

Goresbrook School

Ripple Road, Dagenham, Essex RM9 6XW

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The new principal is driving improvement with conviction and determination. However, there are still weaknesses in the leadership of the primary section.
- Teaching and learning are inconsistent across the school. They are strong in Year 7. However, in Reception and Years 1 and 2, pupils do not make sufficiently rapid progress.
- Teaching in the early years has recently been reorganised, but the lack of strong leadership in the past is hampering improvement.
- In Reception and Years 1 and 2, teachers' expectations are not consistently high. This means that pupils are given work that lacks challenge and the most able pupils in particular are not stretched sufficiently.
- Despite recent improvements, provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not yet good. This means that they are not making progress at the rates of which they are capable.

The school has the following strengths

- The secondary section of the school is led especially well. Effective teaching, a robust focus on pupils' learning and an engaging curriculum mean that pupils in Year 7 make brisk progress.
- The principal, senior leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school and are resolute in their work to improve teaching and learning in the primary section.
- Senior leaders are honest and accurate about the school's weaknesses. They have set ambitious targets and well-defined actions for improvement.
- The behaviour of pupils in Year 7 is exemplary. They are polite and respectful of others and their positive attitudes have a significant impact on their learning.
- The great majority of pupils in the primary section behave well in lessons and around the school. Their positive attitudes contribute well to their learning.
- The school fosters pupils' personal development and welfare well. Relationships are strong and exemplify the school's focus on respect for others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in key stage 1 by:
 - raising the quality of teaching by setting work that challenges all pupils, especially the most able
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' achievements
 - providing timely support to the lower achievers so that they make the progress of which they are capable
 - ensuring rigorous procedures to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the leadership of the primary section of the school so that there is greater capacity to drive improvements to teaching, learning and achievement.
- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - children are given purposeful activities that challenge them
 - adults intervene consistently with children and engage them in conversations that stimulate their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The past year has been an unsettling time for the school. Numerous changes in staffing and a difficulty in recruiting high-quality staff have led to a rapid and recent decline in standards in the primary section of the school. The extent of this decline could not have been predicted by leaders or the trust. Evidence shows that pupils in the primary section were achieving well. For example, external reviews, the 2016 phonics check and the early years profile all painted a strong picture of the school. Furthermore, the trust had taken appropriate action to plug staffing gaps. However, the range of difficulties resulted in a 'perfect storm' that left the school with ineffective leadership in the primary section, especially of teaching.
- The new principal has taken decisive action to reverse the decline in standards. Leaders are frank about the school's weaknesses and the scale of the task ahead. Equally, they have identified the school's significant strengths accurately. As a result, the new principal, with the able support of senior leaders, is making strong headway in tackling the weaknesses. For example, behaviour in Years 1 and 2 has improved and fewer pupils are persistently absent. Changes have been made to the way children in the Nursery and Reception are taught. In addition, leaders have analysed assessment information in Year 2 so that they can fine-tune teaching and fill any gaps in learning. However, these developments are quite recent and have not yet had time to make a significant impact on children's and pupils' progress.
- The weaknesses in the primary section contrast starkly with the strengths in Year 7, the secondary part of the school. In Year 7, leadership is robust and highly effective. Leaders have set high expectations for pupils and staff that are unquestionably met. The high-quality education provided in Year 7 is also the result of the expertise and determination of subject leaders. They have a secure understanding of their subjects and have developed an exciting and interesting curriculum. Plans for next year's Year 8 are well advanced and planning extends into Years 9, 10 and 11. Consequently, pupils make good progress.
- The systems to track pupils' progress and identify those who are falling behind in their learning are robust in Year 7. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' progress and abilities astutely to provide targeted support or to set suitably challenging work. As a result, all pupils in Year 7, including the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and the less able, do well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make adequate progress but fewer achieve the school's target than other groups. This is because the leadership of this aspect of the school's provision has only recently been improved. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and additional staff have been appointed for September 2017. Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now being used more effectively.
- In the primary section, pupils' progress is now being checked regularly using the school's tracking procedures. This provides information that enables leaders to spot those pupils who need extra help, for example with their literacy skills, and provide

individual support. However, these systems are not as well established as they are in the secondary section and the impact is less noticeable. Nevertheless, the school's assessment information shows that the pupils targeted for support in Year 2 are catching up with their peers.

