

Grange Primary School

Elder Avenue, Wickford, Essex SS12 0LR

Inspection dates

25 to 26 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders' monitoring, evaluation and staff development have not been effective enough to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across all year groups.
- Over time, teachers have not planned learning to meet the needs of pupils effectively. Consequently, pupils' progress across the curriculum, including in mathematics and reading, is not consistently good.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough throughout the school for the most able and middle prior-attaining pupils.
- Governors' checks on aspects of the school's work are not thorough enough.
- Leaders do not use the assessment information that the school gathers on pupils' progress to focus teaching and build on what pupils already know.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong, but the quality of teaching varies widely. Tasks are often not well matched to pupils' abilities. They are often pitched too low.
- Cluster leaders have not implemented actions to consistently improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within their areas of responsibilities. This has resulted in variable rates of progress for pupils in some year groups, across subjects.
- Teaching of phonics varies in the school. Consequently, some groups of pupils do not make the progress they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Current pupils are making good progress in writing because the teaching of writing is effective.
- The headteacher has ensured that the curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities. These help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their tolerance and respect for others.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are a key strength of the school. The caring, inclusive ethos of the school ensures that pupils are safe and happy and behave well.
- The experienced and knowledgeable leader for the early years provides insightful leadership. As a result, children make good progress in the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - cluster leaders have a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the progress that pupils make, within their responsibility areas
 - sharp monitoring and evaluation and targeted staff development result in consistently good or better teaching, learning and assessment in all year groups, especially for lower key stage 2
 - the governing body reviews its practice and improves the challenge that it provides to school leaders.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - teaching is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, in particular the prior middle- and higher-attaining pupils
 - teaching develops pupils' specific skills and knowledge further in reading, comprehension and mathematics so that pupils are able to make consistently strong progress
 - teachers make good use of a range of assessment information being provided to them to plan effective next steps and challenge that builds on what pupils already know
 - leaders embed the developments in the teaching of phonics to ensure that pupils' progress continues to improve across the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good. This is because the actions that the headteacher and senior leaders have taken have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should at the end of either key stage 1 or key stage 2.
- Training and staff development have not had enough, or rapid enough, impact on pupils' outcomes. Teaching is not consistently strong enough across the school for current pupils to make good progress.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have not acted quickly and effectively enough to overcome persistent low attainment and below-average progress in reading and mathematics at key stage 2. They have recently acted effectively to improve the use of assessment to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge in mathematics and to improve the curriculum for reading. However, it is too early to see the impact on outcomes at the end of key stage 2.
- Senior leaders' monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and pupils' progress have not led to sharply focused plans and rapid action to improve pupils' outcomes. Leaders have begun to make appropriate changes to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, but the impact of this work is not evident consistently across the school yet.
- Cluster leaders are increasingly confident in using information to identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind or in need of even more focused support. Cluster leaders work closely with their teams to plan learning coherently. However, much of their work has not yet led to secure outcomes for pupils across a wide range of subjects.
- The relatively recently appointed leader of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has developed procedures for planning and reviewing support for pupils with SEND. She has improved the system for checking the academic progress and personal development of pupils with SEND. She has audited the needs of staff to better meet the range of pupils' SEND and has started to provide staff training.
- The pupil premium strategy for 2018/19 is well matched to the needs of the small group of disadvantaged pupils. The pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support for pupils, most of which is effective. For example, the additional support for social and emotional development, including pupils' emotional well-being, helps these pupils be successful in school and is raising their levels of self-confidence.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sports funding is used effectively to deploy specialist sports coaches to provide a wider range of sporting activities for pupils. During the inspection, a group was enjoying a lunchtime fencing session.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are able to learn in creative subjects such as art and music. There are examples of pupils' artistic creations in different parts of the school. Pupils' enthusiasm for music is seen clearly in the numbers who participate skilfully and enthusiastically in the choir and in the use of African drums. Pupils perform to external audiences, including recently when they opened a concert at The Barbican and at

Southwark Cathedral.

