

Notley Green Primary School

Blickling Road, Great Notley, Braintree, CM77 7ZJ

Inspection dates 11–12 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 made slow progress when the academy first opened. They are learning well now but have some ground to make up, including in their knowledge of letters and sounds.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good enough across the academy to accelerate progress for all groups of pupils. This is because tasks are not always set at the right level for pupils of different abilities.
- As a result, some of the more-able pupils, and some who are disabled or have special educational needs, have not made the progress they are capable of.
- In lessons, teachers do not always check effectively that the tasks given to pupils are leading to rapid learning.
- The school's marking and feedback policy gives the right guidance, but it is not being fully applied by teachers.
- By Year 6, pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as good as in reading and writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is not making sure that pupils make good progress throughout the academy.
- Pupils are not always given challenging work in mathematics, and do not have enough opportunities to practise their practical skills through real-life problems in numeracy lessons or in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to do well.
- Pupils behave well. They say that they feel safe and bullying is rare, and when it does happen, teachers deal with it well.
- Children in Reception make good progress, as do pupils in some year groups in Key Stage 2.
- Leaders, including governors, are providing the commitment and drive necessary to raise standards and improve pupils' progress. Teaching is improving and the quality seen during the inspection was often good.
- Pupils value and enjoy the many opportunities they have to join clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 16 different teachers or learning support assistants. At least half of these lessons were observed with senior leaders to check how accurately they evaluate teaching.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the director of learning and other leaders, staff, pupils, parents and carers, governors, and representatives from the local authority and the Change Partnership Trust.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at school documentation, including teachers’ planning, the school’s evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, development plans, assessment information, monitoring files, records of governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- The views of 107 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors also considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by 35 members of staff.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Ladner

Additional Inspector

Hermione Horn

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in November 2012. The predecessor school of the same name was judged to be good when it was last inspected in February 2010.
- The academy is larger than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and pupils who have a parent serving in the armed forces) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs.
- The headteacher is retiring in August 2013, and a new headteacher will be appointed to start in January 2014. The director of learning was appointed to the academy in January 2013 and will be acting headteacher during the autumn term.
- The academy hosts breakfast and after-school clubs. These are independently managed and are inspected separately.
- The headteacher has actively supported other schools, including a school in Clacton which is now part of the Change Partnership Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that pupils in all year groups make good progress, by:
 - ensuring that all planned learning activities closely match the needs of individuals and groups of pupils
 - checking pupils' learning effectively in lessons, and reshaping learning tasks based on pupils' responses
 - using the expertise of the 'phase' leaders, who are in charge of several year groups, to model best practice for other staff
 - ensuring teachers apply the marking and feedback policy consistently to help pupils improve their work.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - using the expertise of the mathematics subject leader more effectively to support other staff
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to consolidate their basic mathematical skills and practise those skills in other subjects
 - planning more practical learning activities in lessons, and minimising the use of undemanding worksheets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the good progress children make in Reception and most year groups in Key Stage 2 is not consistent throughout the academy.
- Children join the academy with skills and abilities lower than those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception classes and enter Year 1 with broadly average standards, although their language and communication skills are more limited.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average in reading and mathematics. Some pupils have not made fast enough progress because the teaching has not been consistently good since the academy opened. The pupils who took the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2013 gained results that were lower than the 2012 national average.
- Unconfirmed 2013 test results show that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress varies between year groups, classes and subjects. Overall, it is slower in mathematics than in reading and writing, and this is associated with too much use of undemanding worksheets, with little opportunity for pupils to use their initiative and solve real-life practical problems.
- Progress in writing has improved this year because leaders have made it a priority. As a result pupils are keen to write and to talk about their ideas. For example, a pupil in Year 1 animatedly told inspectors that she was writing instructions about how to train a dragon and would need to use 'bossy' words to make sure whoever reads the instructions understands them.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs reflects the inconsistencies in the progress made by all pupils. The help they receive from learning support assistants enables them to develop basic skills and to work well with others.
- Pupil premium funding is being spent well. It is used to support pupils' participation in a range of activities including smaller teaching groups, a positive parenting group and after-school clubs. As a result, school data show that eligible pupils are catching up with their classmates and are now achieving similar standards to other pupils in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although much of the teaching seen was good, it is not yet securing good rates of progress for all pupils and groups of pupils. In particular, pupils in Key Stage 1 have ground to make up because of slow progress earlier in the year.
- Where aspects of teaching still require improvement, the issues are to do with making sure pupils have work that is fine-tuned to meet their needs. Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan work based on pupils' previous attainment and build in regular opportunities to check pupils' learning and reshape learning tasks based on pupils' responses.
- Occasionally planned work does not take enough account of what pupils can already do. In addition, teachers do not always demonstrate effective methods to make sure pupils stop work and listen when they are expected to. This slows the pace of progress and makes it difficult for teachers to check on pupils' learning, so they can reshape tasks to better match pupils'

understanding.