- The arrangements for managing staff performance are inconsistent across the school and are not always linked clearly enough to salary progression. Senior leaders recognise the need to improve the arrangements. They are introducing revised systems that set clearer targets based on whole-school priorities, especially teaching and learning.
- The curriculum in the primary section is suitably balanced and provides children and pupils with an appropriate range of experiences. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and develop their literacy and numeracy skills soundly. The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of after-school clubs, including music, drama, ballet, cooking, arts and crafts, football and badminton. A breakfast club runs every morning.
- In the secondary section, pupils are taught the main English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects of English, mathematics and science, plus humanities and modern languages. In addition, the curriculum includes computing, music and physical education. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is part of 'coaching' time each morning. The extra-curricular programme, which all pupils attend once a week after school, provides a wide variety of additional experiences. These broaden the curriculum effectively and range from drama and dance to historical project work and writing the pupil newspaper. Pupils enjoy these experiences a great deal and take part with enthusiasm.
- The additional funding the school receives to support those Year 7 pupils who need to catch up with their peers is used effectively. As a result, Year 7 pupils make rapid progress with their learning. Similarly, the pupil premium money is used well to fund a range of interventions to boost learning in both the primary and secondary sections, although the impact is considerably stronger in the latter. Disadvantaged pupils in Years 1 and 2 are catching up with their peers, but differences remain.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used suitably to support the development of pupils' healthy lifestyles. For example, the school employs professional sports coaches. They lead PE lessons for Reception and Year 1 classes and run a range of sports clubs after school. These arrangements have a positive impact on pupils' physical skills and on developing their awareness of how to keep fit and healthy.

Governance of the school

- The minutes of meetings indicate that governors hold leaders to account effectively. They follow up issues thoroughly so that concerns are not left to fall by the wayside. Governors provide support and challenge in equal measure. They contribute well to ensuring that the school continues to improve its work.
- Governors are provided with a broad range of relevant information and analysis about the school's performance. Regular visits to the school enable them to see for themselves how well the school is doing. They take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and have attended relevant training courses. As a result, they understand their responsibilities for ensuring that all pupils are kept safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and that these are used effectively to keep pupils safe. The school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff have been improved. This ensures that the record of pre-employment checks and the vetting of staff meet requirements.
- Safeguarding records are detailed and well organised. Leaders follow up individual cases tenaciously to ensure that pupils get the support they need and to keep them safe. There are good links with outside agencies, including the local authority's early help and educational psychology services that support pupils' well-being. The focus the school places on safeguarding ensures that pupils are kept safe. Pupils are clear that they feel safe in school.
- All staff receive regular training about safeguarding arrangements. For example, each member of staff completes online training on child protection, the government's 'Prevent' duty and internet safety. In addition, regular in-house training ensures that staff understand how to recognise the signs of abuse, including female genital mutilation. Staff have a secure knowledge of the school's procedures for reporting concerns. Policies are up to date and reflect requirements for staff to have read and understood relevant documents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there are inconsistencies across the school. While it is strong in Year 7, weaknesses in the early years and key stage 1 mean that children and younger pupils do not make enough progress with their learning. Efforts to improve teaching and learning have been hampered by changes in staff and a lack of primary expertise. A lack of leadership capacity in the primary section has also taken its toll on quality. However, there have been some improvements which the new principal has begun to build upon. For example, teaching in Year 1 is now making a positive difference to pupils' learning.
- Teachers' expectations vary too much across the school. In Year 7, teachers have high expectations. Pupils are set work that challenges and stretches them most effectively. However, it is the consistency of high-quality teaching and the well-established and effective assessment that set Year 7 apart from the primary section of the school. Pupils are given work that grabs their interest and, at the same time, deepens their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a humanities lesson, pupils were learning how to tackle a GCSE question as part of a topic on overseas aid. Consequently, pupils in Year 7 make first-rate progress from their different starting points.
- By contrast, teaching in the early years and in key stage 1 does not challenge children and pupils consistently enough. While there are some strengths, notably in Year 1, the range of teaching methods is not always effective in promoting high-quality learning. For example, the work given to pupils often fails to stretch the most able or provide enough support for the less able. As a result, the brightest pupils tread water while the less able do not always get help quickly enough.

