

# The Gateway Primary Free School

Marshfoot Road, Grays, RM16 4LU

**Inspection dates** 25–26 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils' achievement is good in the two year groups currently attending the school.
- From low starting points, pupils in Year 6 are on track to match national outcomes in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in reading is outstanding: many pupils have made more than two years progress in less than two terms.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium achieve equally as well as other pupils.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- The commitment of all leaders, including governors, to improving the lives of young people contributes significantly to the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and the school's success.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. Almost all are very enthusiastic about their education.
- Pupils feel safe and are well looked after.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Gaps remain in pupils' understanding about spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- The quality of marking in Year 6 is not consistently outstanding.
- The high standard of behaviour dips at times in a small proportion of lessons.
- The way that staff are organised in the Reception classes means that they miss some opportunities to accelerate learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons. Four of these were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. The inspector also listened to students reading.
- Insufficient numbers of parents responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the publication of the results.
- The inspector took account of 17 staff questionnaires.
- The inspector analysed current assessment data, pupils' work, development plans, safeguarding documentation, and the school's self-evaluation documents.
- The inspector met with senior and middle leaders, teachers, pupils and spoke with three members of the governing body.
- During this inspection, the inspector asked additional questions to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

Christopher Moodie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This primary free school is smaller than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for certain groups of pupils, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is also above average.
- The free school is part of the Gateway Learning Community Trust. It opened to Year 6 pupils in September 2012. During its first year there were several changes in staffing. A permanent and stable staff member has been in post since September 2013.
- The free school has two year groups at present. Pupils moved from neighbouring schools to join Year 6 in September 2013. There are currently 66 pupils in three Year 6 classes. Children joined the free school's Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) in September 2013; there are currently 39 children in two Reception classes.
- In September 2014, the free school is planning to expand to accommodate all year groups within Key Stage 2. These pupils will move from a nearby school which is undergoing a period of restructuring. At the same time, children currently in the Reception classes will move into Year 1 and a new Reception cohort should join the school.
- At the point of the inspection, the free school was sited within the Gateway Secondary Academy. The free school is about to move into purpose-built accommodation on the same site.
- The current accommodation does not provide outdoor play facilities for the Reception classes. The free school has converted an indoor room to offer some of the activities that would be available in an outdoor environment. In addition, children regularly access the outdoor grounds of the secondary academy.
- A local board of governors has responsibility for the school. This local board reports to the Board of Directors of the Gateway Learning Community Trust.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that:
  - all marking in Key Stage 2 is consistent with the highest quality currently on offer to some pupils
  - no opportunities are missed to promote and accelerate learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve pupils' standards of spelling, grammar and punctuation in Key Stage 2.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils currently in Year 6 entered the school in September 2013 with standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were below those usual for this age group. They are making good progress in these subjects and are now on track to match national levels by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Last year pupils in Year 6 made good progress in reading and writing from very low starting points. Progress in mathematics was weaker. Prior to Year 6, these pupils had attended different schools. Many of them joined the free school at different points in the year and the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was high. At the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment of this age group of pupils was below the national average in writing and reading, and was especially low in mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- In 2012/13 pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium were one term behind other pupils in reading and writing. The gap in mathematics was two terms. In the current Year 6, there is no difference in achievement between this group of pupils and others.
- Pupils in Year 6 have made good progress in writing, mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar. This good progress is due to a combination of finely tuned extra help and the establishment of a 'reading culture' that has captured the pupils' attention and makes them all want to be good readers.
- Reading is taught directly through a systematic approach to phonics (letters and the sounds that they make). This is equipping pupils with the necessary skills to read difficult words that are new to them and has accelerated standards in reading. Pupils speak passionately about their reading and many say that they are regularly reading at home for the first time. One pupil in Year 6 said, 'I came here not really reading, and not really bothered about it. I love reading now, and I am hoping to get a Level 4 in it.'
- Pupils in Year 6 arrived at the school with poor standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Because of effective teaching, pupils are beginning to understand how to punctuate their writing and to use spelling rules and patterns to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Pupils' work is tidy and well-presented. However, many of them struggle with handwriting because it has not been taught well in the past. Not all pupils are able to enter secondary school with clearly legible, joined-up handwriting.
- Pupils in Year 6 make good progress in all subjects. In science, history and Spanish, pupils, including the most able, are learning particularly well. Practical work in science is well explained and diagrams are clearly labelled. Research in history shows attention to detail and the capacity to make good use of different sources of information. Vocabulary work in Spanish is accurate and intermingled with a growing understanding of Spanish culture.
- Pupils' achievement in sport is improving. Many pupils, including a growing number of girls, represent their school in one of the many teams.
- Children entered the Reception classes with skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. They have made good progress and assessments indicate that the majority will be ready for the National Curriculum in Year 1. The proportion that achieves a good level of

development is set to match that found nationally.