- Overall, the school's contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is one of its strengths. Leaders ensure that the school is inclusive. They also ensure that pupils leave with a good sense of right and wrong and a good understanding of how to treat others with respect.
- Support from the local authority has been appropriately targeted. The headteacher and senior leaders have used this support effectively in order to assist with improvements to the quality of phonics teaching and for strengthening the effectiveness of governance. However, many of these improvements are not yet consistently embedded across the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are aware that the progress of pupils has not been strong enough. Governors have worked with the local authority to develop a clearer understanding of the key issues facing the school. They now have strategies in place to address these key issues. However, until very recently, they have not sufficiently challenged leaders about pupils' progress and have accepted the weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Governors are committed to the school and support leaders well. They make regular monitoring visits to the school. However, these visits have not been focused on clear school improvement strategies. Consequently, governors have not ensured that leaders are addressing the weaknesses in teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Appropriate checks are made on the suitability of adults working at the school. Leaders work closely with other agencies to support pupils' welfare. Any concerns over pupils' welfare are swiftly addressed, and the school has effective links with external partners.
- Staff have been trained appropriately and have received up-to-date advice on safeguarding issues. They know how to communicate any concerns promptly to staff responsible for safeguarding, both in person and through the school system for logging concerns. Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out. Leaders have established effective procedures for investigating concerns and following up issues. Leaders are tenacious in their work with external agencies, and they ensure that appropriate actions take place to support and safeguard pupils and their families.
- The overwhelming majority of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who responded in writing, felt that their children were safe, and they praised the quality of care provided by the school. One said, 'My children have always been encouraged to be the best they can be,' with another stating that, 'You won't find a happier, more positive place for children.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across a range of subjects, and this results in pupils making inconsistent progress. However, support and development are beginning to improve the quality of teaching. This is particularly evident in the teaching of phonics. Consequently, there is now some strong teaching in this area, but this is not secure across the school.
- Where teaching is most effective, sequences of learning are well planned to build pupils' knowledge and skills, and teachers match learning tasks well to the abilities of pupils. However, where teaching is less effective, tasks are not well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils should be achieving are not consistently high enough. As a result, pupils do not make good progress from their starting points. Tasks are often too easy and do not enable pupils, particularly the middle ability and the most able pupils, to make good progress.
- In some classes, pupils' progress is slowed by work that is not stretching enough and that is over-reliant on worksheets. These sheets can limit, by the spaces they provide for writing, the depth and amount of specific detail that pupils should go into.
- Teaching is not always skilful and flexible enough in responding to pupils' needs by building on their verbal responses to give an explanation. As a result, pupils occasionally remain stuck and make limited progress in their understanding. On occasions, pupils finish a task and spend too long waiting for guidance from the teacher on what to do next.
- Mathematics teaching emphasises consolidating and recapping pupils' understanding of concepts. It is often not sufficiently challenging and pupils of all abilities complete the same task. As a result, not all pupils make consistently strong progress from their individual starting points.
- New initiatives in the teaching of reading have had a positive impact on pupils' reading ages. Pupils are motivated to read and do so for pleasure. They read regularly and, in many cases, widely. Older pupils have a good knowledge of authors and express preferences about the type of reading they enjoy. Leaders and teachers have enabled parents to support their children's reading well at home. However, leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do in order to improve pupils' reading comprehension skills.
- Pupils' progress in writing is good across the school as a result of the consistent teaching approach that is used. Pupils are encouraged to write at length across the curriculum, which is developing their writing fluency and stamina. Where teaching is most effective, pupils' work is well written and well presented.
- Homework is set regularly in accordance with the school's policy. Pupils say that they enjoy the opportunities that homework offers for them to extend their learning and widen their reading away from school.
- The school's classrooms and shared areas are attractive and vibrant places, full of interest and colour. Pupils are very keen to do well. They told inspectors how much

they enjoy school and learning. Relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils are marked by openness, kindness and mutual respect.

- The roles of learning support assistants are clear. They provide effective support for pupils' learning in class and when providing individuals with additional support.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders are deeply committed to the personal development and welfare of pupils. Leaders and staff support pupils who face challenging personal circumstances very well. This enables vulnerable pupils to play a full part in the life of the school and to have positive attitudes to learning.
- Different groups of pupils say that they feel safe. Pupils have been taught how to keep safe while using the internet, and they were keen to tell the inspectors the strategies they use when they have any worries or concerns. Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with very quickly on those occasions when they are reported.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are motivated to succeed and are enthusiastic about learning. Pupils told inspectors that they want to be challenged in their work and that this does not happen regularly enough. Pupils see challenge as an extra task rather than it being planned into their learning.
- Leaders and teachers demonstrate, through their actions, respect for other people. Pupils learn from this and repeat this in their interactions with each other. Leaders also ensure that there is a culture of praise and reward across the school. Pupils like this and are proud of their achievements. Those in positions of responsibility talk fluently about their roles, how they were selected or elected and why wearing their prefect badges also makes them proud.
- The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of a range of different cultures and religions. Key stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of why this is important to their future life in modern Britain. Pupils show respect for cultures and beliefs that differ from their own. Pupils and leaders have established a strong link with a school in Ghana and have welcomed leaders to Grange Primary.
- Pupils are welcoming to visitors and interested in them. Pupils are happy to talk about their learning and keen to share their work.
- Pupils communicate well with each other and with adults. For example, at lunchtimes, pupils interact positively with one another and with adults in a respectful manner.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is very good. They are kind and considerate and show respect to one another and to adults. They show good standards of concentration in lessons. Pupils enjoy their learning and work well, and low-level disruption is rare.
- Pupils behave well and feel happy and safe at breaktimes. They are active, play

sociably and are friendly towards each other. Pupils are well supervised during play times, and they make good use of the many activities and play areas provided. They move around the school in a responsible and safe manner.

