

Theydon Bois Primary School

Orchard Drive, Theydon Bois, Epping, CM16 7DH

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils in this school make good progress. Many children start with skills which are below expectations for their age. By the end of Year 6 their results in English and mathematics are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good in all year groups and across a range of subjects. Some teaching is outstanding.
- Careful planning means that pupils of all abilities are able to take a full part in lessons and do their best.
- Activities in lessons are interesting so they engage and maintain pupils' attention.
- Teaching assistants and support staff play an important role in making sure that pupils understand their tasks.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils show respect for each other, adults and the school's equipment. They feel safe and understand the school's rules well.
- The headteacher and senior staff lead the school well. They check teaching very carefully to ensure that pupils' learning is maintained at a good standard.
- The headteacher and senior staff have high expectations of pupils' learning. They have the same ambition for pupils' happiness and safety.
- The governing body knows the school well and plays an important part in making the school successful. They challenge the headteacher to ensure that necessary improvements are made.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although achievement in English is good overall, too few pupils reach the highest levels in writing. Teachers do not always give enough attention to pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar when they mark work.
- The school's very careful and comprehensive records of pupils' progress are over-complex, so they do not make for efficiency in improving pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, of which two were paired observations with the headteacher. In addition there were short visits to several other lessons to view the teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- They held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- They checked pupils' books as well as a range of documents including: the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress, lesson planning and the records of lesson observations. Inspectors also looked at documents relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- They considered the results of the 67 parents' and carers' entries on the Parent View website and 33 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Keith Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ruth Dollner

Additional Inspector

Paul Bartlett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Theydon Bois is a primary school of above-average size.
- Some pupils are taught in classes containing two year groups, but there are separate classes for pupils in Reception.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- None of the school's pupils are in alternative provision (none are taught elsewhere).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in writing by:
 - sharing the good practice in developing writing which already exists in some classes
 - placing greater emphasis on accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - giving clearer guidance to pupils about how they might improve their writing when teachers mark their work.
- Simplify the methods of collecting and recording information about pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the school with skills in communication, language, literacy and personal and social development which are below those expected at their age. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is higher than the national average.
- In Reception, teachers pay close attention to areas requiring improvement. Children are taught well and, consequently, they make good progress through Reception. This is maintained throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 so that, by the end their time in the school, many pupils have made better than expected progress.
- Though progress is good in English, it is better in reading than in writing. Pupils read often and confidently, and successfully build upon the early reading skills they develop in their first years in school. However, pupils do not all match this rate of progress in their written work and, as a result, few pupils reach the higher levels in writing (for example Level 3 in Year 2 and Level 5 or more in Year 6).
- Pupils benefit from a varied and interesting range of things to study, which means they develop skills in all areas. Teachers' records show that pupils are making good progress in science. Lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work confirms this is also true in a range of other subjects.
- Parents say their children learn well at school and pupils note that their work is challenging and helps them to do better.
- Teachers are quick to recognise the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and, as result, these pupils do as well as their classmates.
- The pupil premium is used well. It ensures that eligible pupils are given effective support through small-group teaching and extra activities. As a result, in 2012, pupils eligible for free school meals gained roughly the same number of points as other pupils in the Year 6 national tests. This compares favourably with pupils in similar circumstances in other schools. Of 12 pupils identified for recent support, 9 have made rapid improvements in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in all year groups and some is outstanding. English, mathematics and a range of other subjects are all taught effectively and, as a result, pupils do well.
- In Reception, teachers provide a good range of resources and activities to engage children. They join in enthusiastically with imaginative games that support children's early reading and spelling development. Teachers have the technical skills to support the children and ensure that they recognise sounds correctly and form letters with accuracy.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is effective in encouraging pupils to be more independent in their learning. For example, in an English lesson, pupils were asked to comment on each other's work and discuss the themes in a story. This developed their writing skills very well. In a mathematics lesson, more-able pupils were encouraged to move ahead quickly with their work and to support each other. At the same time, the teacher gave some extra explanation to other

groups before returning to them. The result was that pupils of different abilities all made good progress.