- In Year 7, teachers use a range of effective methods to enable pupils to make brisk progress. For example, questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding and adjust the lesson, to correct misconceptions and to give pupils time to consider what they are doing and develop their thinking. Often, teachers ask extra questions to get pupils to explain their thinking. This helps them to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- A strength of teaching that runs right through the school is the way teachers establish clear classroom routines. For example, pupils move from one activity to another, or classroom to classroom, quickly and quietly. Pupils and children are well behaved and ready and willing to learn. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Little, if any, time is lost through silly behaviour, and teachers can teach without being interrupted.
- Across the school, reading is given a strong emphasis and pupils in the primary section learn to read with confidence. Books are readily available in the libraries, and pupils read often. For the most part, literacy is also developed in other subjects. This is especially so in Year 7 where teachers routinely make links across subjects. For example, in humanities lessons, there is an appropriate focus on developing reading and writing skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is stronger in the secondary than in the primary section. Occasionally in the primary section, mathematical misconceptions are not corrected and this limits the extent to which pupils can master a concept. Pupils' numeracy skills are reinforced in the secondary section. For example, in science, mathematical calculations are an integral part of teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal skills. For example, the extra-curricular programme in Year 7 and PSHE in the primary and secondary sections tackle themes such as racism, celebrating difference and democracy. Assemblies reinforce a strong moral code, for example work to raise awareness about homophobia has had a positive impact. This year, assembly themes have included democracy and dictatorship, war, human rights and freedom fighters, gender equality, racism and the Holocaust. As pupils said, their education 'enlightens us for the future'.
- The school's positive climate also plays a strong part in promoting pupils' personal development. There is a strong focus on pupils working together to discuss ideas or solve problems. This not only fosters learning, it also develops pupils' respect and tolerance for others very effectively. Respect between boys and girls, and pupils from different backgrounds or with different abilities, is first-rate and pupils are quick to support others. These positive attitudes have an unmistakable impact on learning.
- Pupils' welfare is dealt with well by leaders, teachers and support staff. The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe.

For example, pupils describe clearly the work they do on internet safety and cyber bullying. They know how to reduce the risks of being harmed, for example on their way to and from school.

- The school's procedures for supporting vulnerable pupils are secure. Leaders understand their responsibilities well and are knowledgeable about the range of external support available to pupils, including working with local charities. The school is rigorous and persistent in following up on those pupils referred to social services. As a result, pupils are well cared for and their welfare is a high priority.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. In Year 7, their behaviour is excellent. They move between lessons extremely well and their conduct at break and lunchtime is first class. As a result, lessons proceed without disruption and no time is wasted.
- All pupils in the school are polite and welcoming to visitors. Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful and warm without being overfamiliar. This creates a highly positive climate for learning.
- Pupils agree that there is very little bullying in the school. They are confident that if there is any bullying it will be dealt with effectively by their teachers.
- The school has well-defined procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, including racism and derogatory language. Pupils are clear about the school's systems of rewards and sanctions, and explain clearly how these work in practice. Year 7 pupils feel that sometimes there are too many rules, but recognise that these 'keep you safe'.
- Nearly three quarters of those parents who responded the online survey, Parent View, agree that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. However, not all parents agree, and some expressed their concerns to inspectors about the recent changes to staff and the resulting decline in behaviour. Inspection evidence shows that behaviour has improved in recent months.
- The school carries out appropriate checks on attendance and has improved its systems for following up absences, including of pupils who are persistently absent. Staff monitor absence rates appropriately so that they can target their efforts. As a result, attendance has improved and the number of days lost has reduced significantly. Attendance is slightly above average in both the primary and secondary sections.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Achievement in the early years and key stage 1 is inconsistent and, as a result, requires improvement. While the proportion of pupils working at the expected standard has improved, those working at greater depth remains too low. As a result, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not doing as well as they should.
- Pupils in key stage 1 who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. The school's work to develop pupils' language skills is having a convincing impact, especially in developing their ability to use phonics to read.

