

Inspection of Graham James Primary Academy

The Sorrells, Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex SS17 7ES

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 April 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Petra Back. This school is a single-academy trust, Graham James Primary Academy, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Bradley Lane.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at the Graham James Primary Academy are kind and polite and enjoy their learning. They embrace the school's values of 'caring to learn, learning to care'. They have positive attitudes towards their learning and take pride in the work they produce. Pupils are keen to share ideas and work well together.

Early years creates a solid platform for children's later learning to build on. From the start, staff have exceptionally high expectations for children, eager for them to learn and broaden their experiences. Throughout school, pupils live up to these expectations, and many achieve well. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities help to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

Pupils behave very well and are keen to impress their teachers. The school places high value on rewards and celebrates pupils' achievements. Leaders and staff encourage and model positive attitudes and behaviour. This helps pupils to develop their character, resilience and independence. Pupils are happy to help others. They support their peers well.

The school cares deeply for its pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive throughout the school. Pupils trust adults to help them with any concerns that they may have. This makes them feel safe and happy at school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Leaders ensure that every opportunity for reading and writing is used. Many staff have expert knowledge and teach the school's phonics programme skilfully. As a result, pupils progress quickly and achieve extremely well in these aspects of their learning. Teachers create classroom libraries where there is a wide range of books carefully chosen to interest, excite and engage readers. Pupils enthusiastically recommend books and authors to each other and are confident readers. Pupils who need additional support with reading get the help they need to improve their accuracy and confidence quickly.

Pupils benefit from a broad and rich curriculum that prepares them for the next stages of their education. The school thoughtfully considers the needs of its pupils. Teachers show much curriculum and teaching expertise. They deliver the curriculum with knowledge, confidence and flair. Nevertheless, in some subjects, the school does not ensure that the staff use assessment to tailor and adapt tasks to pupils' needs. As a result, occasionally, pupils do not learn subject content as securely as they could.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is an important part of the school. The school is skilled at identifying pupils' needs. It ensures that staff make effective adaptations to their delivery of the curriculum. The school ensures that staff know how to provide meaningful help and support for pupils. Staff help pupils with SEND to develop independence and access learning alongside their peers. As a

result, pupils with SEND progress through the curriculum well and, with appropriate encouragement, gain the confidence to achieve.

The early years curriculum gives children a strong start to their education. The ambition and support for children are exceptional. Children learn to be independent and respectful. They are curious and happy, and play well together. Children are familiar with the well-established routines and expectations. This helps them to settle quickly and learn effectively. Expert staff provide comprehensive support to children across all aspects of their learning. Meticulous planning results in high-quality resources, which reinforce children's understanding of taught concepts. The school provides a language-rich environment where children develop their communication skills. The 'chatter box' room and 'voting station' strengthen this offer. Here, children are encouraged to use their voice and to understand fairness, thus underpinning the values of democracy and liberty from a very early age.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their character and cultural awareness. Trips, school events, residential visits, community work and themed days at school enrich the curriculum and help pupils understand different views and perspectives. Leaders value the importance of personal development and ensure they give pupils a rich set of experiences beyond the curriculum. The school works effectively to ensure that all pupils access these opportunities.

The school ensures that pupils understand the changing world. For example, pupils learn about internet safety and what to do if they are worried about anything. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is positive, and disruptions are rare. Pupils show respect for each other and staff and have a positive attitude to challenges in lessons. They work together well and show resilience in the face of difficulties.

Leaders and trustees are committed to providing the best possible education for pupils. They have a clear vision for the school and regularly review progress against key priorities. Staff feel well supported and their workload and well-being are given high priority by the school. Parents and carers appreciate the efforts made by staff to engage with them and help them to support their children's education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, some teachers do not use assessment to adjust their teaching and ensure that lessons are ambitious for all pupils. As a result, some pupils miss opportunities to extend their learning. The school should ensure all teachers consistently check pupils' understanding to offer clear and direct feedback and provide appropriate tasks and activities.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139613
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10378531
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bradley Lane
Headteacher	Petra Back
Website	www.grahamjamesacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The Graham James Primary Academy became an academy in 2013.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have

taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, attendance records, pupil records, records of governing body meetings, school development plans and school self-evaluation documents.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View and conversations held during the inspection.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Louise Cooper, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Fowler	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Rogan	Ofsted Inspector

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