

Inspection of a good school: Gilbert Colvin Primary School

Strafford Avenue, Ilford, Essex IG5 0TL

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are kept safe and feel happy here. This is because building positive relationships is at the centre of everything the school does. Staff warmly welcome pupils into school each day. Pupils show respect to adults and each other. The many pupils who join the school midway through the academic year are helped to settle quickly.

The school has high expectations of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils engage fully in their lessons and disruption to learning is rare. As a result, most pupils enjoy their learning. However, in some subjects, including early reading, the curriculum does not consistently enable pupils to achieve well.

Pupils respond well to the behaviour expectations in and around the school. They move around the school in a calm and orderly way. Pupils enjoy playing with friends at playtimes and play well together. They are confident that staff will listen to them if they have any worries. Staff deal with any incidents of unkind words or behaviour promptly and effectively.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills through taking on roles as librarians, play leaders or computer monitors. Pupils also enjoy participating in a range of clubs, including gymnastics, cooking and karate.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

New leadership has quickly established a clear view of the school's strengths and those areas of the curriculum requiring further development. Subsequently, the school has identified the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn and when in some subjects. Where this is the case, for instance in mathematics, it enables teachers to deliver the planned curriculum well, and ensure that pupils build successfully on their prior learning.

However, in some subjects, the key knowledge that pupils should learn has not been clearly identified. This means that teachers are unclear about what to teach and when. In addition, the delivery of the curriculum in some subjects is not organised in a way that supports pupils to remember and recap previous learning. As a result, pupils do not learn and remember essential knowledge that is vital for them to make good progress through every area of the curriculum.

Staff are enthusiastic and have embraced recent changes made to some subject curriculums. The school has also prioritised training for staff to improve the delivery of the curriculum. However, the school's arrangements for subject leadership are still developing. This reduces the effectiveness of the support that teachers receive to help them make sure that teaching activities match the planned curriculum.

Learning to read is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders have designed a reading curriculum that teaches pupils how to read with accuracy while also developing a love of reading. As soon as children start in Nursery, staff develop their listening and speaking skills. They share books, songs and rhymes to expand children's vocabulary. Children in Reception start to learn to read using phonics from the very beginning. The school's phonics curriculum is well planned. Reading books match the sounds that pupils are taught. Staff are trained to teach reading, including phonics. However, the school's approaches to developing pupils' phonics knowledge are not being used consistently. Sometimes, the teaching of phonics is not underpinned by the necessary expertise and subject knowledge. As a result, some pupils who find it more difficult to learn to read are not getting the help that they need.

The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff use this information appropriately to provide these pupils with adaptations that enable them to learn well alongside their peers. The impact of the school's work to improve pupils' attendance is clear. Many pupils with low prior attendance now attend school regularly.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe online and how to stay healthy. They know about the importance of eating a healthy, balanced diet. Visits to places of worship help pupils to learn about other faiths, such as Islam, Sikhism and Christianity. Pupils understand that learning about different faiths and cultures helps them to be tolerant and inclusive. Pupils are taught to understand the importance of being fair to everyone, irrespective of someone's appearance or beliefs.

Governors have a secure understanding of what the school needs to do to continue to develop and improve. Staff appreciate the support that they receive from leaders and governors to manage their workload and to look after their well-being.

While, overall, parents and carers are supportive of the school, some feel that communication is not as strong as it could be. For example, some parents said that they do not receive sufficient information about what their children will be learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some subjects is less well developed and sequenced compared with others, such as mathematics. Where this is the case, pupils' learning does not build sufficiently well on their prior knowledge. Leaders should continue to develop and embed their curriculum thinking. They should focus especially on ensuring that pupils build up their knowledge and skills equally well in all subjects.
- The school's arrangements for subject leadership are new, with expertise and experience currently being developed. This means that, at times, the school is not providing teachers with the guidance they need to link the planned activities with the aims of the curriculum. The school should embed its work to develop subject leadership, and ensure that what is taught consistently matches the expectations of the curriculum and enables pupils to achieve highly.
- The school's approach to phonics is not delivered consistently well. Some pupils who have fallen behind in reading are not getting the teaching and support that they need to catch up. The school should ensure that all staff are trained to implement the phonics programme with confidence and expertise, so that pupils who are learning to read benefit from a consistent approach to developing and practising their phonics knowledge.
- Some parents are concerned about how well the school communicates with them. This means that some parents feel unclear about what is happening at the school or how they could assist their children with their learning. The school should strengthen its communication with parents to support its work on forging close partnerships with families.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	102805
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10289855
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Clements
Headteacher	Liz Cohen
Website	www.gilbertcolvin.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Gilbert Colvin Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school, with a 26-place Nursery class.
- There has been a change of leadership since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since September 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. For the reading deep dive, he listened to pupils read to a familiar adult. The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector met with the chair of governors and the vice chair. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector spoke with some parents at the school gate and considered parents' responses to the Ofsted survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector met with a range of staff and pupils during the inspection. He considered their responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Birtles, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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