

Grafton Primary School

Grafton Road, Dagenham, Essex RM8 3EX

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders have improved the school significantly since the previous inspection. The school now provides a first-rate education.
- Leaders, governors, staff and pupils live by the school's values. The headteacher and his senior leadership team have successfully instilled a culture of respect and high expectations for all, which supports pupils to excel in their learning.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve highly across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported with their learning and participate fully in the life of the school.
- Middle and senior leaders work together effectively to develop the curriculum and monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The curriculum makes a substantial contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teachers are determined that pupils do their best and achieve highly. They plan thoroughly, taking the needs of all their pupils into account. The teaching of writing is not as strong as the teaching of reading and mathematics. Pupils' presentation of work, including handwriting, varies in quality. Leaders do not routinely share the strong practice in the teaching of writing to raise the quality of teaching still further.
- 100% of parents and carers responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, said they would recommend the school to other parents. One parent said, 'I am so happy that my children attend Grafton ... I feel part of a family at this school.'
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained and vigilant in their practice. Pupils are very well informed about personal safety. Parents and pupils alike say that this is a safe school.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are proud of their school. They care for one another. They appreciate that they have a strong voice. One pupil said that the best thing he liked about the school was that his views were respected.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a flying start with their education. Leaders and teachers work together to help children become confident and enthusiastic learners. Strong early years teaching helps children to make rapid progress in their learning. Leaders' identification of early writing as a weaker area has resulted in prompt action to address this.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in writing by:
 - encouraging children in the Nursery to engage in activities to support early writing development
 - improving the quality of presentation and handwriting
 - ensuring that the best practice is shared with all staff across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher and his senior leadership team lead with integrity. They work effectively with leaders and other staff to give pupils an outstanding education. Together with governors, they lead a school that lives by its values and successfully meets its aims of 'Together we learn, together we achieve'.
- This school is not about academic excellence for some but high achievement for all. Irrespective of pupils' starting points, leaders are tenacious in removing barriers to learning where they exist. Additional funding for pupils who are disadvantaged is used wisely. Leaders fund specific provision for individual pupils as well as equipment and additional support of benefit to all. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress and are achieving as well as their peers.
- Leadership of special educational needs is strong and resourceful. To fully meet pupils' needs, leaders established the Ark, an in-house school-funded provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Pupils attending the Ark achieve well from their starting points and are fully included in the school. Leaders know all pupils with SEND and ensure that their educational, health and social needs are effectively met.
- The curriculum is very strong. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and skilled in their own specialisms and successfully support others to be effective in their practice. In almost all subjects, the curriculum systematically builds pupils' knowledge and skills. Leaders keep the curriculum under constant review, adapting or renewing the content to ensure currency and to meet the needs of each cohort of pupils. This approach contributes to pupils' progress across subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded into the curriculum. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. They enjoy opportunities to share their own experiences with others. Older pupils talk to younger ones about the Muslim festival of Eid and about Ramadan. Pupils are proud that their faiths are known about and celebrated. Pupils benefit from attending a wide range of clubs, including sports clubs, art and gardening.
- Leaders use the sport premium to provide pupils with many opportunities to participate in a range of sports and games. Staff benefit from additional training which supports their strong practice in physical education (PE), including dance.
- Leaders take every opportunity to include parents and carers in their children's education. Regular newsletters, social events and workshops all enhance the partnership between home and school. Parents speak warmly about the school's leaders and teachers and about what they do to support their children.

Governance of the school

- Governors are experienced, well informed and well trained in their roles and responsibilities. They are clear about their safeguarding duties and those of the school leaders and staff. They are confident and clear about their duty to ensure that pupils are aware of risks and how to manage them. A significant strength is their knowledge

of the local community, which guides and informs their work.

