

Ghyllgrove Primary School

The Gore, Basildon, Essex SS14 2BG

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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 and governors have skilfully amalgamated the infant and junior schools. Staff work well to achieve common goals.
- Leaders have established a real community school that serves the needs of pupils, parents and carers well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.
- Progress and attainment at key stage 2 have consistently been in line with national averages. Current progress is similarly strong.
- Staff benefit from useful training that equips them with valuable skills, helping them to develop professionally.
- Teachers plan learning that enthuses pupils and helps them develop key skills. Pupils make good progress over time and are well supported by the team of teaching assistants.
- In recent years, pupils' attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2 has been broadly in line with national averages. Attainment in key stage 1 in writing and mathematics dropped last year. This has been addressed.
- Pupils feel safe, well looked after and cared for. They have an extremely good knowledge of how to stay safe, including when online.
- Staff adapt learning well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The hearing impairment unit provides effective support to help pupils make good progress and become more independent learners.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school. Survey respondents unequivocally recommend the school to other parents.
- Governors know the school well and give up their time freely. They provide effective challenge and support.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of useful learning experiences. A current review is in place to deliver better sequencing of learning.
- Pupils develop key skills well in both English and mathematics. These are not consistently applied across other subject areas.
- Pupils, especially most-able pupils, do not develop their mathematical reasoning or creative writing skills as strongly as other aspects of their work.
- The early years provision prepares children well for Year 1. However, the quality of the outdoor learning does not match that found inside.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure that pupils apply their skills, knowledge and understanding gained in English and mathematics to improve the quality of their work across the foundation subjects.
- Raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - pupils, particularly those who are most able, are challenged to achieve more by consistently developing their use of figurative language in their written work and their reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Improve the early years provision by:
 - increasing the quality of the outdoor provision so that children can develop their reading, writing and number skills across all areas of learning more effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has skilfully and sensitively managed the successful amalgamation of the junior and infant schools. In this, she has been very well supported by governors, other leaders and staff.
- The school has changed significantly. Members of the recently extended senior leadership team are clear about their roles and responsibilities and carry them out well. There is now a strong leadership team and the school is well placed to move forward.
- Leaders and governors know the school well. They can explain the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. Their self-evaluation plan provides them with a useful platform to secure further developments.
- The school is highly inclusive. Respect, kindness and tolerance are embedded throughout daily life. Pupils embody fundamental British values by 'living, growing, and succeeding together'.
- Leaders are very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand and celebrate differences. Weekly assemblies give pupils a strong awareness and respect for people from other cultures or backgrounds. They understand the importance of looking after each other. One pupil, reflecting the views of others, commented, 'New people are made to feel welcome in this school.'
- All staff are committed to doing their very best for pupils academically, socially and emotionally. Staff are a unified team. They work well together and learn from each other. The results from the staff survey are overwhelmingly positive. Pupils receive a good-quality and well-rounded education.
- Following the amalgamation, leaders are reviewing their curriculum offer. They are in the process of developing new long-term plans to remove any repetition of topics, improve the sequence of learning and ensure better coverage, especially in the foundation subjects.
- All staff benefit from useful training that helps them to carry out their roles more effectively. Newly qualified teachers are supported particularly well. This ensures that the standard of teaching remains high and where it is less consistent, it improves quickly. The school has a good track record of developing staff at all levels into effective leaders.
- Leaders monitor all areas of school provision closely. They continually evaluate the effectiveness of their actions and adapt their approach if necessary. Leaders have sensibly rolled out their improvement programme to address the most important priorities first over a timescale that does not overburden staff.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is very well managed. There is a clear understanding of pupils' different needs, alongside bespoke support to help them address their most urgent priorities. The consistency of approach helps pupils to understand how to overcome their frustrations and become independent learners.
- Leaders know their pupils and the community well. They work closely with parents and use additional funding to help disadvantaged pupils overcome any barriers to learning

that they face. Teachers' careful planning, alongside effective additional support, helps disadvantaged pupils make good progress academically. Additionally, pupils are given access to other support services linked to their emotional health and well-being, helping them to attend more often, regulate their behaviour better and be successful.