- Children have made especially good gains in basic literacy and numeracy. These have been areas of particular focus for teachers. Children’s understanding of the world around them is less well developed.
- Children make good progress in reading. Many children repeat their learning throughout the day, experimenting with the sounds that they are learning in their play.
- When children are choosing their own activities, some incorporate their learning into their play very well. A small number, however, have favourite activities which they return to often. This narrows their learning and means that opportunities to tackle gaps in their knowledge and understanding are lost.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils, and some have made outstanding progress. The monitoring of extra help and support is good. Assessment information is gathered so that staff know exactly what is working and what needs to change.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching is consistently good and it leads to strong achievement across the school.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers expect pupils to behave impeccably. They provide very clear guidance about exactly what pupils need to do to improve their work.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly and is now good. Pupils are given time in lessons to correct their errors, they are expected to use the correct technical vocabulary when answering questions, work challenges and demands a great deal from all pupils, and they keep trying until they solve problems.
- The promotion of reading is a common feature of all teaching. Work done is successfully supporting those who have struggled to learn to read in the past. Reading within lessons is a feature of the weekly timetable. Teachers hear pupils read regularly and teach them how to recognise new words. As a result, pupils of different abilities are becoming confident when reading unfamiliar words.
- All pupils in Year 6 receive good quality written feedback from teachers about their progress. Sometimes it is exceptionally helpful in promoting improvement. However, not all staff have adopted the school’s approach to marking in the same way, so its quality varies from being outstanding across the board.
- Teachers regularly assess pupils’ work. These assessments are accurate, and are moderated in meetings with other schools in the Gateway Learning Community Trust. The information arising from the assessments is put to good use in planning learning.
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- Learning support assistants in Year 6 generally provide very effective support in lessons, extending learning and challenging pupils very well through excellent questioning. In contrast to this, learning support assistants in the Reception classes sometimes become too focused on individual children, missing opportunities to ensure that all children are learning rapidly.

- Teachers provide outstanding opportunities for pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development through an effective curriculum. The values and beliefs of the school are very strong and are revisited and reinforced each morning as all staff and pupils sing and dance together, concluding with a shared rendition of the school's creed. This is a powerful reminder of the school's aims and purpose to everyone in the school. The wide range of visits, visitors, extra-curricular clubs and residential trips is popular with pupils and adds value to their understanding of the topics that they are studying.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good in almost all situations during the school day. They move calmly around the school needing little supervision. The current accommodation has narrow corridors but the rules are followed consistently. 'Remember not to run indoors', one child in a Reception class told his friend as they returned from playtime.
- Behaviour in the great majority of lessons is good, and is often outstanding. Pupils enthuse about their learning and celebrate the progress that they make. Several pupils and parents acknowledge the difference that the school has made to pupils' behaviour. One boy said, 'I didn't behave well at my last school, and I often made up excuses not to go. Here it is different; I can't wait to get here every morning.'
- Instances of disruption are rare and, when they do occur, are dealt with effectively by staff. Behaviour only dips below its normal high standard when unfamiliar teachers work in classes.
- Year 6 pupils currently share lunchtime with students in Key Stage 3 from the Gateway Secondary Academy. This is a calm and relaxed period of the school day, where staff take the opportunity to talk to pupils and then accompany them to the outside areas for a break. Here they play well with one another and enjoy the chance to use a range of sports equipment.
- Attendance has improved this year and is now above average. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time. A member of staff responsible for attendance monitors the registers and is quick to establish the reasons for absence.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that staff will be able to help them when necessary. They report that bullying is rare, and is dealt with swiftly. One of the 'anti-bullying ambassadors' said that the most he had ever needed to do was to help friends who had quarrelled to sort things out. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Parents who completed the school's own questionnaire were confident that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders provide very strong support for pupils in vulnerable circumstances. School leaders are already actively engaging with pupils and families who will become part of the school in September 2014. This cohesive approach to educating pupils in a safe and nurturing environment leads to comments from pupils, such as, 'Coming here is like having a second home, with another set of parents to look after you.'

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Senior leaders have quickly created a school where pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- School leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school. Good, regular

evaluation of the school's work, and especially the quality of teaching, helps them to respond quickly to any challenges that arise. Improvement planning is also good, and recognises the extent of the changes that will be necessary as more pupils join the school in September 2014.

- Careful strategic planning, combined with a determination to provide a wonderful place for learning, has enabled the leaders' vision of excellence to influence the building and internal design of the new school. Pupils and staff are justifiably excited about their imminent move into the new building.
- All staff are positive about their role in the school and have faith in the leaders. They are proud to be part of the Gateway Learning Community Trust, and recognise the benefits of working alongside colleagues from the other member schools. The Trust has provided effective support for leaders and teachers during the school's first year and a half.
- Middle leaders are effective. They are focused on outcomes for pupils and make good use of assessment data to amend and adjust the work of their teams. This is a key component in the good progress that all pupils are making.
- The leadership of special educational needs is also good. Close monitoring of the additional help provided for some pupils enables the leader of this area to check the impact of that support. Work between schools is enabling preparations for the support of pupils due to join the school after the summer break.
- The school has effective policies to promote the equality of opportunity, supporting the good achievement of all groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs.
- Additional funding for the promotion of sports is used well. As a result, many more pupils are playing sport, and representing their school in teams.
- Safeguarding systems and procedures meet statutory requirements. The inspector checked the single central record to ensure all staff are rigorously checked for their suitability, alongside documentation such as the child protection policy and first-aid qualifications.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is good and has improved in the short period of time that the school has operated. Governors are providing appropriate levels of challenge and support to school leaders.
  - Some governors visit the school and are familiar with its workings. They report to the full governing body and are focused on how well pupils are progressing. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and what assessment data are telling school leaders.
  - Governors check that school leaders complete the annual review of teachers' pay. They are involved in decision making concerning pay awards. Procedures to tackle underperformance of teaching staff are in place, and governors have been swift to insist on high standards of teaching.
  - Governors receive information on how the school spends its pupil premium funding. They have checked on the impact of the spending, and know that the gaps in attainment that were present last year are set to close for the current Year 6. Governors are less knowledgeable about the impact of the additional sports funding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138334
<b>Local authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	425158

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Gateway Learning Community Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Saunders
<b>Headteacher</b>	Thom Martin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01375 489000
<b>Fax number</b>	01375 489002
<b>Email address</b>	info@theglc.org.uk

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