involvement in the 'act of kindness' team. Projects such as litter picking or visiting a residential home for the elderly teach pupils about their social and moral responsibilities. Equality and diversity are promoted well in lessons, in assemblies and through visitors to the school.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of British values, such as respect, tolerance and democracy. This is evident through opportunities to campaign and vote, for example, for members of the school council and other positions of responsibility that pupils hold. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders closely monitor the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Pupils receive tailored intervention that helps to support their progress. Leaders ensure that staff who deliver the support are trained and clear about

the expectations of the provision. Teachers review targets to check that pupils are making the progress they should do.

- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium is spent effectively by monitoring the impact of actions to overcome difficulties in pupils' learning. Pupils receive high-quality intervention to support their social and emotional needs. Evidence gathered during the inspection and the school's own assessment information show that differences are diminishing between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- The physical education and sport premium funding is used extremely well. Sports leaders oversee a high-quality programme of in-school and extra-curricular sports and games. Many pupils have the opportunity to represent the school in inter-school competitions.
- Leaders use the tracking system to identify pupils who are falling behind and require extra help. However, the targets set from the information it provides are not always sufficiently ambitious to ensure that they make good progress to catch up.
- The large majority of parents are supportive of leaders and the commitment of staff to helping their children. One typical view of many on Parent View, Ofsted online questionnaire, stated, 'We are proud of the school community and the dedication of the teaching staff and headteacher at Earls Hall.' However, a small minority of parents are concerned about how leaders manage pupils' poor behaviour. Leaders have not been successful in ensuring that all parents understand the approaches staff use to manage some pupils' behaviour.

Governance of the school

- Governors have played a pivotal role in ensuring that the primary school has sustained the success of the separate infant and junior schools. They have used the skills and knowledge of all governors to good effect. Meetings are organised so that they make productive use of time while ensuring that they fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
- Governors are well informed because they gather information about the school's performance from a variety of sources. They make regular visits and talk to staff as well as pupils. Some governors take on responsibility for liaising with senior leaders on aspects of the school's provision, such as safeguarding, disadvantaged pupils and special educational needs. Governors' monitoring files record their visits and provide action points that are checked at subsequent meetings. They question and probe the information provided by leaders to ensure that actions taken are improving the quality of education.
- Governors have a secure knowledge of the information about pupils' achievement. They check that additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant, funding for physical education and sport and funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, is spent well and is making a positive difference for these groups.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, place a high importance on safeguarding. Staff at all

levels receive regular safeguarding training. They know how to recognise and report concerns using the school's procedures.

- The designated leaders for child protection ensure that all procedures to keep pupils safe are implemented thoroughly. Records are organised meticulously and leaders are tenacious in ensuring that actions are pursued so that child protection referrals are dealt with swiftly.
- Secure checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children in the school. Governors make regular visits to audit the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures, including a check of the single central record.
- Leaders encourage pupils to talk about anything that worries them. Pupils know that they can talk to staff about any concerns and are confident that adults will listen and respond. This is important in helping to keep children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers have good subject knowledge that allows them to provide pupils with clear explanations and instructions. They plan learning that is well matched to the interests and capabilities of pupils. Teachers use technical language well to develop pupils' vocabulary. For example, younger pupils were using geographical terms for the features they would find on a map and explaining them to other pupils in the class.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and make good contributions to the progress of pupils they support. They are knowledgeable about how to use activities to promote pupils' steps in learning. Teaching assistants' questions often encourage pupils to think independently. This helps pupils to consolidate their understanding and make progress. For example, one group of pupils were asked to select mathematical equipment that represented the calculation written on the whiteboard.
- Reading is given a high priority across the school. Teachers work hard to ensure that they develop pupils' reading skills alongside fostering a love of reading. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly to develop fluency, and receive rewards for the number of books they have completed. Good-quality texts are central to the delivery of the school curriculum. Planned activities link to a class book, introducing pupils to different genres and authors. This has helped to produce strong outcomes in reading across the school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the authors and the books they enjoy reading.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. This is contributing to a continuing rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Leaders closely track the progress pupils make in their phonics. They provide additional support to help pupils catch up. The consistent approach to teaching phonics maximises pupils' progress.
- Pupils use a range of opportunities to write with confidence and purpose. Teachers ensure that pupils develop and refine their skills by breaking down writing activities into clear steps. Pupils build on their understanding to produce final pieces of written work often linked to their class topic. For example, as part of their pirate topic, pupils in Year 1 wrote a set of special instructions for making an item of pirate clothing. Pupils

in Year 6 improved their skills of authorship by writing their own scripts for 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

- Mathematics is taught effectively across the school. Pupils develop confidence in working with numbers through the use of practical investigations and activities. Teachers provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to problem-solving tasks. Teachers challenge pupils' mathematical thinking by asking them to explain and prove their answers.
- Teachers use their skills effectively to support pupils who have a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Plans clearly identify small steps of learning that are regularly checked so that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Evidence from work in pupils' books shows that the quality of handwriting is too inconsistent. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of how pupils should write neatly. Untidy work goes unchallenged, making it difficult to read.
- Some teachers use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' thinking and check their understanding in many subjects. However, others do not check routinely what pupils know and provide challenging work, especially for the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on meeting pupils' social and emotional needs. Adults spend time listening and encouraging pupils to develop their friendships with one another. Pupils have special responsibilities to ensure that everyone understands how to work and play together.
- Pupils' social understanding and moral purpose are particular strengths of the school. This is reflected through pupils' experiences, ensuring that pupils develop positive habits and attitudes that will enable them to make an effective contribution to society. The nurturing and inclusive culture of the school enables pupils to thrive.
- Pupils are confident and build skills of resilience. They quickly learn that making mistakes is an important part of learning. They enjoy their topics and regularly work together to develop cooperation and collaboration. For example, as part of outdoor learning, pupils persevered, and constructed their own sailing ships from materials provided by the teacher.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They understand the dangers of using computers and keeping themselves safe when online. Pupils know about bullying and the different forms it can take. Pupils identified that they could share concerns using 'worry' and 'bully' boxes. They are confident that adults will address their concerns when they arise.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and develop their leadership skills. They discuss their ideas and views with leaders regarding many aspects of school life. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously because they understand their role to

