

Runwell Community Primary School

Canewdon Gardens, Runwell, Wickford, SS11 7BJ

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well during their time in this school in an exceptionally caring and welcoming environment.
- Despite a slight dip in 2013, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average. The teaching of reading is particularly good.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and a clear sense of direction. His drive and determination ensure that this school continues to be successful.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school where they feel safe and extremely well cared for. Parents hold the school in high regard.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of the staff and the pupils. All staff are focused on making sure all pupils can succeed. They are supported well by an effective governing body.
- Teachers provide interesting and engaging lessons which motivate and encourage pupils to learn. Teaching is particularly strong in Year 6.
- The organisation and teaching of subjects through topics is stimulating and has a clear focus on literacy and numeracy. Pupils are provided with interesting experiences which are well tuned to meet their wide range of needs. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in mathematics is not as good as it is reading or writing.
- Marking in mathematics is inconsistent. Pupils do not always receive the challenge and advice they need to move their progress from good to outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, at play, at lunch and as they moved around school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and different groups of people involved in the school. These included pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and members of the teaching staff. The lead inspector held a telephone call with an external consultant to the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors took into account the 46 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including plans for improvement, records of the school's checks on pupils' and teachers' performance, safeguarding and attendance documents, minutes of meetings of the governing body and school policies.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Pitt	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Runwell Community Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, Runwell Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is a lead school for school-based initial teacher training.
- There have been a significant number of staff on maternity leave in the past two years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in mathematics by giving closer attention to detailed marking in this subject.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are below those normally expected for their age. Good teaching and stimulating activities ensure that children settle quickly and their individual needs are met. As a result, they have caught up with children nationally by the time they start Year 1.
- Although attainment dipped in 2013, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are typically above average, and pupils' progress in English and mathematics is good. Both the lower-attaining and the most able pupils make good progress. In 2013, the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in writing was above the national average.
- The dip in 2013, in both key stages, was mainly because long-term staff absences had a negative impact on achievement. These teaching issues have been addressed, and current evidence in lessons, and the school's analysis of pupils' progress, indicate that pupils, including the current Year 6, are now make consistently good and increasingly rapid progress.
- Provision for disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is good. A range of effective support programmes contributes to increasingly rapid progress. Teaching assistants are used successfully to provide support in small groups or for individual pupils. Tracking systems are robust and ensure specific needs are met and equality of opportunity secured for all.
- Effective teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) ensures that pupils have a secure knowledge of the sounds which letters represent. A well-above-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2013.
- At both key stages, the proportion of pupils attaining standards above those expected for their age is above average in reading. Pupils' rapid progress in reading is a significant strength. Pupils are given many opportunities for reading and have access to an impressive range of books.
- The development of writing skills is improving as a result of a very successful whole-school focus on improving the quality of writing. Progress in mathematics, while good overall, is not quite as consistent. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and use the marking to encourage pupils to try to achieve more. The marking is not always consistent enough in giving pupils guidance on how to improve their work from good to outstanding.
- In 2013 the pupils supported by the pupil premium funding did better than others at the end of Year 2. However, the attainment of Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and that of their peers dipped. Although they were around two terms behind the others in English and mathematics, these pupils make good and sometimes better progress from their starting points, in line with their peers. Most eligible pupils currently in the school are making better progress than their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. There are elements of outstanding practice, particularly in Year 6. Senior leaders have successfully addressed weak teaching. Pupils' current good progress and the quality of their work indicate that the school leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching. They have high expectations of teachers and pupils, and check teachers' performance

regularly.

