

Richmond Avenue Primary and Nursery School

Richmond Avenue, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 9LG

Inspection dates 10-11 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is improving rapidly. Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and is good.
- Under the dynamic leadership of the headteacher, the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Staff and pupils' expectations are much higher.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has risen at both key stages since the last inspection.
- Children in the early years make an excellent start to their learning. The stimulating provision captures children's interest and imagination.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their excellent behaviour make a strong contribution to their achievement and enjoyment of school.
- A highly supportive and caring atmosphere contributes strongly to pupils' safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance has improved rapidly and is currently above the national average. No pupils are persistently absent.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous to adults and to one another. They show great respect and tolerance to those from different backgrounds.
- A wide range of clubs and activities develop and enrich pupils' sporting, artistic and other interests.
- School leaders are very committed to ensuring that pupils achieve their potential, personally and academically. The staff and the whole school community have high morale.
- Working with schools in the Shoebury Educational Partnership has supported rapid improvement in the quality of teaching.
- Governors provide strong support and challenge to the school. They are very committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they can and that teaching is as effective as possible.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of mathematics teaching in Key Stage 1, while good, is not as strong as it is in other areas.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) does not ensure that all pupils achieve well in reading.
- Teachers do not consistently take pupils' prior knowledge and understanding into account when introducing new learning challenges.
- Some pupils lack confidence in asking and answering questions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a wide range of lessons and activities led by teachers and teaching assistants. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed assemblies, lunchtimes and playtimes, and pupils arriving and leaving school.
- Discussions were held with pupils, parents, teaching and other staff, school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books, listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work.
- The inspectors took account of the 57 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also obtained the views of several parents arriving with or collecting their children from school.
- The inspectors observed the school at work and considered a range of documentation. This included school and other information on pupils' progress and attainment, school improvement planning and the school's work to judge its own performance. In addition, the inspectors looked at minutes of governing body meetings and documentation relating to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

St. John Burkett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Natasha Campbell	Additional Inspector
James Fuller	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Richmond Avenue Primary and Nursery School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A minority are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, supported by the pupil premium is considerably greater than in most schools. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children start school part time in the Nursery classes. Just over half of the children starting in the school's Reception class each year transfer from the Nursery classes. All children in Reception attend full time.
- The school is part of the Shoebury Education Partnership, a group of local schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that:
 - it is as strong in mathematics in Key Stage 1 as it is elsewhere
 - pupils' knowledge and understanding of phonics (the sounds which letters make) improve in order to increase progress and raise attainment in reading
 - lesson introductions take full account of the skills and knowledge pupils already have
 - all pupils have the confidence to ask and answer questions in detail.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership and the considerable determination of the headteacher to provide all pupils with the very best educational experiences are central to the school's rapid improvement. Staff at all levels share the ethos created by the headteacher's ambition and her high expectations for their teaching and for the pupils' achievement and their outstanding behaviour.
- The strong leadership of teaching has been key to the school's rapid improvement. Weaknesses at the time of the last inspection have been overcome. All leaders maintain a careful focus on the impact new initiatives are having on the quality of teaching. Regular feedback to staff about their performance is used to acknowledge good teaching and to improve it in areas where it is weaker. Consequently, teaching is typically good.
- The leadership of middle and senior leaders has strengthened since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have provided guidance and acted as role models to develop other leaders' skills. As a result, middle leaders have become increasingly effective. For example, the leader of religious education has improved the experience pupils get from assemblies, developed the use of visits and visitors, and ensured that the subject is taught well. Strong leadership, at all levels across the school, results in pupils achieving well.
- Outstanding leadership and the excellent example set by all staff have greatly improved behaviour. The school's records since the last inspection and inspectors' observations of pupils at work and at playtimes show consistently excellent and respectful behaviour.
- The school uses additional funding for the pupil premium very effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress and are able to take part in all relevant school events and activities. Additional adults are employed in the classrooms to enable teachers to give extra attention to eligible pupils who need it. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is often more rapid than that of their classmates.
- The school's work to promote equal opportunity and tackle discrimination is exceptionally strong. Staff work with both pupils and their families to ensure that all have the same opportunities to succeed. The school's work to keep pupils safe is very thorough and fully meets requirements.
- Leaders rightly prioritise the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics so that all pupils have a secure grounding in the basic skills. They ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, well-planned assemblies, lessons in citizenship and personal and social development promote tolerance and respect towards those from different cultures, faiths and communities. The recent school elections, based on the general election, gave pupils the opportunity to experience the workings of British democracy at first hand.
- The range of subjects taught in the school is broad and balanced across the main areas of learning. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school has developed a remarkably wide range of visits, visitors and residential experience to enhance the range of learning opportunities for pupils. Assemblies are uplifting and joyous. There are close links with local churches, including the neighbouring church, in which celebration assemblies are held weekly. The school also works proactively with the local high school to enable a smooth transition for pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress from the extensive range of opportunities provided.
- The school works to meet the needs of all pupils and supports families so that all parents can help their children to learn. Workshops are held to train parents how to listen to their children read, and homework is often designed so that it can be completed by pupils working with their parents. As a result, the school's links with the community are close and several parents, in conversation with inspectors, expressed their gratitude for the way the school had worked with and supported them. Parents are strongly supportive of the school's work.