- The primary physical education and sport premium is used effectively to develop teachers' skills and help pupils participate in a wider range of sporting activities. More pupils are becoming involved and seeing the benefits of a healthier and fitter lifestyle.
- Leaders provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. Many pupils enjoy the mini-athletics, multi-skills activities, clubs and the competitive fixtures against other local partnership schools, where they have experienced significant success in hockey.
- Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are very positive about the effectiveness of the school. Every single respondent would recommend the school to other parents. They consider that the school is well led and managed, and that their children are happy at the school.
- At the start of the school day, parents told inspectors how much they valued the work of school staff. They particularly valued the school's inclusive nature and how they have been helped to access other services to help their children. Other parents highlighted the approachable staff, frequent communication and positive relationships as real strengths.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a range of different strengths and experiences to the role. They give up their time freely and check standards through routine visits to the school. They access training that equips them with useful skills which they use to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have been instrumental in the successful amalgamation of the two schools. This has been completed quickly and highly effectively.
- Governors' minutes provide evidence of their effective challenge and support, especially linked to finances and premises.
- Governors ensure that their legal duties, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met. The link safeguarding governor attends training and carries out regular visits to audit standards, including the record of pre-employment checks.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school provides staff at all levels with regular safeguarding training to ensure there is a strong culture in place to keep pupils safe. Staff are clear about how to identify pupils who are potentially at risk and are confident in using the procedures for the reporting of any safeguarding concerns.
- School leaders log and follow up safeguarding concerns quickly and effectively. They have strong links in place with other agencies and work very well together. Together, they support families well to access the help that they need.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers' high expectations set the right tone. Pupils respond well and learning time is used productively. Pupils take pride in their studies, as seen through the quality of their presentation, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teachers make good use of their secure subject knowledge to plan activities that pupils enjoy. Teachers model learning effectively. They highlight common errors and help pupils to put right any misconceptions they may have.
- The learning environment is well planned to support pupils to achieve well. Displays are bright, vibrant and celebrate pupils' achievements, such as the English 'working walls' to showcase pupils' writing.
- The precise language used by teachers helps pupils to widen their vocabulary and use the correct subject terminology appropriately. For instance, pupils explain how they check the accuracy of their answers in mathematics by using the inverse operation. In their written work, pupils can explain that 'adverbs can give additional information about the verb and usually end with the suffix 'ly'.'
- Additional adults in the classroom provide effective support to help pupils learn successfully. They question, challenge and query without giving excessive help, meaning that pupils grow in independence, confidence and understanding.
- Pupils with additional needs are well supported in class. Similarly, pupils in the specialist resource base are well catered for. Staff use a range of approaches to help them access the work and make good progress.
- Teachers' consistency of approach successfully develops pupils' arithmetic and grammatical skills. These are secure. Pupils' mathematical reasoning abilities and their use of figurative language are not as consistently strong.
- Some pupils, notably those who are most-able pupils, are not always moved on to more difficult work as quickly as they might be, which slows their progress. This is more evident in the topic books where pupils' work does not show that they consistently use and apply the skills they have learned in English and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's 'learning powers' have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils 'believe in themselves, stay focused, challenge themselves and are proud' of their school.
- Pupils take on various leadership roles around the school, such as play leaders and taking responsibilities in communal assemblies. This helps them develop a thorough appreciation of fundamental British values which they epitomise in everyday life.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are respectful, kind and look after each other by 'being a buddy, and not a bully'.

- Unequivocally, pupils say they feel safe. Staff and parents agree. The well-planned curriculum helps them to mitigate any potential dangers to their safety. The e-safety and cyber bullying programmes, alongside assemblies and 'friendship day', ensure that pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online.
- Pupils say that there is always a member of staff to help them if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils also say that bullying is not a problem at the school. On the rare occasions it does happen, pupils say that it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite, listen to instructions and welcome visitors to their school.
- Leaders have a clear behaviour management policy in place. Pupils understand the consequence system and 'going for gold'. Staff consistently apply it, and it works. It focuses more on celebrating successes, such as the new certificate assemblies in key stage 1. Pupils are also rewarded for making the right choices by getting a 'named brick' posted on the wall. This means a lot to them.
- Pupils are keen to do well. They adopt the 'I can do it' approach that builds their confidence and raises their self-esteem. Their attentiveness and readiness to listen support their learning well.
- Pupils enjoy school, and this is reflected by their good attendance. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the past three years, pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have been consistently in line with national averages. The proportion achieving the higher standard has also been broadly average.
- In recent years, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been in line with national averages at the end of key stage 1. However, in 2018, pupils' attainment in mathematics and writing dipped below average. The work in pupils' books shows that they are now making rapid gains in their learning and making good progress from their starting points.
- Staff work hard to raise achievement in writing and this is paying dividends. In key stage 1, pupils consistently follow the 'think, say, write, check' approach to developing their use of command sentences.
- In a Year 2 class, pupils develop their descriptive language well. One pupil's work stated, 'Princess Pearl's dreams are to be a vet. That is why she is so exuberant, and her dress is glistening.' This example is typical of pupils' increasing confidence and accurate use of more sophisticated vocabulary.
- In key stage 2, pupils write in paragraphs using a wide range of punctuation, vocabulary and sentence structures and across a range of genres and audiences. There are some good examples of pupils writing expressively. However, this is not fully

embedded yet and remains an area of focus.

