

William Read Primary School

Long Road, Canvey Island, SS8 0JE

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teachers do not always make the best use of time available in lessons to drive forward pupils' learning. Not all teachers use their questioning to make pupils think hard.
- Boys make slower progress in writing than girls and their attainment lags well behind.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium are not making enough progress to close gaps between their attainment and national averages by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are not always given time to respond to their teacher's comments in their marking and so correct and improve their work.
- The depth to which some subjects are studied is limited by the large amount of time devoted to teaching English and mathematics.
- Governors have only just put into place systems by which they can challenge school leaders with enough rigour.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is leading the school well and is challenging everyone to aim higher. She is building a strong leadership team that is fully focused on helping teachers to improve their teaching.
- Teaching is improving and pupils are starting to make more rapid progress. Reception children and pupils in Years 2 and 6 make good progress because teaching is effective in both year groups.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are very polite and well mannered and show great respect for adults.
- Most pupils say they enjoy school, as is reflected in their steadily rising attendance. Their very positive attitudes in class and the way they work together enhance their learning.
- School leaders and governors make sure the pupils are kept safe and are cared for well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons or parts of lessons, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bimla Thakur

Additional Inspector

David Rosenthal

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most other primary schools.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is average. This is extra money given to schools for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.
- The school has been through a period of considerable staff turnover since its last inspection, including a number of teachers on maternity leave. Consequently, the majority of classes are taught by teachers new to the school since September 2012. The governing body has also been through considerable change and the Chair and Vice Chair are new in post this term.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils off site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make at least good progress by:
 - making sure all lessons move forward more rapidly so no time is wasted
 - developing the questioning skills of teachers and support staff
 - making sure that pupils have time to respond to their teachers' comments in their marking.
- Broaden the pupils' experiences by:
 - planning closer links between subjects so that key skills are systematically developed
 - giving pupils time to apply their mathematical skills across subjects
 - exposing pupils to a wider range of literature
 - offering more interesting approaches to stimulate boys' writing.
- Secure firmly changes to the work of the governing body so that governors are able to hold the school to account for its performance, including how well it uses pupil premium funding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- A legacy of underachievement has affected the attainment of older pupils. Fewer pupils in the 2012 Year 6 group than seen nationally made the expected rates of progress in English and mathematics over Key Stage 2, in spite of making rapid progress in Year 6 itself. Consequently, their test results were still below average in all subjects in 2012.
- Pupil-premium funding is allocated to providing additional small group work, but not always only for eligible pupils. The school does not track their individual progress closely enough to identify how better use could be made of this money. As a result, their attainment is well below others nationally by the end of Year 6.
- The drive to improve writing through the focus on handwriting, grammar and providing more opportunity for extended writing is beginning to have an impact. However, boys' writing requires improvement partly because the themes for writing are not always interesting enough to grab and retain their imaginations.
- Progress is speeding up and standards rising as teachers demand more of the pupils. More pupils are working at higher levels than has been the case in the past. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to meet their targets which have been set higher than last year.
- Pupils are now making better progress in understanding letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) following training for staff following a disappointing performance in the Year 1 screening check last summer. Most now have the skills needed to be able to tackle difficult words. They enjoy reading and talk with interest about their favourite authors but are not exposed to a wide range of literature by having books read to them.
- Progress in mathematics is improving by pupils sharpening their mental arithmetic skills through homework tasks and a dedicated weekly lesson. They have many opportunities to apply these skills by solving problems in mathematics lessons, but rarely in other subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do as well as their peers. Their specific learning difficulties are identified early and support targeted in class or through individual tuition.
- Children enter Reception with skills broadly as expected for their age. Good teaching is speeding up their progress. Standards at the end of Reception rose sharply in 2012 from below to above average.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- In spite of the efforts of the headteacher, and because several teachers are new, not all teaching is of the high quality needed for the pupils to make up for inadequate progress in the past and reach national average standards by the end of Year 6.
- In lessons where teaching requires improvement, the pace to learning can be slow because either whole-class teaching or activities being undertaken last too long. At times teachers do not question to check understanding, challenge thinking or draw out ideas from the pupils.

