

# Meadgate Primary School

Mascalls Way, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, CM2 7NS

## Inspection dates

26–27 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- In most lessons, pupils now make good progress because teaching is at least good.
- Leaders and, increasingly class teachers use performance information well to monitor pupils' progress and adapt work to match their different abilities.
- The executive headteacher and leadership team have skilfully steered the school's recovery and galvanised staff at all levels to work as a team.
- Consistent and effective day-to-day management has transformed the climate of the school so that behaviour is now good.
- Pupils feel safe. The overwhelming majority of pupils now have positive attitudes and want to learn.
- Improvements in teaching are well led. The impact of the programme of professional development, and sharing of practice with Purleigh Primary School, is very clear in lessons.
- There are very clear systems for checking the quality of the school's work so that improvement can be sustained.
- A combination of staff changes at all levels, including a completely new leadership team and improved teaching from the few remaining staff, mean that this is a very different school to the one that existed at the time of the previous inspection.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Most teaching is good. Outstanding teaching is not widespread enough.
- Pupils all have challenging targets but do not necessarily understand the steps to meet them.
- While pupils do cover a range of subjects, the need to plug gaps in prior learning has led to an emphasis on English and mathematics, especially in Years 5 and 6. Coverage of other subjects is less strong.

## Information about this inspection

- This two-day inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspector observed six lessons, taught by six different teachers. He visited an assembly, observed break-times and an anti-bullying workshop. He also carried out short visits to a number of lessons, some of which were with the executive headteacher.
- A range of documentation was analysed, including that relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress, attendance, exclusions, and the academy's self-evaluation and its systems for managing teachers' performance and improving teaching and learning.
- By the end of the inspection, there had been too few responses to the Ofsted online survey Parent View to take into account. The inspector evaluated parental responses to the school's own survey.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing body and a representative of the local authority.

## Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.*

### Information about this school

- The school is of below-average size and has more girls than boys.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, known as the pupil premium, is average. This funding is provided for those known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils with a parent in the armed services and those in the care of the local authority.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, five teachers have left and have been replaced by four new teachers.
- The executive headteacher was appointed in September 2013.
- At the previous inspection in January 2013, the school was placed in special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Inspectors subsequently visited the school on two occasions to monitor its progress.
- The school is scheduled to close at the end of March 2014. It will reopen on 1st April 2014 as a new academy, sponsored by a local multi academy trust.

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

- Strengthen teaching further so that more is outstanding.
- Ensure that in all age groups and especially in Years 5 and 6, pupils are fully prepared for the next stage of their education by bringing the same rigour to the coverage of all subjects as is now found in English and mathematics and by further increasing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Raise achievement further by making greater use of the personal targets that pupils have, so that pupils not only know what their targets are, but know what they need to do to reach them.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- As the school is emerging from special measures following a period when standards in Key Stage 2 were too low, there is no track record of good achievement. The position has been rapidly turned around this year. Pupils' achievement has improved very quickly this year. The history of underachievement, especially in Years 5 and 6, left pupils with significant gaps in their learning. These gaps, compared with pupils of the same age nationally, have been carefully identified and addressed with pupils catching up by making strong progress.
- Standards are rising rapidly in English and mathematics. Pupils in each year group now make good progress in these subjects. The proportion on track to reach the expected level by the time they leave is in line with most schools. This represents a huge improvement.
- Pupils make a strong start in the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress and attain well. This progress is now continuing as pupils move up the school.
- The school uses the pupil premium carefully to target support for groups of pupils in danger of falling behind. In the 2013 public tests, the then Year 6 pupils qualifying for the pupil premium were two years behind their classmates. There are now no obvious gaps between the achievement of pupils currently in the school and entitled to this support and their classmates. Checks on pupils' progress, by both teachers and senior leaders, ensure that underachievement is identified and dealt with promptly through extra support. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, those known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress which is just as good as other pupils. This is because support is carefully thought out and specifically tailored to their needs, for example through small-group work.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting events and activities. These develop pupils' physical abilities and understanding of healthy lifestyles. As a result of sports premium funding, sports coaches are employed to teach across the school working with class teachers. Teachers are now receiving weekly training in games and gymnastics, with athletics planned for the summer term. This has had a positive impact on pupils' ability in physical education as they are now taught by a gymnastics and games expert, while classroom teachers have more confidence in delivering physical education lessons.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Inspectors' evaluation of the quality of teaching over two visits confirms the school's and the local authority's judgement that the quality of teaching over time is good. Parents, carers and pupils concur. As one parent told the inspector, 'It's much better; back to what it should be.' Teachers use teaching time well to ensure that pupils make good progress. Teaching is now consistently good with some that is outstanding. This is helping pupils to catch up quickly.
- At the last monitoring visit, teaching in English and mathematics lessons was well planned to cater for the different abilities of all pupils in the class. This has now been extended to all lessons. Basic skills in mathematics and English are developed well in other subjects, such as in science. Topics such as the Tudors or Harry Potter provide excellent opportunities to develop pupils' writing.

