

Notley Green Primary School

Blickling Road, Great Notley, Braintree, CM77 7ZJ

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement has improved markedly since the previous inspection. Pupils have made rapid progress over the past year in reading and writing.
- The very strong leadership of the lead headteacher, ably supported by the head of the school, other leaders and governors, has improved teaching and raised pupils' achievement in all areas within a short period.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They behave well and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. High quality care and support ensure that they are safe and happy.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well provided for. This and the responsibilities they take on in school prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate high expectations for the behaviour and achievement of their pupils.
- Children in the Reception classes benefit from an exciting and well-planned learning environment and make good progress.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and are effective in holding leaders to account for continued improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Almost all parents who expressed a view appreciate that the lead headteacher and the heads of school keep them well informed about all aspects of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in mathematics, although much improved, is not as rapid as it is in reading and writing.
- The most-able pupils do not always achieve as well as they can. This is because not all teachers challenge them sufficiently to deepen their understanding so that they reach even higher standards.
- Marking is not always effective in giving pupils guidance about how to improve or in ensuring they respond to the advice given.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, five of which were seen jointly with the lead headteacher and the school headteacher. They made a number of short visits to lessons and observed small groups of pupils taught by teachers and teaching assistants. The inspectors also listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 read to them.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 84 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). They talked to parents in the morning when they accompanied their children to school.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; school improvement planning; documentation relating to teachers' performance over time; and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Redman	Additional Inspector
Christopher Birtles	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Children are taught full time in the Reception classes.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils in local authority care and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school became a sponsor academy in November 2012, under the newly formed CHANGE Schools Partnership Multi-academy Trust. The Trust includes another school in Essex.
- The Trust appointed a lead headteacher in January 2014, following the retirement of the previous headteacher, to lead both the schools. The lead head appointed a head of school from 1 September 2014 to increase leadership capacity in Notley Green. Three other assistant headteacher roles with wider responsibilities have since been created to strengthen further the leadership team.
- The school works very closely with the cluster of local primary and the secondary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics further by extending the opportunities for all pupils, including the most-able, to apply their mathematical skills for solving problems and through application of these skills in other subjects.
- Improve teaching further so that it is always good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently set tasks that challenge all pupils, including most-able, to extend their knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding at all time
 - teachers always provide pupils with clear guidance on what they need do to improve their work to achieve even higher standards
 - teachers make sure that pupils respond to the guidance given and learn from their mistakes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The effective restructuring of the leadership team has made a very positive impact on all aspects of the school's work. The strong leadership of the lead headteacher, with the support and commitment of other leaders, governors and other staff, has improved the quality of teaching and the standards of achievement significantly. Leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils. They successfully foster a culture where pupils' responsible behaviour is well established and standards are rising.
- Arrangements for monitoring staff performance are rigorous and ensure that all teachers are held responsible for their pupils' achievement. This monitoring is effectively linked to a comprehensive staff development programme to strengthen the skills of all staff. Teachers are set challenging targets that are linked to raising pupils' performance. Teachers who meet these ambitious targets move up the salary scale.
- The quality of teaching is checked by the senior and subject leaders through frequent observations of pupils' learning and work. Subject leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and make a positive contribution to teaching quality and to pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum is planned effectively and gives pupils good opportunities to enhance their learning and skills through additional activities, events and clubs. These learning opportunities help pupils to develop positive attitudes to their work. Music, art and drama play an important part in pupils' life in school. The school places a strong emphasis on deepening pupils' understanding of British values and preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop a good understanding of democracy and how Parliament works. For example, they held a mock election in school recently. They know the importance of the country's laws and school rules. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a range of subjects, including religious studies, art and sporting activities.
- The primary school sport premium is used to provide specialist coaches for competitive sports activities and to train staff to raise their expertise in sports. Pupils' involvement in sport is very high and they thoroughly enjoy participating, and winning, in inter-school and county sports events. For example, the girls' football club has recently won an inter-school competition. Pupils gain in health and physical well-being as a result of these sporting opportunities.
- Safeguarding systems meet current requirements and policies are applied consistently, so that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the disadvantaged pupils through a well-organised intervention programme. Consequently, these pupils make good progress.
- The school is committed to equal opportunities for all its pupils and focuses strongly on raising the achievement of all groups and tackling any discrimination. This commitment is evident in the opportunities it provides for all pupils to extend their learning and skills through a range of subjects, events and clubs.
- The school works closely with the local authority, which has provided good support in moderating the baseline and writing assessment and in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The school also works closely with other local schools in extending the expertise of staff and sharing good practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been reorganised since the school converted to an academy and is effective. It has been successful in appointing several new governors with the skills and expertise required within the school. The Chair of the Governing Body has produced an effective action plan for ensuring full involvement of governors in all aspects of the school's work. The effectiveness of the plan is checked in the governing body's meetings. Governors ask probing questions about pupils' performance and support and challenge the leaders in equal measure. They have an accurate understanding of how pupils are

