

The Gateway Primary Free School

Marshfoot Road, Grays, Essex RM16 4LU

Inspection dates

18–19 June 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Ambitious leaders have made a notable difference to the quality of education pupils receive. Leaders are determined, focused and have been effective in raising standards.
- Good-quality teaching, learning and assessment are underpinned by secure curriculum plans. Most teachers make sure that pupils are interested in their learning and progress well.
- Leaders have secured better standards for pupils since the previous inspection. Pupils' outcomes are continuing to improve. Most pupils in the school now make good progress.
- Leaders make sure that pupils overcome the barriers to learning they might face. Leaders use additional funding appropriately and effectively to support these pupils to achieve well.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively and achieve well.
- Pupils behave well, in and out of lessons. They are polite and keen to learn.
- Early years provision is strong. Leaders and other adults use time, resources and activities well to ensure that children make good progress and behave well.
- Most pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that prepares them well for their next steps in education. However, this curriculum is not as well developed in Year 6.
- On occasion, teachers do not have high expectations of how pupils should present their work.
- Teachers do not routinely challenge the most able pupils to achieve the highest standards in mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress pupils make by:
 - ensuring that best practice in teaching, learning and assessment is consistent across the school
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations for the quality of work in pupils' books
 - increasing teachers' expectations of how well the most able pupils should achieve in mathematics.
- Develop the curriculum so that pupils experience the same quality of coverage of different subjects in Year 6 as they do in other year groups.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- From the very top, leaders are ambitious for pupils' success. They have clearly defined strategies for achieving high standards of behaviour and good academic progress. As a result of their determined and effective leadership, standards have improved since the previous inspection of the school.
- Leaders set themselves clear targets against which they measure the impact of the actions they take. When things are going well, they celebrate their achievements. When they find that plans could be more effectively implemented, they take action, such as guiding staff in how to improve their practice. This has secured the good quality of education in the school and equipped leaders with a clear understanding of what to do next.
- Leaders have changed the way early reading is taught. This has been effective and follows from leaders' belief that all pupils should be able to read well. Through regular and well-focused training, leaders ensure that adults adhere closely to their one chosen phonics scheme. Adults implement this scheme skilfully.
- Leaders' focus on reading has made a difference for older pupils too. Pupils told inspectors of their enjoyment of reading. Inspectors heard pupils read with great enthusiasm and listened as pupils recited poetry from memory. Pupils read widely and often, in school and at home.
- Leaders have improved writing and mathematics provision. The teaching of writing and mathematics follows curriculum plans and strategies determined by leaders. Teachers' planning and implementation are monitored by leaders, who provide guidance and support to maximise the effectiveness of teachers' work. This ensures that most pupils secure the skills and knowledge they need.
- Additional funding for pupils with SEND is used well. Leaders monitor pupils' progress against individual targets. Additional adults are trained to support these pupils well in classes. The effectiveness of this is monitored by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). As a result, pupils with SEND are able to access their education well and make good progress.
- Leaders make good use of funding for disadvantaged pupils. Specific approaches, such as 'key workers' discussing pupils' reading with them, underpin teaching which meets these pupils' needs well. These pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum, including extra-curricular provision, effectively supports the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social education. Pupils benefit from a variety of clubs, trips and other opportunities, such as cultural workshops, charity days and assemblies, to consider and learn about the wider world. Leaders monitor pupils' involvement in these to ensure that their experiences are wide ranging.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively, and evaluated regularly, by leaders to improve pupils' sporting experiences and to ensure that good value is achieved. Sports coaches promote collaboration between pupils and help teachers to develop their sports teaching skills. Participation in a sports partnership increases pupils' opportunities to take part in competitive tournaments.

Outdoor gym equipment is used by pupils during their free time to keep fit, and the range of different sports on offer after school ensures that over 70% of pupils have attended after-school sports provision.

- Leaders are outward-looking in their ongoing work to improve provision. They seek out best practice in other schools and adapt this to meet the needs of pupils in this school. For example, leaders visited a high-performing school and learned some of the key strengths in their approach to teaching. They arranged for their staff to receive training in these techniques. As a result, teaching improved.
- While the curriculum ensures that most pupils progress through a wide range of subject areas in a logical sequence over time, the wider curriculum is not as well developed in Year 6. Pupils do access other subjects, but the sequencing and development of this curriculum is not as evolved as in other year groups.

Governance of the school

- The trust set the high standard against which success in the school is measured. It represents the trust's commitment to support pupils in this school's community to do as well as they can. The goal of the trust is to ensure that pupils are equipped with the education they need to make choices about their careers and lifestyles when they complete their journey through education. They recognise that learning well from the very start is critical.
- Following the previous inspection, the trust fundamentally has changed the way in which the school is led. The trust board took direct responsibility for monitoring standards. They appointed a new headteacher and restructured the school leadership team. Directors of the trust hold trust leaders and school leaders effectively to account for their work and for the quality of education the school provides.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain accurate records on the checks made on adults who work with pupils. Safeguarding records show that concerns are passed on by staff and followed up appropriately by leaders, including with external agencies when appropriate.
- Leaders teach pupils how to keep safe through personal, social and health education, visiting speakers and assemblies. Pupils learn about, for example, online safety, stranger danger and road safety. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said they feel safe and that they have someone in school they can talk to if they are worried about something.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and learning support assistants are well trained and apply the school's chosen approach to phonics consistently and well. As a result, pupils learn to read the text they see and catch up from starting points which are often low.
- This early work to support pupils' reading is built on by teachers as pupils move through the school. Most teachers apply leaders' approach to the teaching of reading

to build on pupils' enthusiasm for reading well. Books are selected for pupils to read to ensure that they develop competency in their reading over time. Pupils are successfully encouraged to read at home, while those who do not are given extra reading time and support in school. Teachers choose books to read with pupils, so they can share their passion for reading.

