

Rochford Primary and Nursery School

6 Ashingdon Road, Rochford, SS4 1NJ

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The leadership team has improved the school since the last inspection. As a result, attainment is rising and pupils from all ability groups and backgrounds are achieving well.
- From low starting points, children make good progress in the nursery and Reception.
- Teaching has developed well since the previous inspection and is now typically good across the school.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe and cared for.
- Teachers use ICT (information and communication technology) effectively in lessons to support pupils' learning.
- The 'thematic curriculum' that links subjects together for lessons has improved pupils' achievement in English and mathematics through practising and extending their key skills.
- The governing body works effectively with the school and has a good understanding about the progress pupils make and the impact that teachers have in the classrooms.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to accelerate achievement even more in all year groups.
- The questions teachers ask pupils in lessons do not always make them think hard or deepen their understanding.
- Pupils are not always encouraged enough to learn without direct support from adults.
- The linking of subjects together when teaching is not yet used effectively to raise standards beyond English and mathematics; for example, as in history and geography.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 lessons, two of which were seen together with the headteacher. They also observed play and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 37 parents who replied to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were analysed. Opportunities for parents to meet or contact inspectors by phone calls or letters were given over the two days.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school improvement plan, information on pupils' attainment and progress, and the school's own evaluation of its performance.
- Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' books, sampled sessions where pupils were learning about the sounds that letters make (phonics) and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

David Berry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Flesher

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children with a parent in the armed forces, is just below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching throughout the school to raise achievement even more rapidly, by:
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to develop independent learning skills by working without direct supervision
 - routinely asking pupils challenging questions throughout lessons to deepen their understanding and make them think hard
 - using the opportunities of the themed curriculum to raise standards even further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress, and achieve well. Many start school in the nursery with attainment that is below national expectations for their age, particularly in speech and language skills. Attainment is above average by Year 6.
- Children learn and develop well in the Nursery and Reception class. Inconsistent teaching in Key Stage 1 has now been eradicated and a previous legacy of low achievement has been tackled successfully. As a result, pupils in Year 2 are now on course to exceed national averages at the end of this year.
- Reading is given a high profile and is taught well throughout the school. The pupils who spoke to inspectors were able to show good knowledge of different authors, books and different forms of writing. Pupils know how to link letters and sounds (phonics).
- The quality of writing is typically good across the school, and some is outstanding. At its best, pupils are able to show quality writing not only in English but also across a range of different subjects. In an outstanding Year 5 English lesson, the teacher skilfully used knowledge of pupils' previous learning to encourage them to try different approaches in their use of adverbial phrases. The teacher kept an excellent pace to the lesson, and intervened when necessary.
- Pupils learn a wide range of skills in mathematics, and teachers use ICT well to support and extend their mathematical understanding. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils were challenged to apply their understanding of times tables through a series of problems.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress. Test results show that they reach the standards expected for their age in English and mathematics and sometimes do better than other pupils, thanks to effective help and guidance. A wide range of support and intervention programmes help to close the gap in their learning and raise their confidence. Leaders regularly review the impact this support is having on pupils' progress, and respond accordingly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good, and some is outstanding. The positive relationships between staff and pupils ensure the right climate for good learning. Pupils like school and believe that they have a strong say in their own learning.
- Teachers plan for the needs of different groups of pupils very well throughout the school. For example, they make sure that lesson activities relate to the individual education plans for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers use a wide range of successful strategies to check pupils' progress throughout the course of lessons. Activities are planned carefully to maintain pupils' interest and they are taught to think about and evaluate their learning, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers make good use of computers to make lessons stimulating and enjoyable.
- Reading, including phonics, is taught well. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the excellent pace and challenge of the phonics teaching led to pupils making good progress, and any mistakes were addressed quickly by the teacher.