- Pupils' attendance has improved during the last year and is only slightly below the national average. The levels of persistent absence have also dropped but they are still higher than the national average. Many of the repeat absences arise from pupils' regular medical appointments. Leaders provide appropriate support for families where pupils' attendance is low.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because pupils' progress in reading and mathematics has been too low for the last three years. The progress of current pupils is not consistently good across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- In 2016, 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. The progress that these pupils made in reading and mathematics was also below the national average. As a result, not enough pupils left the school well prepared academically for the next stage in their education.
- The middle ability and most-able pupils are not consistently making the progress that they should across the school. This is because teachers' expectations of what these pupils could and should be achieving are not consistently high enough. Too often, the tasks that they are set are limiting and do not encourage them to draw on and extend their existing knowledge and skills, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The review and scrutiny of a wide range and number of pupils' books during the inspection showed variability in the progress that pupils made across a range of subjects. This variability was linked to the quality of teaching and the expectations of staff. Where the expectations and skill levels of staff are higher, pupils made good and better progress. In a Year 5/6 English lesson, for example, pupils were deeply engaged, in discussing, in groups, a piece of writing about a local town's upcoming 70th birthday celebration. The pupils responded at length and in detail.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in the phonics screening check has been consistently lower than the national average over the past three years because the teaching of phonics varies throughout the school. Leaders have recently begun to address this issue, but, new systems in place, such as reading books being closely matched to pupils' phonics abilities, are yet to bring about the improvements required.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, there is evidence that pupils are beginning to develop secure subject knowledge. However, sometimes pupils do not use and embed this growing knowledge to deepen their understanding. For example, in science, understanding of how to successfully complete practical experiments, or the use of pupils' mathematical knowledge, is not as evident in pupils' work.
- Leaders and staff track the progress of pupils with SEND carefully. These pupils are, in the main, making good progress, particularly where staff carefully plan small steps in learning to meet these pupils' needs.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in Reception because the early years leader has high expectations for children in her care. Children experience a wide range of interesting activities, which build skilfully on their interests, strengths and what they need to do to improve even further. As a result, children within the early years are developing quickly and successfully, and more are reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years.
- Teachers and teaching assistants develop a close understanding of children's interests and needs through dialogue with parents and children and a close observation of children's learning. For example, in the outside learning environment, children were enthusiastically building different modes of transport, using benches and tyres.
- Staff have developed a stimulating learning environment, which provides a wide range of interesting activities to support learning, both inside and outside. Children collaborate and take turns. They are kind to each other and know how to behave with consideration for the needs and feelings of others.
- Children are encouraged to explore ideas in practical ways to enhance their mathematical understanding. For example, inspectors spoke to children rolling cars down different sized pieces of guttering in order to land on different numbers.
- Teachers monitor children's progress closely and record this accurately. Ongoing observations of learning are supported by more formal periodic assessments. These records confirm that children make good progress from their starting points. Teachers have an accurate picture of children's abilities, and learning is tailored to build on what children can already do.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are effective. There are no breaches in statutory welfare requirements. Children are supported and cared for and teachers and teaching assistants are attentive to their needs.
- Relationships between adults and children are positive. Well-structured routines and procedures mean that children move carefully from adult-led activities to open-ended tasks. They cooperate with each other and behave well.
- The learning environment is well resourced, bright and stimulating, both inside and out. Distinct areas of learning allow children to work with adults and have the freedom to explore activities individually, in pairs or in groups. Some activities, however, are not always challenging enough, and adults occasionally miss the opportunity to deepen children's knowledge and skills in some tasks.
- Children behave well and are respectful of each other and their environment. This is because adults consistently model the behaviour they want to see and are highly skilled in managing those children who are at an earlier stage of personal and social development. Children are extremely happy and well looked after.

School details

Unique reference number	131579
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10101256

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	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Albert Ede
Headteacher	Lyn Corderoy
Telephone number	01268 734 420
Website	www.grange.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@grange.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 to 28 February 2019

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEND is lower than the national average, although the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school has received support from the local authority to develop the quality of teaching and learning and leadership capacity.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, cluster leaders, leaders of English, mathematics and phonics, members of the governing body, including the chair, and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspection team visited teaching sessions across a range of subjects from Reception to Year 6. The headteacher accompanied inspectors for some of these visits.
- The inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work in their books across a wide range of curriculum areas. They also reviewed pupils' work in other curriculum areas, such as art, by considering the work on display around the school.
- Eight pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read their reading books to inspectors and discussed how the school supported their reading development.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and their checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Inspectors also looked at a range of documents and records relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in the playground and around the school. They observed pupils around the school building, in the school grounds and as pupils ate their lunch. Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils about what it is like to be a pupil at the school.
- Inspectors took account of staff members' opinions via the responses made to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions.
- Inspectors took account of the 96 responses to Ofsted's free-text survey and 100 replies to Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with several parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Joseph Figg, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Parsey	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Hopkins	Ofsted Inspector

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