represent others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is calm and orderly and pupils conduct themselves sensibly when moving around the building. They are polite, well mannered and respectful of one another. For example, when a group of pupils were taking turns to read, one pupil politely requested the reader to speak a little louder so that she could hear.
- Adults are good role models and have clear expectations for maintaining pupils' attention in class. Pupils respond quickly to adult direction and listen respectfully when sharing ideas. Consequently, they are able to focus on tasks with little disturbance. However, on occasions, the presentation of pupils' work is not consistent. This is because teachers' expectations are not made clear, or pupils simply do not try to write as neatly as they could.
- Learning is rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. A few pupils present challenging behaviour. Staff manage this well so that pupils quickly settle to their class activities.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good rates of attendance, which are above the national average. Leaders are tenacious in checking that pupils attend regularly. Where concerns are raised, contact is made with parents and meetings held to ensure that help and support are offered.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In the 2017 national assessments, a higher proportion of pupils than was seen nationally attained the expected standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in mathematics was in line with the national average. The proportions of pupils attaining at greater depth were below in writing and mathematics, although they were exceeded in reading.
- Leaders have rightly focused on increasing the number of pupils who are working at greater depth. In mathematics, challenges deepen pupils' thinking and help them apply their knowledge to a range of problem-solving activities. In writing, pupils develop stamina and fluency because teachers expect them to write at greater length. School information and work in pupils' workbooks show that current key stage 1 pupils are attaining well across the curriculum. Work is well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- In 2017, pupils at the end of key stage 2 had made above-average progress in reading and mathematics and average progress in writing. The proportions of pupils attaining both the expected and high standard in the national assessments were above those seen nationally. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education by the time they leave the school. However, for those who were middle prior-attaining pupils, lower proportions attained the higher standards in mathematics and at greater depth in writing when compared with the national average.
- Current pupils in key stage 2 make stronger progress in Years 5 and 6. It is more variable in Years 3 and 4. This is partly because teachers' skills are variable in

questioning pupils to gain an understanding of their progress and in providing challenging tasks.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who have a statement of special educational needs or an EHC plan make good progress from their individual starting points. Teachers make use of detailed support plans to break learning down into achievable targets. This enables staff to track pupils' progress accurately and to ensure that they are achieving well.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. Differences have diminished or are rapidly closing when compared with other pupils nationally. However, fewer disadvantaged pupils attain the higher standards in mathematics and at greater depth in writing because leaders do not set ambitious targets for their learning as they move through the school.
- Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the well-planned curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' skills and knowledge across the different subjects. The rich and inspiring curriculum provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities to explore their interests and refine their skills. The celebration of skills is captured in school displays and through performances for parents.
- The effective leadership of phonics has improved teaching. As a result, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check is above the national average. Pupils quickly gain a secure understanding of letters and the sounds they represent. They use this knowledge to develop broader skills in reading and writing.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start Reception Year with levels of development that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress so that by the end of the year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is higher than the national average. In this way, children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- The leadership of early years is effective. A strong sense of teamwork is evident and provision is consistently good across all the classrooms. The early years leader has high expectations and provides good direction for the assessment and planning of activities to meet children's different developmental needs. Adults share her enthusiasm and commitment to providing the best start for children's education. This, combined with good teaching, ensure that children achieve well across all areas of learning.
- Clear systems and routines help children to settle quickly. Adults establish positive relationships with children. This helps children to feel safe and confident. Behaviour is good and children are happy to follow instructions and to share and take turns. Adults show a high level of care for the children. They have received appropriate training to keep children safe, including paediatric first-aid training.
- Children benefit from a well-organised environment where they are encouraged to be active, curious and independent. They sustain high levels of concentration when working in groups or on their own. This is because teachers use assessment effectively to match learning activities to children's abilities. For example, one group used mathematical resources to help solve their own number sentences they had created

themselves.

- Training has helped adults to respond to children's interests while ensuring that children apply their basic skills. They support and guide children's learning skilfully. For example, use was made of World Cup football cards to make a mathematics game to improve children's skills of counting on. Adults ask open-ended questions to challenge children's thinking and develop their skills of problem solving successfully.
- Teachers work closely with parents to help share learning experiences at home and in school. Teachers use this information to review children's development needs. They plan individual activities that build on children's growing interests and skills. This is why all groups of children, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	114720
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10046480

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

Type of school	All-through primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	631
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Stanton
Headteacher	Matthew Badcock
Telephone number	01702 333360
Website	www.earlshallprimary.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@earlshallprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 June 2013

Information about this school

- Earls Hall Primary School is an amalgamation of infant and junior schools where the junior school was enlarged to become an all-through primary school. The primary school retains the registration number of the former junior school, which was last inspected in June 2013. This is the first inspection of the new primary school, which opened on 1 September 2015.
- Earls Hall is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an EHC plan is above the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British background.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum

expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed parts of 26 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documentation, including assessment information. They checked the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and other documentation concerned with the safer recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teams for English and mathematics, inclusion leaders, middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection and with parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors considered 229 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 134 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered 29 responses made on the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Annie Hookway	Ofsted Inspector
Lou Nelson	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Carter-Tufnell	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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