

Messing Primary School

School Road, Messing, Colchester, Essex CO5 9TH

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has high expectations for what every pupil can achieve and has very successfully driven improvements in teaching, learning and the curriculum. The areas for improvement from the last inspection have been fully addressed.
- The trust board and local governing body give exemplary support and challenge to the headteacher. They have a thorough knowledge of the school and are highly committed to school improvement.
- The leader for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has exceptional knowledge of her subject. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is good in key stages 1 and 2. There have been strong improvements in mathematics teaching over the last year. Consequently, pupils' progress in mathematics improved in 2018.
- Most groups of pupils in both key stages make good progress in reading and writing from their starting points.
- The leadership of, and provision in, the early years foundation stage are outstanding. Children settle rapidly and make good and often outstanding progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum is good. Pupils enjoy learning because their interests are taken into consideration in teachers' planning.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. Pupils love coming to school because everyone is kind. They have strong friendships and feel very safe.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly pleased with the school. One parent described Messing as: 'A gem of a school. It's supportive and caring whilst challenging children to do their best. I couldn't be happier.'
- Middle-ability pupils do not make sufficient progress in reading in key stage 2. It is not clear to staff, pupils or parents what information should be recorded in pupils' reading record books. Pupils do not always understand what they are reading because teachers do not check whether books pupils choose suit their level of understanding. Pupils are not clear what to do if they come across a word that is new to them when reading on their own.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching and progress of middle-ability pupils in reading in key stage 2 by ensuring that:
 - there is a consistent and clear rationale for the use of reading record books
 - pupils know what to do when they come across a word they do not understand when reading on their own
 - teachers regularly check pupils' choice of reading books to make sure that they can understand the story as well as read the words.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher continues to provide highly effective leadership. She works closely with all staff to develop school policies and procedures that everyone adheres to and that result in improvements in teaching and learning. Her evaluation of the school is accurate and based on a careful and exceptionally thorough analysis of the strengths of the school and areas for further improvement.
- The headteacher and staff work closely with a local consortium of schools and with the local authority. The headteacher goes out of her way to make sure her judgements of teaching and learning are accurate through additional external monitoring from consortium headteachers and the local authority school excellence partner. Subject leaders work closely with their colleagues in the consortium. This collaboration has resulted in rapid improvements in subject leadership and accurate assessment of pupils' work.
- The New Hall Multi-Academy Trust has provided highly effective additional support for subject leaders in computing and mathematics. For example, subject leaders from the sponsor school have been released to work with subject leaders in Messing, and technical support is also provided.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides impressive leadership and support to staff, pupils and parents. Her assessment of pupils' needs is thorough and accurate, and based on expert knowledge and understanding. For example, every pupil who has SEN and/or disabilities has a one-page profile, shared with parents, that sets out their needs and the additional help they are receiving to meet those needs. Pupils with an education, health and care plan have individual education plans that set out a manageable number of current targets. All plans and provision are rigorously monitored by the SENCo and adapted at least termly. Parents cannot speak highly enough of the provision made for their children and the extraordinary progress they make both academically and in their social, emotional and behavioural development. The SENCo works exceptionally well with external experts, including the local authority specialist adviser for autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) are very pleased with the training and support they receive. They particularly value working with teachers from the consortium schools and the specialist training they have received in supporting and managing pupils who have ASD.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and based on the national curriculum. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of what they are learning in their termly topics. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are keen to explain the functions of the different parts of a plant. A geography-focused topic about volcanoes also captured pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning. The school, supported by the trust, provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. For example, sports coaches provide many different sporting activities, including golf and archery.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and for the next stage in their education. Pupils take an active part in the local community, including picking up litter and designing posters for the parish council website about the dangers of fly-tipping.

The school has its own allotment where pupils successfully grow a range of seasonal fruit and vegetables. The trust ensures that pupils' experience of diversity is enhanced by providing regular visits from overseas students who attend New Hall School. During these visits, students share information about their countries and culture.

- Most parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and who met with the inspector are exceptionally positive about every aspect of the education their children receive at the school. A very few parents raised a concern about bullying. Inspection evidence does not support these concerns and the school has effective systems for dealing with bullying should this occur.
- The headteacher, local governors and the trust board have identified progress in reading in key stage 2 for middle-ability pupils as an area for improvement in the school improvement plan. However, the actions planned are not focused sharply enough to bring about the required improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governance by the local governing body and trust board is extremely effective. Both local governors and the trust board know the school exceptionally well. For example, they analyse pupils' outcomes in detail and challenge the headteacher as to why pupils are not achieving as well as they should, for example in mathematics in 2017.
- Local governors have specific responsibilities and visit the school at least two or three times a term to give support and challenge in specific areas, for example safeguarding.
- Local governors and the trust give effective support to the headteacher in managing the school budget. They take care to ensure that additional funding to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium, SEN and physical education and sport is used effectively.
- Both local governors and the trust share the headteacher's high expectations for staff development and pupils' outcomes. They are rightly proud of how well the school has grown and developed since the last inspection.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has strong and effective systems and procedures that meet requirements and ensure that all pupils are safe. The procedures are reviewed regularly by the trust.
- Staff training is refreshed every term and safeguarding procedures are a key part of the induction for new staff. Consequently, all staff know what to do if a pupil raises a concern and are confident to complete referral forms.
- The designated safeguarding lead keeps careful records of any concerns raised by staff and gives regular feedback on how issues are resolved.
- The trust provides a safeguarding governor to contribute to the work of the local governing body who gives valuable additional support and challenge to the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge well to make lessons interesting and engaging for all groups of pupils.
- Teachers work effectively with LSAs by making sure that LSAs know what is expected of them in each lesson and by checking their contribution to pupils' learning during and after lessons.
- Teachers and LSAs have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour during lessons. Consequently, pupils listen attentively and get down to work rapidly.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved over the last year due to the effective training and support staff have received by working with the consortium schools.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 is highly effective. This provides a strong foundation for developing fluency in reading in key stage 2.
- There are effective systems in place for the direct teaching of reading in key stage 2, for example in reading lessons. However, systems to support pupils' progress in reading when they are reading on their own are less effective. This is because there is no clear, consistent guidance on the use of reading record books, what pupils should do when they come across a word they do not understand when reading on their own, and how teachers should support pupils in selecting books pupils can read and understand.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school provides an exceptionally safe and caring environment. Pupils are taught how to care for one another from the moment they start school and consequently demonstrate consideration, care and respect towards their fellow pupils and to all the adults who work with them.
- Parents are particularly pleased with how the school supports their children. Many parents who responded to Parent View comment on the extremely inclusive community feeling of the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make outstanding progress in understanding and managing their emotions and developing their ability to work and play with other pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- All pupils behave well in class because they like their teachers, enjoy learning and have highly effective support when required.

