

Stambridge Primary School

Stambridge Road, Rochford, SS4 2AP

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- School leaders, including governors, have not done enough to stop the decline in the school's performance. As a result, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics across the school is inadequate.
- Too few pupils reach the expected standard in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 because the teaching of phonics is inadequate.
- Governors have not challenged senior leaders effectively to ensure that teaching is good enough for pupils to achieve as well as they should.
- The school is failing in its duty to keep pupils safe from bullying. The agreed procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying are not followed. As a result, when bullying has occurred, it has not always been dealt with effectively and in many cases has continued.
- Teachers have not been challenged about the lack of progress, nor have they been provided with appropriate support or access to training.
- The role of teachers who are in charge of subject areas has not been developed well enough for them to have an impact on the standards being achieved.
- Teachers do not use information about what pupils know and what they can do to plan tasks that will move their learning on to the next level.
- Pupil premium funding has not been used to support those pupils for whom it was provided.
- Progress in mathematics is slow because of teachers' poor subject knowledge.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to engage in sporting and musical activities.
- Attendance, which was previously low, has improved this year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited seven lessons and observed four teachers. This included observing pupils being taught phonics (the links between letters and sounds). The headteacher joined the inspector for two observations.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans, achievement information and documents relating to safeguarding. He also listened to pupils read.
- The inspector took account of the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire. He also spoke to some parents and carers at the start and end of the day.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Stambridge is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is around average. This is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and other groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs 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 also above average.
- In 2013 the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Due to serious concerns about the school, the local authority issued a Performance, Standards and Safety Warning Notice in October 2013. The local authority subsequently suspended the school's right to a delegated budget. Following this action, all members of the school's governing body, except the Chair of Governors, resigned. A Strategic Intervention Board is now in place.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - are given appropriate guidance about how to improve their practice and have access to high quality support and training, including in the teaching of phonics
 - structure lessons around what pupils are meant to be learning
 - provide work which is more challenging and is closely matched to pupils' ages and abilities
 - promote effective learning by picking up misconceptions and correcting them both within lessons and when marking pupils' work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - taking swift action to address underperformance
 - establishing a governing body which is effective in challenging senior leaders about the quality of teaching and the standards being achieved at the school
 - holding teachers to account for the progress of their pupils through regular checks on the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that the pupil premium is used effectively to help eligible pupils accelerate their progress
 - training subject leaders so that they have an impact on the work to raise standards.
- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:

- the work that teachers set is based on accurate assessments of pupils’ abilities so that they are provided with good levels of challenge and are able to make rapid progress
- teachers insist on correct spelling, punctuation and grammar, and neat presentation of pupils’ work
- teachers’ subject knowledge in mathematics is secure.

■ Improve behaviour and safety by enforcing the school’s anti-bullying policy.

Ofsted has made recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school. An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils start at the school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. They make slow progress across Key Stage 1, because teaching is not good enough. This is reflected in the 2013 phonics check where the vast majority of pupils demonstrated very poor knowledge of phonics. The standards achieved at the end of Year 2 in 2013 indicated that pupils were at least two terms behind the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress pupils make across Key Stage 2 has been significantly below the national average in two out of the last three years. In 2013 pupils left the school approximately two terms behind pupils nationally, including the most able.
- Evidence seen during this inspection suggests that rates of progress across Key Stage 2 are improving, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Overall, however, attainment remains low and the school is predicting that the results will, once again, be below the government's floor standard in 2014.
- Improvements to the teaching of writing are beginning to motivate older pupils, who are now provided with more opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes, such as through newspaper articles. In some classes, pupils do not do enough writing and simple errors in punctuation, grammar and spelling are not corrected. The presentation of pupils' work is poor.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs progress at a similar slow rate to other pupils in the school. They often struggle because the work that has been set for them is too difficult for them and they become over-reliant on adults working with them to complete the work.
- Extra funding, in the form of the pupil premium, has not been used to provide additional support for eligible pupils. As a result, the progress and attainment of these pupils, particularly in reading and writing, remains low.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- On too many occasions teachers plan work which is not well matched to the needs of pupils. As a result, some pupils struggle with work that is too difficult for them and others merely complete tasks which do not help them to develop their skills, knowledge or understanding.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage tends to result in children being occupied rather than challenged so that their knowledge, skills and understanding can be developed.
- As pupils move through Key Stage 1 much of the teaching fails to build on pupils' existing knowledge and skills, and the work is either too easy or too difficult. As a result, the progress pupils make over time is inadequate.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is improving, particularly in Years 5 and 6. As a result, pupils are beginning to make more progress. The good teaching is purposeful and the work set provides a good level of challenge to pupils of all abilities. Good feedback is provided on the progress that pupils make and how they could improve further.