- The way teachers ask questions to extend learning in lessons varies in its effectiveness. In the best examples observed, teachers used their good subject knowledge to challenge pupils' thinking skills by asking them probing questions. They also chose questions carefully to assess understanding, so they were able to carefully build on pupils' previous learning. In the less successful lessons, they sometimes missed opportunities to challenge and develop pupils' understanding.
- Marking is generally good and sometimes outstanding, particularly in showing pupils clearly what they need to do to improve their written work. However, this good practice is not always evident in the 'themed' books. Here, opportunities are lost to move learning on by giving pupils clear guidance for improvement, and teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve are not as high in other subjects as they are in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always make the most of pupils' attitudes to develop their independent learning skills. For example, they sometimes do too much for the pupils and do not give them enough opportunities to engage in independent and open-ended learning in their thematic work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons because they are keen to learn. They behave extremely well around school, especially in the playground. All the pupils who spoke to inspectors talked about the school being a place where good behaviour is expected. Pupils say that behaviour is good, and all the staff, parents and carers agree.
- During meetings with a random group of pupils and in a meeting with the highly effective school council, pupils talked enthusiastically about the school. As one said, 'This is a really good school and we are all one family'. Pupils behave particularly well when teaching is engaging and challenges their thinking. Where less impressive behaviour was seen, it was usually because the teaching was not stimulating enough to fully engage the pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying means. They are able to say very confidently what the consequences would be if bullying did occur. Moreover, every child explained how any problem that occurs in school is explored and dealt with appropriately. Thus, all pupils feel safe. They talked about the strong relationships they have with adults, and how caring the school is.
- Attendance is now broadly average. Nevertheless, the school continues to use and evaluate a range of systems to tackle what was historically below-average attendance. The administrative staff monitor attendance and work closely with the headteacher. In addition, pupils are given good incentives to encourage them to attend school regularly.
- The pupils believe that the extensive range of clubs run by staff and a P.E. specialist, makes the school 'special'. Also, pupils enjoy the thematic work and like the 'wow' visits that start a theme off.
- The school council gives pupils an important voice in the school. An elected treasurer, secretary, chair and vice chair run regular meetings and have responsibility for a substantial budget. In true democratic fashion, decisions are based on the views from elected representatives from each class. Pupils talked about the changes they are making in the school, for example, playground markings.

The leadership and management are good

- The highly effective headteacher who has been ably supported by senior members of staff, have a good, accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve, based on rigorous checking of performance at all levels. They have diligently tackled weaknesses in teaching across the school. As a result of this focused work, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good in all year groups.
 - The small leadership team tracks pupils' progress carefully, and responds quickly if any pupils are identified as stalling or falling behind in their work. Leaders have had a good impact in writing, reading and mathematics. As a result of this, pupils are now making good progress in Key Stage 1, where attainment is expected to rise above the national average by the end of this year. It is already above average in Key Stage 2.
 - The headteacher has ensured that senior leaders have a clear picture of the performance of each teacher. Teachers are set individual targets which are carefully checked each term. Working closely with the governing body, the headteacher has ensured that any pay rises are based on each teacher's effectiveness in the classroom, and their targets are linked closely to pupils' achievement.
 - The school cares for pupils very well. This is evident in lessons, but also the array of clubs that are offered to pupils. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well in the thematic approach it uses for teaching various subjects, and through a wide range of clubs and activities. Leaders recognise that the thematic approach is not always used as well as it could be across the school to raise standards in all subjects.
 - All of the parents who responded in 'Parent View' are pleased with the school and would recommend it to others.
 - The local authority now provides 'light touch' support because of the confidence it has in the leadership of the school. A recent local authority survey, carried out by a team of external consultants, noted the good improvements since the previous inspection.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The effective governing body challenges and supports the school well. Governors regularly take advantage of local authority training to maintain a thorough understanding of their role and sharpen their skills. The relationship between the school leaders and governors is one of respect, based on the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. Governors have a good grasp of what the school's performance data show about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, and evaluate its progress against improvement targets regularly. They are appropriately involved in managing teachers' performance. All relevant policies and procedures related to child protection, safeguarding and the general safety of pupils are monitored and reviewed regularly by governors, to make sure they meet national requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115315
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	405578

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sonia Worthington
Headteacher	Andrew Howe
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2011
Telephone number	01702 544342
Fax number	01702 530711
Email address	admin@rochford.essex.sch.uk

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