- The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not as rapid as it should be. This is because the systems to support these pupils have lacked rigour in the past. The new procedures have not had time to demonstrate an impact.
- Pupils in Year 7 achieve well and make swift progress with their learning. The school's assessment information and work in books show that pupils are doing well. They make better than expected progress from their different starting points across the range of subjects taught. Achievement in English, mathematics, science and PE is especially strong.
- Disadvantaged pupils, who make up nearly half of the Year 7 group, make the same strong progress as other pupils. This is also the case for Year 7 pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's work to raise standards of literacy in the secondary section is proving effective.
- The most able pupils in Year 7, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make better than expected progress from their starting points. This is the result of challenging work that stretches pupils' thinking effectively. In addition, the school promotes pupils' aspirations well. Pupils noted that they get an 'insight into lots of different careers'. Those pupils who started in Year 7 with below expected key stage 2 test results are also doing well. The school's assessment information shows that they are making swift progress to achieve at least the expectations for their age.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leadership of the early years provision is not yet good and requires improvement. Changes of staff and recruitment difficulties have resulted in a lack of capacity and expertise. However, the new principal has taken swift action to tackle weaknesses. There is now a clear vision for the early years, and new leaders have been recruited for September 2017.
- Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. In 2016, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year was above the national figure. However, insufficient leadership capacity has resulted in a recent decline in standards, and children currently in the early years do not make as much progress as they should.
- The Reception classrooms, both the inside and outside space, do not provide a stimulating environment to make learning exciting. Adults make a wide range of activities and resources available, which children enjoy. However, their purpose is unclear and they are insufficiently focused on learning. For example, children play happily with sand or water, or spend time making things with building bricks, but are not challenged by adults to develop their skills. Sometimes, children are left to play with others without the intervention of an adult. As a result, children's knowledge and skills are not being developed consistently, especially their writing.
- Provision in the Nursery is similar, although children make reasonable progress because the smaller groups allow teaching to be targeted more effectively. For example, children made a butterfly successfully with targeted help from an adult. In another case, children were busy playing with bikes and making up a story. However,

they did so on their own and opportunities to develop their language skills were missed by adults.

- Children in the early years have positive attitudes and behave well. Children work independently on the range of activities that are available to them. For example, children in the Nursery sustained their interest in building cars and houses with building bricks without intervention from an adult. Children have well-developed social skills and know how to work sensibly with others. However, adults do not always intervene in a timely manner to engage pupils in conversation and extend their learning. As a result, children are not always challenged sufficiently.

School details

Unique reference number	140962
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10031669

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	381
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Hannah Smith
Principal	David Ellison
Telephone number	0203 597 6666
Website	www.goresbrookschool.org.uk
Email address	office@goresbrookschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is currently a smaller than average-sized all-through school. It opened in September 2014 with Reception children. Year 7 pupils joined in September 2016. The school plans to grow to 1,350 pupils over the coming years.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and an education, health and care plan, is average.

- The school is part of the United Learning Academy Trust.
- The school does not yet have pupils who have taken external tests or examinations. As a result, there is no information about whether it meets the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in each year group, including the Nursery and Reception classes. Many of these were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work across the range of subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 7 reading.
- Inspectors looked at behaviour at break and lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, governors, subject leaders and pupils.
- Inspectors met informally with parents at the start of the day.
- A range of documentation and policies were scrutinised, which included the school's self-evaluation, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, assessment information and the minutes of the meetings of the executive and local governing bodies.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to the quality of teaching, the school's website and information about extra-curricular activities.
- Records, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding were reviewed.
- Inspectors took account of 52 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also considered 23 written responses by parents.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Simon Knowles	Ofsted Inspector
Jeff Cole	Ofsted Inspector

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