- Governors share leaders' dedication in helping pupils achieve well. As one governor said, 'We are here for the love of the students.' They rigorously hold leaders to account, asking questions which challenge leaders to reflect on the impact of their actions. Minutes from previous meetings reflect governors' focused approach to fulfilling their duties.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- An effective culture of safeguarding is embedded across the school. Leaders, governors and staff are up to date with the latest statutory guidance. Regular training for all and induction for new staff ensure that safeguarding practice is strong. Staff are very clear about their safeguarding responsibilities and know how and when to report their concerns.
- Leaders and staff are aware of the local context and the risks that pupils might face. They make sure that the curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep themselves safe, including e-safety. Pupils who spoke to inspectors showed strong awareness of risks and confidence in how to manage risks.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers know pupils' learning needs very well and plan effectively to meet them. Interesting and memorable lessons inspire pupils to try hard. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and enjoy learning.
- Teachers encourage pupils to think about what they already know or have previously learned. In phonics lessons, teachers give pupils plenty of time to think about how to pronounce new sounds and remember those they have already learned.
- Reading is taught consistently well across the school. Teachers are knowledgeable about how to improve pupils' technical reading skills as well as how to instil a love of reading. In key stage 1, when coming across new words, pupils do not shy away from trying and instead use their phonics knowledge to help them. Over time, pupils read with increasing understanding and expression. They develop their knowledge of, and preferences for, different authors and types of books. Older pupils are confident in using texts to research and build their knowledge in different subjects. Pupils are successful readers in other subjects because of their increasing knowledge of texts, and their accuracy and fluency.
- Teachers give pupils meaningful opportunities to write in different genres and across the curriculum. Over time, pupils typically write with increasing sophistication, using accurate grammar and punctuation. In Year 2, teachers' skilful modelling of interesting vocabulary choices helped pupils to understand what was required. As a result, they offered some interesting adjectives and similes to enrich their descriptions. Pupils in Year 5 worked on finding alternative endings to the story they were reading. The teacher's skilful questioning helped pupils to consider a range of alternative options. Some inconsistencies between classes means that writing is not always consistently of the highest quality. Presentation of work varies, partly due to the recent introduction of

a new and different handwriting scheme and partly due to differences in teachers' expectations.

- Strong, knowledgeable teaching helps pupils become confident mathematicians. Mathematics is typically challenging for even the most able pupils. Teachers are highly skilled in explaining mathematical concepts and in encouraging pupils to test out their understanding with problems of increasing complexity. A small group of Year 6 pupils confidently discussed mathematics with inspectors, identifying work which showed secure understanding as well as examples where they needed additional practice and support.
- Pupils with SEND are very well supported because teachers are aware of their learning needs and plan activities to support them. Pupils in the Ark enjoy an effective balance of time spent in the sensory room and on short, focused activities to help their academic progress. In other classes, pupils with SEND receive very well targeted support which increases their self-reliance and motivation.
- Teachers use resources effectively and creatively to promote learning. In writing, grammar and mathematics lessons, resources to aid learning are readily available for pupils to use if they need them. In a Year 3 science lesson, pupils were excited about the chance to make their own short videos on the theme of flowering plant reproduction. Pupils were positively encouraged to share their prior knowledge with others to support everyone in making interesting and informative films. In an art lesson, due to the wide range of resources provided, pupils quickly became engrossed in creating pictures using leaves and real fruit.
- Teachers encourage pupils to talk to each other about their learning and to collaborate in their activities. In a Year 5 PE lesson, pupils discussed how they were going to improve on their moves and sequence for performing the 'Haka'. In a Year 1 PE lesson, pupils worked in pairs to refine and improve their marching with straight backs and high knees.
- Teaching is as strong in some other subjects, including science, art, PE and history, as it is in mathematics and literacy. In these subjects, pupils steadily acquire the relevant skills and knowledge to learn more and understand more in subject-specific ways.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders have successfully created a cohesive community where all pupils are valued. Relationships between pupils and their peers and between pupils and adults are respectful and kind. Adults are excellent role models. Pupils are so proud to be a part of the school.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum makes extensive provision to support pupils' well-being. Being a 'rights respecting school' is a status understood and held dear by pupils and staff alike. Older pupils appreciate that they not only know their 'rights' but they also understand how to live by them.
- All pupils who spoke to inspectors said they felt safe in school. Their parents and staff

agree that this is a safe place to be. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and always dealt with.

- Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility. As members of the school council, they proudly attend regular meetings to hear the views of others and help make decisions to improve things for everyone. Candidates for becoming 'Headteacher for the Day' explained with confidence and maturity what they would do if given the opportunity. Above all, pupils are clear about their responsibilities towards one another in their peer group, of including them and respecting their views. Pupils in Year 6 feel well prepared for secondary school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Their behaviour when moving around the school and at playtimes and lunchtimes is exemplary. They are kind and show generosity of spirit towards others. Pupils know and understand the behaviour code. 'Green is good' is an expectation known by all.
- On the playground, pupils are happy and play together cooperatively. They share equipment during games and line up calmly at the end of breaktimes ready for their next lessons. At lunchtime, pupils enjoy their lunch, sitting in friendship groups and generally getting on well with one another.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' attendance and punctuality have improved. Pupils know the importance of coming to school on time. Attendance is now above that found nationally. Leaders are tenacious in following up any persistent absenteeism which has resulted in a fall in the numbers of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make strong progress in English, mathematics, science and other areas of the curriculum, including art, PE and history. All pupils are challenged to achieve. Lower-achieving pupils are given timely support to do their best.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils attain standards above those seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. During their time in the school, pupils make very good progress from generally low starting points when they start school in Reception.
- In 2018, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was above average and was average in writing. Disadvantaged pupils made the same rate of progress as their peers.
- In 2018, pupils in Year 1 attained at the expected standard in the phonics screening check. This was a significant improvement on the previous year. Current pupils have strong phonics knowledge. They use phonics to read, write, segment and blend words. Over time, they learn the difference between words that are made up and words that are real. Strong phonics support, combined with access to a broad range of age- and stage-appropriate books, helps develop pupils' very good early reading skills.
- Pupils continue to make strong progress in reading because they have access to good-quality books and because direct teaching of reading continues into key stage 2. Pupils

read aloud with confidence, clarity and expression because of continuous and purposeful teaching.

- Pupils' progress in writing is more uneven. The teaching of writing, while typically strong, is less so in some classes. Not all teachers expect pupils to practise and build on their skills and knowledge in the same systematic way. Different expectations of presentation hamper pupils' efforts to produce neat and tidy work in a consistent manner.
- Pupils make strong progress in mathematics because of teachers' expertise and because their knowledge and understanding of calculation is well embedded. They confidently approach new problems and investigations. They are unafraid to tackle a difficult mathematical challenge, knowing that support is there if they need it.
- Pupils with SEND, including pupils in the Ark, make strong progress from their starting points. All adults working with them know how to support their learning in a timely and purposeful way.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress because they are well supported by teachers and are motivated to learn. Written work showed no distinct difference between the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those of their peers.
- Leaders encourage teachers to lead the learning but, at the same time, they are vigilant about checking on impact. Pupil progress meetings and regular monitoring, including external scrutiny, all serve to support leaders' efforts to secure strong outcomes for all.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The early years gives pupils a flying start. Leaders are ambitious for every child to achieve and work with children and their families towards this end.
- Children start in the early years with a very broad range of needs. Typically, their knowledge and skills are well below those expected for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is close to that found nationally. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- A significant strength is the partnership with parents. Adults make sure that children's learning is shared with parents, encouraging regular communication about skills and knowledge acquired. In a similar way, leaders' partnership with other providers helps to support transitions and improve practice.
- Leaders make effective use of the early years pupil premium to support the needs of individual children right from the start. As a result, more children are making stronger progress and achieving at greater depth as they move through the school.
- The quality of teaching is strong. Adults working with the youngest children model warm and kind relationships. They provide a broad range of interesting activities for children to choose from. Mathematical activities help children with number recognition, counting, size, shape and measure. Children use their phonics skills well to help them with reading but they do not routinely choose activities where there are opportunities to write.
- Children behave impeccably. They respect their environment, tidying away and

replacing things where they come from. They show kindness towards one another. They know and understand the routines and rhythm of the sessions and abide by the rules.

School details

Unique reference number	101206
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10088770

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	888
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms S Khanom
Headteacher	Mr M Nicholson
Telephone number	02037 275171
Website	www.graftonprimary.co.uk/
Email address	office@grafton.bardaglea.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2018

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. During the school's last section 8 inspection in June 2018, the school demonstrated significant improvement in specific areas. The school's last section 5 inspection took place in November 2013 when the school was judged to be good overall.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well above that found nationally.
- Pupils attending the school come from a range of ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is also above that found nationally. The proportion with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. The majority were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of pupils' written work to check pupils' progress.
- Inspectors met with school leaders and governors to discuss self-evaluation, safeguarding and priorities for the next steps of school improvement.
- Inspectors met with staff, including those with other leadership responsibilities. They took account of the 68 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and at playtimes and lunchtimes. They met with pupils more formally to talk about their views of the school. They took account of the results from the school's recent pupil surveys. Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about their written work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents related to safeguarding, leadership and governance, and school improvement.
- Inspectors spoke to parents to seek their views about the school and took account of the 63 responses to Parent View and the free-text service.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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