- While marking is regular and thorough pupils are not always given time to respond to their teachers' comments and correct or improve their work. The most effective marking gives pupils the responsibility for improving their work by setting a further challenge or requesting rewriting an extract of their work. This helps pupils to eliminate errors and learn more quickly. Pupils' learning was seen to benefit when they assessed their own and other's work to clear criteria.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection when there were many inadequate features. As the new teaching team beds in more lessons are being well taught. Typically, the most effective teaching enthuses the pupils through interesting methods, activities and resources. Teachers make clear to pupils the purpose behind what they are doing and check their progress as the lesson moves on so that they can adapt quickly as required. Teaching and activities are pitched well to provide challenge for all pupils and demanding work for the more able.
- Teaching of children in Reception is good in adult-led sessions to develop specific skills and when children are learning through play. Adults extend the children's vocabulary at every opportunity and encourage the children to learn by discussing their ideas with each other. Resources in the outdoor area require improvement as they are becoming old and outdated.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Through the 'Good to be Green' system, pupils are very clear about the school's expectations of how they should work and behave in lessons. Because they found this helped them, pupils asked for the procedures to be used outside as well. This has helped to improve behaviour at break and lunch and make for an enjoyable experience for all.
- Pupils enjoy working together and supporting each other's learning either in discussion or when undertaking tasks. They work hard, although at times some pupils lose concentration when working on tasks by themselves if teachers have not made their expectations clear.
- Pupils are given many responsibilities which they take on with pride as they are keen to help the school to become better. Year 5 and 6 pupils enjoy helping on the infant playground as play leaders and resolving problems as peer mediators. The school council has a say in many areas of school life including about playtime and how it could be improved.
- Pupils say they feel safe and cared for in school because they are confident any problems will be dealt with quickly. Their parents and carers largely agree. Pupils understand what constitutes different forms of bullying. Records show incidents of bullying and racism are rare and dealt with swiftly. This is confirmed in discussions with pupils, although a small number of parents and carers feel the school could do more.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school devotes a considerable amount of time each week to teaching English and mathematics. This is at the expense of other subjects. To compensate for this, teachers try to link subjects together through topic themes. However, these links are often unconvincing and do not systematically develop pupils' key skills.
- The new teaching team is responding well to the headteacher's priorities but has not been in place for long enough to make a lasting impact. Governing body changes are also very recent and although leaders have quickly introduced more robust systems they need time to become fully established.

- The new leadership team is enabling the headteacher to delegate responsibilities and giving the capacity to drive the school forward. It is through her leadership that the school has moved forward and tackled head-on shortcomings in teaching. She regularly checks the performance of teachers and sets them challenging targets. Teachers are only rewarded through pay rises if they can show pupils have made good progress in their classes.
- The local authority has made a considerable difference over the last year to teaching, and in supporting the headteacher. Its regular reviews help the headteacher identify where further action is needed and enables her to call on training to tackle priorities such as in phonics. By visiting a local school teachers can work alongside and see experts in the classroom in order to improve their practice. They are starting to bring back the successful practice they are observing into their own classrooms.
- Much emphasis is placed on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies give pupils the opportunity to reflect on a wide range of issues and different festivals and special events. This is helping them to develop an understanding of different cultures in the wider community. Through topics and the work of the 'Eco Champions' pupils gain a global perspective on protecting the environment, saving resources and waste management.
- The headteacher and governors are striving to work ever more closely in partnership with parents. The new 'Parent Council' is giving them an informal forum in which to air their views to which the school is already responding such as over concerns about homework.
- The school is fully committed to equality of opportunity and to helping all pupils learn as well as they can. One example of this is the nurture room, which is valuable as a base for pupils who need extra support to manage their behaviour and emotions. The school does not tolerate any discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The new Chair of Governors is putting in place more rigorous systems so that governors can carry out their roles more effectively and hold the school more closely to account for its performance. One immediate action has been to investigate whether the allocation of pupil premium funding is making an impact. Governors know further improvements are needed in teaching, what the headteacher is doing to bring this about and how only good teachers are given pay rises. They regularly update their skills and recent training on assessment information is helping them understand better the school's performance relative to other schools and to pose pertinent questions for the headteacher. They are fully involved in financial decisions, striving to gain value for money at all times.

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	115062
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	399682

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	394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Walpole
Headteacher	Jacqui Gosnold
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2011
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