

Shelley Primary School

Milton Crescent, Shelley, Ongar, CM5 0FF

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils in Key Stage 1 have not made enough progress from their starting points in recent years. As a result, standards in English and mathematics have been below average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Not all of the more-able pupils have done as well as they could in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons are not high enough, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Children in the Reception class do not have enough opportunities or suitable resources to develop their skills in the outdoor learning environment.
- Although support staff make an important contribution to the quality of pupils' learning in class, they are not always as effective when working with groups of pupils out of the classroom.
- The information teachers collect about how well pupils are doing is not always used well enough to set work at the right levels to challenge all pupils of different abilities.
- Checks made by leaders and managers are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that teaching is consistently good and results in pupils' good progress in all subjects.
- Governors have not sufficiently challenged the school's leaders, particularly in relation to pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have had some success in raising standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school makes sure that all its pupils have equal opportunity to fully participate in school life and take part in a wide range of additional activities.
- Leaders have been effective in improving attendance, partly through the very well-attended breakfast club. Pupils are keen to achieve the various awards that celebrate good attendance.
- The school works very effectively with a range of professionals beyond the school to support pupils whose circumstances might put them at risk.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms.
- Meetings and discussions were held with governors, members of staff, representatives of the local authority and groups of pupils. The inspector also heard a number of pupils read.
- The inspection took into account the 11 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View, and the outcomes from the school's recent consultations with parents.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupil mobility, pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Over half of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and other specific groups) and this is well above the national average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join the school part way through their primary education.
- There were too few Year 6 pupils in 2013 to comment on floor standards.
- There has been an almost complete change in teaching staff since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and pupils' achievement, so that they are consistently at least good, by making sure that teachers:
 - make better use of the school's information on pupils' attainment to set work that is at the right level for different pupils, and especially work that is hard enough for the more-able pupils
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons
 - more effectively supervise the quality of group work undertaken by teaching assistants when working away from the classroom
 - have opportunities to share best practice within the school and through visits to other schools.
- Improve resources and planning for the outdoor curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that the governing body evaluates the performance of the school more rigorously and challenges the school more critically.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils, particularly those in Years 1 to 2, have not made the progress necessary to reach at least the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although improvements have been made in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2, and school data indicate that pupils' progress is continuing to improve, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in these subjects remains below average. This is the result of a past legacy of inadequate teaching, which has left pupils with considerable gaps in their prior learning. Increasingly effective teaching in Key Stage 2 is leading to improvement and is helping to bring pupils closer to the standards expected.
- Children start in the Reception class with skills that are below those typically found for their age. They make good progress in most areas of learning, but could be doing better. Opportunities for activities they choose themselves in the secure outdoor area are currently restricted and this limits the development of their learning.
- The school's data and the work seen in the lesson observations show clearly that attainment and progress are beginning to improve. However, these recent improvements have yet to work their way through to standards by the end of Key Stage 2. School expectations for the current Year 6, confirmed by observations of pupils' work, are that they are on target to achieve average results in 2014.
- Attainment in mathematics has been lagging behind that in English, particularly at the higher levels, but is improving rapidly due to the school's focus on improving both the range of activities provided in mathematics lessons and the way they are taught.
- The teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) in Years 1 and 2 has been less well-developed. However, recently introduced, regular and intensive (twice a day in Reception and Key Stage 1) work on phonics and guided-reading activities across the school are helping pupils to make expected and sometimes good progress in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the good support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. Their classroom support plans are child-friendly and appropriate. This good support helps these pupils to learn successfully.
- Those who are eligible for support from the pupil premium generally make slightly better progress than their classmates. The small numbers in each year group mean that it is not possible to comment in detail on their relative performance without risk of identifying individual pupils.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- There is not enough consistently good teaching to accelerate pupils' learning. Although a considerable proportion of teaching observed during the inspection was good, there is still too much variation in the quality of teaching. Too much teaching, as reflected in pupils' books and learning outcomes, still requires improvement.
- Pupils' ability to rise to additional challenge is very evident in effective lessons where activities

are explained quickly and modelled effectively, thus allowing pupils to get started on their work. In too many lessons, however, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve. Sometimes pupils are not given enough time to complete work.