- In mathematics, pupils show a strong understanding of number and complete more complex calculations as they move through the school. These progress into real-life problems linked to shape, space and measure that help pupils to apply their knowledge successfully.
- Careful monitoring and effective support ensure that attainment differences in key stage 1 for disadvantaged pupils disappear by the end of key stage 2. These pupils leave the school having made similar progress to their non-disadvantaged peers nationally.
- A range of strategies are used to help the pupils with SEND to work more independently. The consistent use of language and picture sequencing, alongside other visual and physical resources, is particularly effective. In the special resource base, staff use a range of techniques to help pupils effectively develop their communication skills. Pupils with SEND make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils read every day. The focus on the early acquisition of reading skills through guided reading texts helps pupils with gaps in their learning to make rapid progress. Pupils' use of phonics to blend and segment helps them to succeed across other areas of the curriculum.
- Leaders monitor pupils' progress very carefully. Those who fall behind get extra support, helping them to make significant improvements in their reading ages, comprehension and arithmetic skills.
- Pupils recall facts and knowledge learned across the wider curriculum readily. They clearly develop a greater knowledge and understanding in the foundation subjects. However, the quality of the written work in topic books does not match that seen in English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children join the early years provision with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those typically expected for their age. Some children, many of whom are disadvantaged, arrive with very basic literacy and number skills. Leaders ensure that children make good overall progress across the early years and are prepared for Year 1 effectively.
- Children use their phonics knowledge to read and write simple sentences. They have developed their concept of number, including removing one item because they have too many when counting to a set number.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the future development of the early years provision. This includes encouraging boys and reluctant readers to develop their skills across all areas of learning.
- Teaching in the early years is effective. Staff continually assess what children can do across a range of situations and use this to plan their next steps. Children make good progress in reading, writing and number because they complete interesting activities linked to structured sentence writing, phonics and arithmetic. Children with SEND receive well-considered support and make good progress from their starting points.

- Until last year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year had been in line with the national average. It dipped last year. Leaders have adapted the timetable so that more formal learning activities take place in the morning. The evidence in children's learning journal workbooks shows that children this year have made strong progress from their starting points.
- The new writing initiative helps children to develop simple sentences using capital letters. Evidence in children's learning journals shows that the sentence structure work is now firmly in place and over half the children in the cohort are making accelerated progress in their writing.
- Adults are well trained to care for and safeguard children. Children appear happy and confident. There is a welcoming and nurturing environment and children learn valuable social skills, like waiting their turn and sharing. Although only about a quarter of the children come from the school's own nursery provision, the effective transition arrangements allow children to settle quickly and feel safe.
- Parents work closely with the school. Learning journals monitor progress as well as celebrating children's achievements outside of school, including the 'wow moment' slips. Workshops on phonics, writing and mathematics help parents to support their children more effectively on any work completed at home.
- The outdoor provision is used well for activities such as counting boots to consolidate children's understanding of number bonds. However, it is under-resourced and is not of the same high standard as the indoor provision.

School details

Unique reference number	114914
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10077820

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	491
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Moloney
Headteacher	Judith Gibbon
Telephone number	01268 450067
Website	www.ghyllgroveprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	jgibbon@ghyllgrove.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average, including those who have an education, health and care plan.
- Ghyllgrove Primary School was formed through the amalgamation of the community infant school and junior school in September 2018.
- The school has a specialist resource base. It caters for seven pupils who have hearing impairments. This was checked as part of this inspection.
- There is also alternative provision on the school site to support pupils with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Referrals are via the primary SEMH panel. No pupils on the school roll attend this provision. Evidence of its effectiveness was not collected as part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Ghyllgrove Primary School kept the unique reference number (URN) of the junior school. As it lowered its statutory pupil age from 7 to 4 years in September 2018, the school was inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- The inspection team observed pupils' learning in lessons across all year groups. All observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day and around the site were made. The internal exclusion centre and the specialist resource base for pupils with additional needs were visited and checked.
- The inspection team looked carefully at the quality of work in pupils' books to assess progress and teaching over time.
- The inspection team considered the 68 responses to the online parental questionnaire, Parent View, together with 30 written responses, the 24 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 52 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team met with the chair of the governing body, two other governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders, staff and different groups of pupils. Inspectors observed a wide range of school activities, including an assembly.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- An inspector held a meeting with the local authority school improvement partner.
- The inspection team analysed the school's self-evaluation documentation, development plan, governors' minutes, school policies and progress information.
- Inspectors examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils in the school.

Inspection team

John Randall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Cloke	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Warboys	Ofsted Inspector

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