- Teachers' knowledge of how to teach reading and writing is weak. The teaching of phonics is not effective and this has resulted in many pupils not being able to read and write as well as they should.
- The teaching of mathematics is not systematic. This means pupils have gaps in their learning and are not developing the necessary knowledge and skills at the right pace. Too often, pupils are given tasks that require little thought and provide little mathematical challenge. Gaps in teachers' subject knowledge sometimes contribute to poor progress in mathematics. Teachers are not quick at identifying where pupils have misconceptions and tackling them promptly. This means that pupils continue to make mistakes and their confusion goes unchecked.
- The quality of marking is improving but varies considerably. Older pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their work, particularly in writing. They are now given time to read and respond to the comments that the teacher has made about their work in writing and mathematics. This is helping them to make progress at a better rate as they understand precisely what they need to do to improve. The same rigour, however, is not applied in all subjects. In science and history, for example, books are often left unmarked and the quality of work is poor.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. This is because the agreed systems for dealing with bullying are not being followed. Consequently, incidents of bullying are not dealt with effectively. The school has failed to follow up incidents in line with the agreed policy and the behaviour has, in many cases, persisted.
- Attendance over the past three years has been well below the national average. Since the beginning of this school year the school has taken effective action to improve attendance, by being more rigorous in following up repeated absence and not authorising holidays during term time.
- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils usually behave well in class, but some demonstrate poor attitudes to learning. This was seen through a lack of concentration, untidy work in books and, in some cases, challenging behaviour.
- Pupils are usually respectful and show consideration towards each other. Behaviour around school and in the dining room is usually good. In the playground, older pupils take responsibility for organising activities and making sure younger pupils are not left out.
- Pupils spoken to during this inspection demonstrated a good understanding of e-safety. They know about the dangers of social network sites and understand how to keep safe in this respect.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- School leaders, including governors, have not done enough to stop the decline in the school's performance or to promote good teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, across the school, is inadequate.
- The governing body has failed to hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance.
- In turn, the headteacher has failed to hold teachers to account for the standards being achieved

by their pupils. Basic systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning are not in place. As a result, teachers have not been challenged about the pupils' lack of progress, nor have teachers been provided with appropriate support or access to relevant training.

- Subject leadership is inadequate. The teachers who are in charge of subject areas have not been given enough support or guidance to enable them to carry out their role effectively. The systems for checking on the quality of teaching are inadequate and there are significant gaps in the curriculum.
- Specialist teachers for music and sport help to enrich school life. The quality of the curriculum overall, however, does little to develop pupils' moral, social and cultural development. In subjects other than mathematics and English, books are often left unmarked and the quality of work produced is extremely poor and goes unchallenged by teachers. This gives the impression to the pupils that these subjects are not important.
- Last year the school failed to use all of its pupil premium funding to support those pupils for whom it had been provided. Opportunities to support the progress and attainment of these pupils were therefore lost.
- The additional funding for primary sports is being used to provide additional after-school sports activities. The funding is also being used to provide sports coaches and plans are in place to provide swimming lessons for pupils later in the year.
- The local authority has taken strong action to address the decline in the school's performance. It suspended the school's right to a delegated budget in November 2013. Following this decision, nearly all members of the governing body resigned. A Strategic Intervention Board is now taking responsibility for managing the school's budget and associated personnel matters. New governors are currently being recruited.
- The local authority has brokered support from a successful local school which is now providing leadership support and staff training. Teachers have welcomed the opportunity to access high quality professional support and development.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance at the school is inadequate because the governing body has not provided sufficient challenge to senior leaders to bring about improvement. Governors have been aware of low levels of achievement, but have not made links between underperformance, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership. They have not made sure that pay rises are linked to good teaching and effective management, nor have they ensured the appropriate use of the pupil premium funding. Although governors have set targets for the headteacher they have failed to take appropriate action when these have not been met.
 - Governors have not ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. Although they have adopted appropriate policies they have failed to check that agreed procedures have been followed.

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	114848
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	432324

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Betty South
Headteacher	Maureen Sealeaf
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2011
Telephone number	01702 544369
Email address	admin@stambridge.essex.sch.uk

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