- Despite work undertaken across the school, expectations regarding handwriting and presentation are not yet sufficiently high.
- Teachers mostly plan work which is meaningful and interesting for pupils. Where teaching is particularly effective, teachers make sure that activities take full account of what pupils can already do and which builds on this accurately.
- In the best cases, teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to support, challenge and ascertain how well pupils are learning. However, in a small minority of lessons where they were working away from the classroom, teaching assistants were expected to take too much responsibility for teaching large groups of pupils for extended periods without any oversight from the responsible teacher. This made it difficult for teachers to make sure that all pupils made the progress they should.
- The best marking identifies clear strengths and areas for development for pupils. In these classes, pupils know what their next steps are and have time to practice and improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Although there are good improvements over time across the school and most pupils behave well, where teaching is less effective, pupils' approach to learning is not always as positive as it should be. They do not all have the self-motivation to complete their work quickly, particularly when the work teachers set is not planned to enable them to move on swiftly with their learning.
- Around the school and at break times, pupils behave well, although a few sometimes need to be reminded of the behaviour that is expected.
- Pupils' generally good behaviour is a testament to the good procedures in place to enable the many new pupils to settle in quickly and become a part of the whole school.
- School leaders emphasise the value of good manners and behaviour, and pupils are all encouraged to be 'TERRIFIC' – that is, Trustworthy, Enthusiastic, Respectful, Responsible, Independent, Fair, Inclusive and Considerate. The gentle but constant focus on these values is enabling all pupils to appreciate how they should behave towards each other.
- Instances of bullying in its various guises are rare. Pupils say that, although there are sometimes arguments, usually about football, at lunchtime, this 'isn't really bullying' and 'there is no real bullying in school'. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the potential hazards posed by misuse of the internet and mobile phones.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of how to avoid risks. Advice and guidance on safe practices when using the computers, crossing the road, travelling outside school and in swimming lessons, helps pupils to develop a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- Through the school council, pupils show their pride in the school community and they take their responsibilities very seriously.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. The difficulties the school has experienced in changes to teaching staff have slowed down the rate of improvement since the previous inspection, but now all staff are eager to contribute fully to improving pupils' achievement.
- As a result of these frequent changes to staffing, leaders have not been able to secure consistently good teaching and good progress over time. Governors are not yet as actively involved in holding the school to account as they might be.
- The school's view of itself is accurate and realistic and the school improvement plan, rightly, has a strong focus on further improving teaching and raising achievement.
- Significant improvements have been made in the assessment and tracking systems. Each pupil's progress is carefully tracked at termly meetings between the teacher and the headteacher. This information is used to identify any underachievement and to provide pupils with extra help when they need it. As a result, there are no major differences between the performance of different groups in the school.
- There are effective systems in place to check the quality of teaching. These identify where further action or support is needed. Training, coaching and mentoring are beginning to raise the quality of teaching and accelerating pupils' progress. However, there are not enough opportunities for teachers to share good practice, or to observe outstanding teaching in other schools in order to influence improvements.
- The majority of pupils are making at least the progress expected of them and information about pupils' progress is taken into account when making decisions about the pay of teachers and teaching assistants.
- Although at the time of inspection, the school had yet to receive all its primary sport funding, the school was providing all pupils with weekly physical education lessons led by skilled sports trainers. Systems have been established for evaluating the provision at a future date.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a range of visits, some of which are residential, when pupils benefit from the experience of new and unfamiliar surroundings. This helps prepare pupils for their next stage of education and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Most of the parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire were positive about the school's provision and would recommend the school to other parents.
- The local authority has supported the school well in raising the quality of teaching and levels of attainment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive but, until very recently, it has not challenged the school's leaders strongly enough, or held the school to account for pupils' attainment and progress. However, a number of new governors have recently joined the governing body and the level of challenge and their knowledge about all aspects of the school is steadily improving. Governors gather, check and discuss a wide range of reports about the school, as well as visiting regularly to see for themselves how the school is operating and being led. As a result, they have an increasingly accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and

understand what is being done to tackle any underperformance, and to recognise and reward good teachers. The governing body makes sure that safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet current national requirements. It has overseen the arrangements for the effective use of the pupil premium funding and ensures that teachers only receive pay increases if their performance is at least good.

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	115020
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425229

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	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Gode
Headteacher	Lesley Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2011
Telephone number	01277 362354
Fax number	N/A
Email address	admin@shelley.essex.sch.uk

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