- The best teaching is very challenging. Work is planned at several levels to challenge pupils of different abilities. The most able pupils in English or mathematics are challenged to reach ever-higher levels or to deepen their knowledge and understanding, for example, by engaging in high-quality discussions with adults and their peers. The atmosphere created is one of high expectations, with pupils and adults working exceptionally well together.
- Teachers are particularly effective in asking pupils thought-provoking questions. This was seen in a fast-paced literacy lesson where pupils in Year 6 were studying the speeches made by African-American civil rights leaders. Pupils gained an excellent understanding of the power of the written word as they selected their own range of words to create potent images or evoke moving emotions.
- Children are taught well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Exciting and imaginative activities are planned for children, both indoors and outdoors, linked to current learning. During the inspection, pupils were captivated by the visit of a grandparent who told them how to take good care of the fish newly installed in their fish tank. The children had raised the money to buy the tank and had chosen the type of fish they wanted. Previously, they also had the opportunity to pay the pet shop owner in coins and make sure they received the correct amount of change. These activities formed the basis for a series of calculations and many opportunities for the development of good communication skills.
- The school has consistent systems for checking and improving pupils' progress. These, together with effective support, ensure that pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding make good progress. All pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium funding, are focused on their learning, keen to work together and are eager to succeed. This results in pupils who work hard and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- The teaching of reading is particularly good. There is good provision for the teaching of phonics and good opportunities to assist pupils to catch up. Pupils read confidently and with understanding.
- Teaching throughout the school provides many opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through excellent relationships within classes, high levels of collaboration and respect for the opinions of others.
- Marking in all subjects is thorough, but in mathematics it does not always give pupils a clear idea as to what they need to do to improve their work.
- Most teachers use resources well to motivate pupils, for example, through the frequent use of information and communication technology which helps with pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well mannered and courteous. They behave very well in lessons. They eagerly undertake responsibilities within class and in the playground, so contributing significantly to the friendly and welcoming school community.
- They are very proud of their school and enjoy the many links the school has with other schools nationally and internationally. They attend regularly and are very keen to take part in everything

offered, including a good range of sports, art, music, drama and visits to places of interest.

- Pupils display exemplary attitudes. Their enthusiasm for learning contributes strongly to their good and increasingly rapid progress. This was evident, for example, when pupils in Year 6 recounted their experiences following the recent visit from their link school in Beijing. With great excitement, they showed the wonderful 'Chinese Dragon' they had made together with their Chinese friends.
- Inappropriate behaviour is rare. The school's effective behaviour management systems ensure a consistent response to any issues. Few parents and carers who gave their views indicated any concerns about behaviour.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel extremely safe and are very confident that adults will manage any difficulties.
- The premises are very well maintained and this ensures pupils are kept safe. Pupils are acutely aware of how to keep themselves and others safe at all times. Bullying is rare. Pupils understand that bullying may take many forms, and know that it will be addressed rigorously by the school.

The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership and management, spearheaded very effectively by the headteacher, have been central to the school's improvement in the two and a half years since it opened. The school is most certainly run for the benefit of the pupils, and all aspects of leadership, including governance, are relentlessly focused on improving achievement still further. The school's view of itself is accurate. Senior leaders accurately recognise the remaining inconsistency. School improvement strategies reflect the correct priorities.
- Leaders have established robust procedures, including rigorous tracking and monitoring systems. Monitoring of teaching is very effective as it is sharply focused on pupils' achievement and is supported by effective professional development opportunities. This is giving rise to ever-higher standards of teaching. There is a very close link between teachers' performance and pay progression. Subject leaders roles are well developed; they have fully evaluated their subjects and are clear as to what improvements are needed.
- Pupils have a range of rich and varied learning experiences, including drama, music, sport, and team building. Provision is further enriched by residential visits and from national and international visitors into school. These add considerable enjoyment to pupils' learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength. It is promoted very effectively through strong messages built into lessons and assemblies. Community links and partnerships with other schools, including the one in China, are excellent.
- Parents and carers hold the school in high regard and are full of praise for the support their children receive. Parents have opportunities to be involved in school life and are kept well informed through newsletters or reading record books. The new parent forum is further strengthening home-school communication.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively to increase the opportunities for competitions between schools, to provide sports coaching in school and offer sports training for teachers.
- School leaders closely monitor the impact of pupil premium funding and adjust provision to

ensure maximum impact on pupils' achievement. This funding is now contributing effectively to better gains in learning for qualifying pupils.

- Although it is an academy, the school has a close relationship with the local authority which uses the headteacher to support other schools. As a lead school for school-based initial teacher training, the headteacher and his staff play a very active role through mentoring and training new teachers. This contributes well to the sharing of best practice.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good understanding of the school and of the quality of teaching. Governors are clear about how well pupils are progressing, the results they attain in national tests and how they compare with other schools. They are increasingly confident to ask challenging questions of the headteacher and senior staff. The governing body ensures financial resources are well managed, including the school's use of additional funding to support pupils, such as those eligible for the pupil premium. Governors are fully aware of how the sports funding has been spent and the level of enjoyment this has brought to the pupils. Governors are involved in setting targets for the headteacher and they are also fully aware that teachers' pay awards are securely linked to their performance and the progress that pupils make. Systems to safeguard and protect pupils meet requirements. Governors are committed to ensuring that the school improves further and they willingly undertake training.

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	137054
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	431252

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Wright
Headteacher	Jeremy Crook
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
Telephone number	01268 735329
Email address	jcrook@runwell.essex.sch.uk

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