- Teachers typically have high expectations of how well pupils should write. They employ strategies such as discussing with pupils the different words they could use and making sure pupils understand the purpose and context of their writing. They identify misconceptions in pupils' work and help pupils to put these right. As a result, pupils' writing develops well.
- Teachers often make good use of questions and discussion to ensure that pupils share their ideas. This helps pupils to deepen and consolidate their understanding and to grow in confidence.
- Teachers have well-established routines and high expectations for pupils' attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils remain on task and time is not wasted.
- In most year groups, teachers use the clearly planned and broad curriculum well. For example, inspectors saw pupils being inspired to learn with interest and enthusiasm in religious education, and questioning being used well in science to develop an understanding of the life cycle of plants.
- Learning support assistants (LSAs) provide effective support for pupils with SEND. They help pupils to understand the work they are doing through the carefully crafted questions they ask.
- Leaders' work has ensured that the teaching of mathematics is now underpinned by a consistent approach to how mathematics should be learned. This helps pupils to learn basic mathematical skills and to apply these to different problems. However, teachers' expectations of the most able pupils in mathematics are not high enough.
- Some teachers do not insist on high standards of presentation in pupils' books. The quality of some pupils' written work is not consistently good.
- While teaching, learning and assessment are typically strong, there is a small amount of variation in practice which does not maximise the progress that pupils can make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers involve pupils in lessons regularly and effectively. They encourage pupils to speak to, and in front of, others. They praise them for doing well and develop positive relationships with pupils. This means that pupils are happy to share their ideas and that they speak with confidence.
- Leaders promote pupils' understanding of, and respect for, difference well. Pupils told inspectors about the welcoming ethos of the school and were clear that it is fine to be different.
- Adults protect pupils from bullying. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is unusual. They

are confident that, if it happens, adults will deal with it well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils play well together in the free time, using equipment and space sensibly. During lessons, pupils are attentive, work hard and are keen to succeed. They listen well to adults and to their peers.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors were impressed by pupils' polite and welcoming attitudes. Pupils respond well to the modelling of good manners demonstrated by adults, holding doors open for others and saying please and thank you. One pupil exemplified the positive attitudes demonstrated by many when he said, 'the headteacher makes us feel like this is our house'.
- The school's records reflect the positive behaviours and attitudes to learning seen by inspectors. They show a decline in the incidence of poor behaviour and reflect the improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
- Absence rates remain higher than the national averages. Leaders continue to work systematically and persistently, with parents, carers and with external agencies, to reduce absences.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over time, pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 has been significantly below the national average. Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has also been low. Leaders have rectified the historical weaknesses of teaching in reading and pupils now learn to read well.
- Pupils' progress in writing in the past has been variable. Most pupils now in the school make strong progress in writing and develop the range of skills necessary to write well.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved to be broadly in line with the national average. It continues to improve for pupils currently in the school, though some pupils' understanding is not as strongly underpinned by high-quality written mathematics as it should be. The most able do not reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and pupils with SEND, are well supported and, along with other pupils in the school, make good progress across their studies.
- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for secondary school study by a logically planned and broad curriculum which extends their learning beyond reading, writing and mathematics. While this is evident in most year groups, it is not as strong in Year 6.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years benefit from well-equipped indoor and outdoor areas. Adults use these well to ensure that children participate in activities which fascinate them. Adults carefully assess children's progress in different areas of learning and target any gaps. They structure activities to ensure that what children do is meaningful and helps them to learn. As a result, children make good progress through Reception and are

ready for Year 1.

- Well-established routines ensure that transitions between activities are swift and no learning time is lost. Adults make sure children know what they need to do so that they are able to get on with it quickly. They ensure that resources are readily at hand for children to use. Children are supported effectively in understanding how to use time in school well.
- Children in the early years behave well. They interact well with each other and with adults. This was exemplified in the way they confidently spoke with inspectors and enthusiastically discussed what they were doing.
- Leaders make sure that children receive teaching that meets their needs. They make sure adults in the early years are well trained in regular sessions focusing on different skills, such as effective questioning. They deploy staff well. For example, leaders target additional speech and language support towards some children. This is effective in helping these children to speak confidently and clearly.

School details

Unique reference number	138334
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10088677

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Hilary Hodgson
Headteacher	Daniel George
Telephone number	01375 489094
Website	www.theglc-primaryfreeschool.org.uk
Email address	admin.gatewayprimary@theglc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 February 2017

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, significant changes have been made to the leadership of the school. A new headteacher has been appointed and the senior leadership team has been restructured.
- The Gateway Primary Free School is part of the Gateway Learning Community (GLC) multi-academy trust. The work of the school is overseen by the GLC board of directors.
- Since the previous inspection, the trust has changed the way in which it monitors the effectiveness of the school. Instead of a local governing body, the trust now monitors the academy through a sub-committee known as the progress board. This meets on a monthly basis and reports back to the board of directors.
- The school makes use of the Thurrock Turnaround Centre to provide alternative provision for a small number of pupils for short periods of time. There were no pupils accessing this provision at the time of the inspection.

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There is a larger than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attend the school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes across the school, sometimes accompanied by leaders, reviewed the work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers, the chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and two members of the board of directors.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school, improvement plans, safeguarding records, an external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding and records of the work of staff with pupils. They considered the school's information on pupils' attendance, progress and behaviour, and reviewed minutes of meetings of the board of directors.
- Inspectors considered the 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the six responses to the free-text option. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff or pupil surveys. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the inspection and with pupils during their free time and in organised meetings.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tania Perry	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Tims	Ofsted Inspector

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