- Pupils take great pride in their work. For example, written work in pupils' books is carefully set out and numbers and handwriting are neatly formed.
- Pupils make friends rapidly and collaborate and play well together at breaktimes. Pupils who join from other schools at different times during the school year rapidly settle in and feel at home, because staff and pupils take extra care to make them feel welcome.
- The school is doing everything it can to raise attendance, which remains around average. Persistent absence rose slightly last year due to unusual circumstances that no longer apply.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' below-average progress in mathematics in key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017 was a cause for concern for school leaders and for the trust. The school turned this around during 2018 by making significant improvements to the teaching of mathematics and the mathematics curriculum. Consequently, in 2018, Year 6 pupils made similar progress to others of their age, with a higher proportion than average exceeding the expected standard.
- Pupils made good progress from their starting points in grammar, punctuation and spelling and in their writing in key stage 2, with a higher proportion than average exceeding the expected standard.
- Progress in reading in key stage 2 for middle-ability pupils was not as good as in writing and mathematics. This is an area for improvement.
- Key stage 1 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was above the 2017 average in 2018.
- Because it is so early in the school year, it is difficult to determine current progress. However, the good-quality work in pupils' books indicates that all groups of pupils have settled into their new classes and are working hard during lessons.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children typically start in the Reception class with a range of different abilities. This year, there is a higher than usual proportion of children who have additional needs which could hold back their learning and progress. However, after barely two weeks in the class, it is clear how rapidly all children have settled into this exceptionally inclusive and effective setting. For example, children can sit quietly and listen to each other as well as to the teacher. Children speak clearly and confidently, and are able to express their ideas in sentences.
- Children make good and sometimes outstanding progress in early years from their different starting points. The school's own performance information indicates that the majority reached a good level of development in 2018.
- Teaching in the Reception class is outstanding. Teachers set high expectations for learning and behaviour from the moment they first meet the children in their various pre-school settings, prior to starting school. Once children are in school, teachers demonstrate good speaking and listening, and praise the behaviour they expect from

all the children. Children respond with accurate enunciation of words and sounds and rapidly learn how to behave well in class. Outstanding teaching makes a strong contribution to children's outstanding personal development, behaviour and welfare.

- Children start learning to read as soon as they start school and rapidly develop story-telling skills. Teachers begin the direct teaching of phonics once they have completed their initial assessment of children's starting points.
- Children are exceptionally safe in the early years classroom and outside area. For example, children walk down the steps to the outside area carefully and with consideration for each other.
- The interesting curriculum is developed from teachers' accurate, ongoing assessment of children's learning and development needs, and children's interests. Stories often provide the stimulus for learning. For example, during the inspection, children were able to talk about when they were brave, like the brave butterfly in their class storybook. Teachers use the outside area exceptionally well to enhance the curriculum, for example by enabling children to listen to and identify the sounds around them.
- The leadership of early years is outstanding. Every learning activity in the classroom and outside is focused on making sure that every child makes the best possible progress in all the areas of learning. The early years leader works successfully with the headteacher and with Reception staff to determine the next steps in improving provision. For example, this term, teachers are starting to use a web-based system for recording the highlights of children's learning and progress.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139252 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10046466 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 83 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Anne-Marie Renshaw |
| Headteacher | Jackie Halliday |
| Telephone number | 01621 815415 |
| Website | www.messingprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@messingprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 16–17 June 2015 |

Information about this school

- The school is a very small primary school.
- The school is part of the New Hall Multi-Academy Trust, which is led by a large and successful independent school.
- The school works closely with a local consortium of 24 primary schools.
- There is a new teacher in Year 6 and five new learning support assistants this term.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who have an education, health and care plan is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the SENCo, the early years leader, the mathematics leader, groups of pupils, parents, teachers and support staff, members of the New Hall Multi-Academy Trust's local governing body and the director of the multi-academy trust.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' written work in mathematics, English and foundation subjects in key stages 1 and 2, and learning journals in Reception.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including safeguarding procedures, attendance records, the school's own assessment information, the most recent school self-evaluation document and the current school improvement plan.
- The inspector observed teaching in all classes. All visits to classrooms were made jointly with the headteacher or the SENCo.
- The inspector scrutinised 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and nine free-text messages from parents. There were four responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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