- Teachers are now planning a wider range of activities in mathematics. For example, they are making effective use of computer equipment to support learning. However, sometimes teachers rely too much on giving pupils worksheets that lack challenge and do not ensure rapid learning.
- Most teachers set pupils targets for reading, writing and mathematics, but they do not always make sure pupils know how to reach them. Marking and feedback are improving. In the best examples seen during the inspection, pupils responded well to teachers' comments and pupils marked each other's work. However, this is not always the case; the academy's marking and feedback policy is not yet consistently applied.
- There is some outstanding teaching within the academy, where a range of activities successfully keeps pupils' interest and attention. An example of this during the inspection was when a Year 6 teacher used the poem *Stop the Clock*. The highly effective questioning elicited thoughtful, reflective and mature responses from the pupils.
- Teachers make sure pupils have many opportunities to work together and to share responsibilities. This builds on the academy's emphasis on 'core' skills throughout lessons, which encourages pupils to think and make learning decisions for themselves. This promotes pupils' moral and social development effectively, so they respect others and take other pupils' opinions and ideas into account.
- Where teaching is good or better, teachers are aware of the urgency to help pupils catch up on past underachievement. There is a good match of activities to the ability of all of the pupils and many opportunities are taken to ask pupils probing questions about their learning. This encourages pupils' development of speaking and listening skills, their ability to explain their understanding, and their enthusiasm to influence their own learning.
- Teaching in Reception is good. Teachers give children many opportunities to gain independent learning skills. Work is challenging and adults provide good support and guidance for children, encouraging the development of good social skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in school is good. Pupils are courteous, respectful and polite towards other pupils and adults. All these characteristics are emphasised in the academy's core skills approach, and regular references were made to these skills during the inspection.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and readily take part in the many interesting and stimulating activities.
- Pupils were most welcoming to inspectors and were keen to engage them in conversation about their academy. For example, two Year 1 pupils invited the inspection team to the performance of *Billy the Bus* at the local church.
- The majority of pupils listen carefully and are eager to answer their teacher's questions, but this is not always the case. Older pupils contribute confidently to discussions, and some attend a gifted and talented association run by the local secondary school on Saturday mornings.
- Pupils feel safe and behave safely around the school, in lessons and in the playground at break

and lunch times. The academy has had an effective focus on teaching pupils about e-safety, and all pupils sign a code of conduct.

- The responses on Parent View and from the staff questionnaires show that nearly all parents, carers and staff believe the school ensures that pupils are well behaved. A very few parents and pupils expressed concerns that bullying is not tackled well, but the majority of pupils feel that any issues are dealt with quickly, including through the 'Snack and Chat' times.
- Pupils are given responsibilities to ensure that they are prepared for the next stage of their education. These include being house and sports captains, becoming 'buddies' to younger children and participating in the 'student voice'.
- Most pupils attend well and overall attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils receive stickers and certificates to reward their good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, the recently appointed director of learning and the phase leaders provide good direction for the academy's improvement. They work collaboratively and effectively, and their impact on raising standards and improving the progress made by pupils is already showing in school performance data.
- Improved leadership in Reception has already ensured that children make good progress. Leaders have also improved teaching in other year groups, but in some of these more rapid progress has only been evident in the last term. The academy leaders acted quickly to eliminate inadequate teaching.
- Training is effective, and new staff are supported well in a drive to make sure teaching improves to be at least consistently good. The academy is well on the way to achieving this aim.
- The academy's self-evaluation and improvement plans, which were developed with an external 'school improvement partner', accurately identify its priorities and provide effective direction for improvement. Writing has been a priority for this year and actions have had a good impact.
- Leaders use regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress with their teachers and to identify the support needs for any pupils at risk of underperforming. The academy's assessment data show that this has improved the progress and attainment of the more-able pupils.
- Leaders have used innovative approaches to ensuring better progress, some of which have worked well. For example, single-sex teaching in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 has increased the proportion of pupils exceeding expected levels of progress.
- Teachers' targets to help them improve their work are closely linked to pupils' progress, individual needs and the school's priorities to raise standards and improve progress. The resulting information is used to determine whether governors should be asked to approve pay rises.
- Phase and subject leaders have made a good impact in raising the quality of planning, but not all have had sufficient time to use their expertise to influence teaching practice. As mathematics has not yet been the focus for school improvement, the mathematics leader has had limited time to support other staff.

- The curriculum is under review, and leaders have rightly prioritised improving the way mathematics is covered. The subject leader has a clear, sharply-focused plan for the next academic year and is aware that pupils are not yet given good opportunities to practise mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Pupils say that they particularly enjoy lessons planned around themes covering history, environment and media. A variety of trips to enhance the curriculum and sport, drama and music have a high profile. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support learning within the classroom and to link to other schools within and beyond the UK.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The nine 'core values' thread through the curriculum and are linked to festivals and charity work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the academy's current areas of development and have benefited from accurate reporting of data by the director of learning. Meeting records show that they question leaders effectively, so holding the academy to account. Governors check the impact of pupil premium funding on the standards achieved by eligible pupils. They know how good teaching is, and have an understanding of how teachers' pay rises and promotion are linked to pupils' progress, their individual targets and their contribution to academy priorities. Safeguarding practices and policies meet current national requirements. Governors and members of the Change Partnership Trust are beginning to evaluate the success of the partnership, and are now better placed to ensure that the impact on partners is mutually beneficial.

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	138901
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	411930

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beth Gask
Headteacher	Jacqui Green
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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