- Leaders and governors have transformed the environment of the school so that classrooms are light attractive spaces, and the limited play area is a stimulating place to be. The small field has been resurfaced so that it can be used all year round. As a result, while pupils say their play space is too small, they also say that playtimes are very enjoyable.
- The school uses the primary physical education and sport funding well. Staff have increased the number of clubs available and the opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive sports. Specialist sports coaches have helped pupils to achieve greater success in inter-school competitions and to develop their skills. As a result, pupils also recognise how much they have gained in improving their health and physical well-being.
- The local authority provides effective support. It works closely with the headteacher to ensure the best use of the advisers available to the school to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective. It has a very clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. Governors know about the quality of teaching and analyse information detailing pupils' progress and attainment.
 - Governors work well with the headteacher who makes sure they are well informed and given the important information they need to carry out their roles successfully.
 - Governors are extremely professional in their approach, and share the high expectations of the headteacher for the further improvement of the school. They give leaders strong support and challenge them to account for the school's performance. They carry out their statutory duties diligently, ensuring that child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
 - The governors make sure that the headteacher's performance is rigorously appraised through annual objectives. They ensure that teachers' success in enabling pupils to make good progress is carefully linked to their pay. They oversee appraisal arrangements for staff to make sure classroom practice improves.
 - Governors manage the school's budget effectively and check closely how pupil premium funding is used to ensure its positive impact on eligible pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Behaviour at all times is impeccable. Pupils walk sensibly to assembly and to their classes, settling quickly with little supervision. As a result, lessons always start promptly.
- Pupils are very respectful and extremely polite to all adults and to each other. They thoughtfully hold doors open for each other and always remember to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Pupils take turns in conversations, listening respectfully to each other. Derogatory language is rarely heard. Adults set an excellent example across the school.
- Attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils concentrate extremely well in lessons and persevere with their work until tasks are completed. They enjoy the challenges they are given and they think hard about their answers to the teachers' questions.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They take pride in their uniforms and appearance, and keep the school neat and tidy. They are particularly proud of the displays around the school, which they have helped to create, including the changing display on the homework they have completed.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school. They invariably present their work neatly. Homework projects are carefully completed. Pupils have numerous opportunities to take responsibility. They are keen to take part and be involved in school life. For example, they willingly take on jobs in the classroom and seek election to the school council. The school council is particularly effective. Members select the local and national charities to support, such as to alleviate distress in Nepal or help for the homeless in Southend-on-Sea.

- Almost all parents responding to the online survey, Parent View, are convinced that behaviour at the school is good.
- Attendance is currently above the latest national average and has risen rapidly since the last inspection. The school's family worker is highly effective and forms positive relationships with families to make sure that pupils attend. Pupils' improved attendance has contributed to their better achievement.
- Older pupils attribute a strongly positive change in behaviour at the school to the leadership of the headteacher since her appointment. Since that time, absence, exclusions and other incidents have fallen rapidly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, such as cyber bullying or name calling. Pupils are adamant that bullying has not occurred in the school for a very long time. They are clear that if it were to happen, it would be dealt with straight away. Pupils are confident to share any concern with an adult in school.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors all said they felt very safe. Almost all parents responding to the online survey Parent View agree with this view. The close attention given to making the school safer, such as building a new perimeter fence and the readily identifiable staff who meet children at the gates each day, add strongly to pupils' sense of feeling safe.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills in a safe and stimulating environment. For example, pupils' sense of well-being is developed by activities such as the breakfast club, the forest school at lunchtimes and the gardening club after school. The school's emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education helps pupils to get on well together and to support each other.
- The few pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties or concerns meet daily with an adult to talk about and pursue strategies for dealing with any negative feelings. As a result, pupils say they always leave these sessions feeling positive.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and rapidly improving. Consequently, pupils are making much better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than they were at the time of the last inspection when teaching required improvement.
- Teachers have an increased understanding of what makes effective learning. They have benefited from sharing best practice and from very helpful training. As a result, teachers are far more aware of their impact on pupils' progress.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and have good relationships with pupils. This gives pupils growing confidence to try new things and to concentrate and complete tasks well. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers, try their best and are becoming more skilled at discussing their tasks with each other.
- Through thorough assessment of what pupils know and can do, teachers make work challenging for all abilities. As a result, pupils are making more rapid progress, including the most able, and attaining higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, together with those who are disadvantaged, are also achieving more because teachers and teaching assistants have become better at meeting their needs. Occasionally, at the start of a lesson, teachers do not take full account of what some pupils can already do, which slows their learning.

- Teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting pupils' learning. They are well trained and work very effectively in partnership with the teachers. In small groups and one-to-one activities, they show a good understanding of the next steps that particular pupils need to take to make good progress. They share information on how well pupils are doing with the teachers and, together, they help pupils to make good progress.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have focused on improving the guidance pupils receive on how to improve their work. Teachers give good verbal advice to pupils during lessons. The marking of books is very helpful in telling pupils exactly what to do next to improve their work and make good progress. Teachers check carefully that their guidance is followed by pupils.
- Homework is very helpful to learning. Most parents responding to Parent View think that homework helps their children to make good progress. There is an emphasis on the involvement of families in homework, which adds to pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- The teaching of phonics is helpful for most pupils. A well-planned programme enables pupils to use their skills well in reading and writing. The teaching of reading has improved but it is not as effective as that in writing and mathematics. Some pupils do not use phonics to work out unfamiliar spellings and occasionally misunderstand the meaning of words and sentences.
- Staff are keen to reflect on how they teach to make sure it is as effective and engaging as possible. They work closely together to share ideas and to try out new approaches. They benefit from working with other schools in the Shoebury Educational Partnership to improve the accuracy of their assessment of pupils' work. However, training for teachers in Key Stage 1 is more recent. As a result, the teaching of mathematics, although good, is not as effective as it is in reading and writing. Nevertheless, pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress in all subjects, including mathematics.
- Most staff use questioning effectively to test pupils' understanding and present challenge or support as needed. Teachers are increasingly asking questions that require more than a 'yes' or 'no' response. A growing number of pupils are responding in full, adding explanations to back up their answers because teachers have higher expectations of pupils. However, teaching does not yet ensure that all pupils have the confidence to explain their thinking in full.

The achievement of pupils is good

- By the time pupils leave the school, they have made good progress from their varied starting points in reading, writing and mathematics; attainment is rising. Leaders' drive to raise achievement since the previous inspection, when achievement required improvement, has been successful.
- Children enter the early years provision with a level of knowledge, skill and understanding below that typical for their age in personal and social development, communication and those areas related to language, literacy and mathematical understanding. By the end of the Reception Year, children have made outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress and their progress accelerates across Key Stage 2. The standards attained by pupils in the assessments in Year 2 and national tests in Year 6 have risen since the last inspection. More pupils across the school are working at the higher levels expected for their age because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher.
- The school works to ensure that all groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, make equally good progress. Through close monitoring of progress, leaders are quick to intervene should any group show signs of falling behind.
- From their different starting points, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school are working at levels similar to and sometimes ahead of other

pupils. This shows a rapid improvement in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection, when typically this group was more than a year behind their classmates. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is in line with and in some cases better than both other pupils in the school and others nationally. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils attained as well as others in the school in mathematics and writing, and were a term behind them in reading. In comparison with other pupils nationally, they were half a term behind in mathematics and a term behind them in reading and writing.

- Since the last inspection, the school has raised the level of challenge given to the most-able pupils. Most make good progress and several Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve Level 6 in the Key Stage 2 tests in reading, writing and mathematics this year. Increasing proportions of pupils are attaining the higher levels year-on-year as the school's greater expectations are being met. Inspectors found that most-able pupils were challenged consistently in the lessons they visited.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check is in line with the national average. However, the proportion achieving the standard in the Year 2 repeat check was well-below average in 2013 and 2014. Although this has currently risen and is broadly in line with the national average, phonic knowledge is not always used well by pupils across the school to improve their reading.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Under the outstanding leadership of the foundation leader, all staff work together to provide an interesting, exciting and well-organised place in which children are extremely well taught, learn very effectively and make outstanding progress.
- Achievement and the quality of teaching in the early years is better than that in the rest of the school. This is because the training teachers and teaching assistants have received has been effective in improving the progress made by children over a longer period of time. At the time of the last inspection, they were making good progress while the progress of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 required improvement.
- Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that children quickly settle into school. As a result, children are confident, happy and ready to learn. Staff focus sharply on developing and encouraging children's communication, personal and social skills. Every opportunity is taken to promote the development of language. Staff are excellent role models.
- Strong, positive relationships ensure that children feel safe in school, enjoy all that is on offer and their behaviour is outstanding. Children work well together, enjoy their snack times and cooperate well with one another in play activities.
- Teaching is outstanding. Staff provide exciting activities, both outside and in, that engage and capture the imagination and interest of all children. Children are encouraged to be curious and explore. Themed areas, such as the barber and hairdresser in Nursery, or the hospital in Reception, help them to try out their ideas.
- Excellent teaching of phonics develops children's knowledge and skills well and enables them to use their skills effectively in reading and writing. The development of early writing is excellent. Children engage freely and regularly in writing across all areas of the curriculum. For example, one child, playing with cars in a water tray, had written the colour of each on a whiteboard and underlined each pair of letters which made a single sound. The quality of phonics teaching has improved so that children now enter Year 1 with better phonics skills than in previous years.
- The excellent provision meets the needs of all children, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. It contributes strongly to children's physical and emotional health through the close focus the school has on its work with families. The extensive range of imaginative activities ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness develops rapidly through the many opportunities available to them.

- Outstanding systems of assessment are in place to track individual progress and identify children's next steps in learning. All staff are highly skilled in knowing when to intervene in children's learning to check knowledge and understanding, and to move learning forward with additional challenge.

- Staff work well with parents and carers, engaging them in their children's learning and providing opportunities to discuss their children's progress.

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	133957
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	462048

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Reeder
Headteacher	Dawn Dack
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2013
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