- Teaching assistants generally make a good contribution to the learning of pupils they support in lessons, particularly in group work and where the learning planned for different groups of pupils is clear in teachers' plans. The productive working environment enables pupils to achieve well in the time available.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the needs of all children are met well. There is good interaction between adults and children which helps them to develop skills rapidly in all areas of learning.
- There is clear evidence that teaching has improved as a result of the school's training and the links formed with Purleigh Primary School.
- Marking has improved strongly. Pupils respond well to the advice and guidance teachers give in work books.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed, but leaders recognise that assemblies could be used more effectively and the school is aware that opportunities are sometimes missed to develop this aspect of pupils' education during lessons.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This includes behaviour around the school, in corridors, at lunchtime and at the end of the school day.
- Pupils are friendly, courteous and helpful. While establishing a more rigorous approach to achievement, the high level of care for pupils has been maintained.
- Attitudes to learning are positive and any low-level disruption in lessons is rare. Parents questioned by inspectors, at this and previous monitoring inspections, were positive about behaviour and safety.
- Sports coaches run lunchtime games sessions, engaging pupils in purposeful play during their time outside. This has had a very positive impact on the behaviour of pupils at lunchtimes as they now have a channel for their enthusiastic play.
- The school has a small number of pupils whose behaviour is particularly challenging. Teachers and other adults are skilful at managing the behaviour of pupils, often quietly applying the school behaviour policy.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils now feel safe and free from all forms of bullying. During the inspection, a professional company was used to work with pupils across the school in powerful bullying workshops. These were followed up with discussion with class teachers. Pupils and teachers have a better understanding of bullying. Some pupils have been selected and trained to be 'ambassadors'. In addition to teachers and other adults, they check that pupils are not isolated and that nobody is being picked on.
- Inspectors observed pupils getting on well together at play time and in lessons. The anti-bullying day followed a recent e-safety day, with knowledgeable training leading to pupils' understanding procedures for using computers safely.
- Attendance has improved and now compares well with other schools. There have been no fixed-

term or permanent exclusions this year.

- All staff have received training in child protection and procedures are clear. Investment in new fencing has improved the security of the site. Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements.

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

- Parents, teachers and pupils are pleased that there is now permanent and stable leadership. The new executive headteacher has brought experience of highly successful school improvement and has communicated a clear vision of wanting a great school where pupils achieve very well. The school is in the fortunate position of having two current leaders who have recent experience of local authority improvement work in mathematics and in English. Their experience continues to help to drive forward the school's rapid improvement.
- The improvement made since the last inspection in achievement, the quality of teaching and in behaviour and safety is testament to the skills and positive impact of the senior leaders and the school's capacity to improve further.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved because of more accurate assessment and expert planning and analysis of their needs. As a result, they now make better progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well and provision in this used as a role model for other schools.
- The partnership work with Purleigh Primary School has proved highly effective. Staff from the two schools have trained together and observed each other's work. Both schools recognise and learn from highly effective practice in each school.
- Robust action has been taken to confront and deal with the history of ineffective teaching. Teachers' progress up the salary scale is linked to their performance.
- Parents value the improved communication from the school. Senior leaders meet parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are now encouraged to visit the school and help with activities such as reading.
- Over the last year, the local authority and governors have worked well together to improve the school. They secured highly effective leadership. Effective use has been made of other schools to enable teachers to see outstanding practice and to bring ideas back into school.
- The curriculum ensures that in most classes, pupils develop skills in a range of subjects. In Years 5 and 6, in order to spend the time that was needed in plugging the gaps in learning left by previous poor provision, there has been a huge emphasis on English and mathematics. As a result, leaders recognise that the time spent on catching up, may have left too little time for other subjects, pupils' education has been narrower than is desirable and the curriculum requires further improvement. For example, the school does not currently teach a foreign language.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well informed and their impact has improved during the last year. They now have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses as a result of training in understanding performance information. They know about the quality of teaching. They have helped to drive through the improvements needed since the school became subject to special measures. The governing body has been strengthened by new appointments, including more

parent governors. The governing body has commented positively on training received from the local authority and from Ofsted, and has carried out a review of how it could work better.

- Governors have accelerated the performance management process for teachers. They know what the school is doing to reward good teachers and has supported past action to tackle underperformance.

## 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>	115032
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	432713

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	162
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sara Kightley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joseph Figg
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 259403
<b>Fax number</b>	01245 344297
<b>Email address</b>	admin@meadgate.essex.sch.uk

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