- High expectations and challenge are apparent in teaching in all year groups. Teachers use clever and topical strategies to help pupils to complete their tasks. In an English lesson, some older pupils were encouraged to consider Barack Obama's inauguration speech as a way of understanding persuasive writing. Teachers add a good range of strategies, such as discussing issues with a partner and making suggestions to improve each other's work. As a result of working with someone else, pupils gain in their own understanding.
- Teachers assess work frequently and accurately, both within lessons and when checking books. However, not enough attention is paid to ensuring accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation when work is marked. This is one reason that some pupils are not reaching higher levels. Additionally, comments in pupils' books do not point clearly enough to the next steps in their learning.
- Relationships in lessons are good and there is clearly a positive learning attitude. Teachers and assistants are very good at extending pupils' knowledge. They skilfully select questions to help pupils who may not fully understand a task or to stretch those who are ready to move on.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. The school's emphasis on clear routines and high expectations is understood by pupils and consistently followed by adults.
- As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and during other activities. On the days of the inspection, pupils had to spend all breaks in classrooms due to heavy snow on the school grounds. The children knew the routines and kept busy with indoor games, reading or talking to friends. Behaviour remained as good as it had been in lessons.
- Parents and staff say that behaviour in the school is good, and pupils agree. They say they can give their views through the school council. They also speak positively about how play leaders and the 'friendship post' can be used by children who may have a difficulty at break time.
- Pupils are aware of different types of danger and understand how they can stay safe when using the internet. They say that bullying of any type is rare and is always dealt with by adults. They feel safe and know who to speak to should they experience any problems.
- There are opportunities for pupils to reflect on 'life issues', which raise thought-provoking questions. In an assembly for older pupils, they were asked to consider how it is important to respect the views of people from different faiths and beliefs. Pupils showed understanding of how this affects them in school and beyond.
- The atmosphere within the school is calm and orderly. Pupils enjoy school and, as a result, their attendance and punctuality are both good.

The leadership and management is good

- The strong ambition and high expectations of the school's leaders and managers are clearly evident in all of the school's work. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and leaders have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further. Staff say the school is well led and managed. They value the efforts of the headteacher and senior team in guiding

them to improve the school further.

- A comprehensive programme of lesson observations accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. This is followed by well-selected training opportunities for teachers which ensure that improvements are made. The requirement from the previous inspection to improve the amount of good or better teaching has been an important part of the school's development planning and has been achieved.
- The headteacher's and senior leaders' plans give the right priority to improving literacy. This has ensured that this key skill is well taught within the school. However, the best practice is not used to full effect as an example to all other teachers, specifically in the teaching of writing.
- Those with responsibilities for subjects and other areas carry out their duties thoroughly. They make great efforts to ensure that they achieve what is required within the school's development plan. They are careful to keep very close checks and records on the performance of the pupils. However, these are often complicated and so they do not form an efficient tool for teachers to use as a basis for planning.
- The range of subjects and activities taught offers a wide range of experiences to pupils, including many opportunities outside formal lessons. These include sports, music and drama, and are popular with pupils and well attended. Many activities successfully support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has worked effectively with the local authority to develop teaching in science and the checking of progress in Reception. The headteacher is pleased with recent support and is positive about working with the authority in the future.
- The school has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. Teachers make every effort to see that all pupils get the best out of the school and to take all the opportunities on offer. Pupils recognise this and say that 'no one is left behind'.
- Proper attention is paid to safeguarding and child protection, and statutory requirements are met. The school takes these aspects very seriously and keeps them under review to maintain good practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides appropriate support and challenge to the school and is just as committed to its success as the headteacher and staff. Governors make a carefully planned programme of visits to the school so they know the school well. An appropriate range of committees are effective in challenging leaders in different areas of the school's activity. Governors know how well the pupils are doing and have a clear grasp of progress and attainment and what the school is doing to maintain improvements. Members are trained well, which ensures that they are able to play their role in important areas such as safeguarding, finance and staff appointments. They have a good understanding of the teachers' appraisal process and how this is linked to pay progression. They know that all teachers have objectives which are linked to good results for pupils. Finances are properly used and pupil premium funding is linked clearly to improved outcomes for the pupils who are supported by the funds.

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	115026
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	401482

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Seagers
Headteacher	Elsbeth Bonds
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2010
Telephone number	01992 813083
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