performing compared with national standards. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how it is improved. They make sure that teachers are rewarded only when they are able to raise achievement. The governing body monitors the school's finances carefully and ensures that the funds for sports and pupil premium are used effectively to improve pupils' achievement and in raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. It ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are articulate and confident when explaining their 'three rights', namely, the right to be safe, the right to respect and the right to learn, which underpin their class agreements that they decide upon every year.
- Pupils respect school rules. They appreciate the school's system for managing behaviour and recognise that it promotes good attitudes to learning. They learn to persevere when they find a task difficult and are happy to ask for help. This is because, as they explain, 'nobody laughs if you need help'. Occasionally, however, pupils lose concentration because the work does not challenge or engage them effectively.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as the house captains guiding the younger pupils and leading at sports days. They formulate their own school development plan that outlines suggestions for improving teaching and learning and how to promote 'Gold Standard Behaviour'.
- Pupils' attendance, although improved, is in line with the national average. This is partially because the county has a system of recording the pupils on residential trips as absent. The school rewards good attendance and follows up poor attendance, particularly persistent absences, rigorously.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. As a result, pupils say they feel safe in school at all times. All staff are checked for their suitability to work with pupils prior to appointment. The building is kept secure. The vast majority of parents, who responded to the parent questionnaire and talked to the inspectors during the inspection, appreciate the good quality of care and support the school provides for their children.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe because this is closely considered and discussed well in assemblies and lessons. They are able to explain the dangers of the misuse of the internet, social-networking sites and drugs.
- Pupils are well aware of the different forms bullying can take. They say that it is rare in school. They are confident that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with quickly by teachers and other adults.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and, as a result, teaching over time is now consistently good. This is having a direct impact on raising pupils' achievement. Staff provide a positive and purposeful climate for learning and, consequently, pupils respond readily to tasks with interest and enthusiasm. Good relationships between all adults and pupils help to promote good learning throughout the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. In most cases they ask probing questions to assess pupils' progress and to extend their knowledge and understanding further.
- Reading and writing are taught well. Teachers ensure that pupils write for different purposes and audiences. Reading sessions promote stimulating discussions on different styles of writing by different authors. These activities support pupils' reading and writing skills well.

- Teachers ensure that pupils develop good phonics (letters and sounds) skills in the early years so that they become independent and fluent readers. This has helped the rapid progress in reading across the school.
- In mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils develop their calculation skills successfully and consolidate them through regular practice. However, they do not always provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in solving problems and to use these skills in other subjects. As a result, although pupils have made faster progress over the past year, progress in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to build on their prior learning, as was evident in several sessions during the inspection. Teachers plan activities that make learning interesting and engaging. In most cases, they provide all abilities with suitably challenging tasks. However, not all teachers ensure that work is always sufficiently demanding to stretch all groups of pupils, including the most-able.
- In most classes, teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give clear guidance on what pupils should do to improve their work so they make faster progress. However, in some classes the guidance and comments on pupils' work are not always clear enough to enable pupils to know how to improve their work. Pupils are not always required to respond by correcting and learning from their mistakes.
- In most lessons, teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers and provide good support to disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This is helping these pupils to make good progress.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' progress in reading and writing has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good. Their progress in mathematics, although accelerated over the past year, is not as rapid as that in reading and writing. This is because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems and to use their learning in other subjects.
- Observations of learning, pupils' work, individual case studies and the school's own assessments show that pupils have made much faster progress over the past year in all areas and are on track to achieve higher than average standards. The proportion of current pupils exceeding the expected level of progress is above the 2014 national average in reading and writing and close to that in mathematics.
- In 2014, at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attained standards which were in line with the national averages in all areas. Currently, attainment is rising and the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 and above in Year 6 is above the 2014 national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in Year 1 apply their phonics knowledge accurately to their reading and writing. They have achieved standards that are in line with the national average in the phonics screening check in the current year, which shows an improvement since 2014.
- The most-able pupils make good progress in all areas as they move up the school, especially in reading and writing. Most of them write effectively for different purposes and analyse different styles of writing by a range of well-known and popular authors. In mathematics, they are increasingly applying their mathematical skills in calculations and problem solving. Nonetheless, not all of them achieve as well as they could and reach even higher standards because teachers do not always give them hard enough work to challenge them fully, particularly in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress from their different starting points. The school has acted decisively to improve the support system for these pupils and has given effective support through intervention programmes that meet their learning needs. As a result, they make good progress from their often low starting points.

- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. They currently attain standards at least in line with those of their peers and often better. Their success is due to very effective support for them within each class.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were almost a term and a half behind their classmates in reading, and just over two terms behind in writing and mathematics. Compared with other pupils nationally, they were about a term behind in reading, about two terms behind in writing and nearly three terms behind in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows the gaps have narrowed in the current year.

The early years provision is good

- Leadership of the early years is good. The leader ensures that adults provide a very high level of care, guidance and support for all children and that children learn and grow up in a very safe and secure learning environment. By the end of the Reception year, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children start in Reception with skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in communication and language development. A welcoming environment, good teaching and stimulating resources support their learning and development well and have accelerated their progress markedly this year. Consequently, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is currently above the most recent national average. This shows a significant improvement since 2014.
- Teaching is good. A good range of engaging and stimulating learning resources and activities are used effectively to capture children's imagination and this moves their learning on quickly. Adults encourage children to become confident in pursuing indoor and outdoor activities that match their own interests as well as those directed by staff.
- Children's behaviour is good. Children have an excellent relationship with their teachers and teaching assistants. They listen carefully, support one another and are starting to take on simple responsibilities, such as tidying up. Their health, safety and well-being are always of the utmost importance to staff and, as a result, children are very safe and secure in school.
- Phonics is taught regularly and effectively. This supports children well in rapidly developing their reading and writing skills. Children develop good coordination and personal skills and grow up as confident learners. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are well integrated and benefit from good support from skilled teaching assistants.
- The school works very well with families and supports the parents well to help their children's learning at home. The vast majority of parents, consulted during the inspection at the start of the day, stated that children are safe and secure in school at all time. They say that they are very happy with school's work with their children.

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	462121

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	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Allan John
Headteacher	Stuart Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2013
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