

# Canvey Island Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114980
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	357663
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Clarke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ann Matthews
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2008
<b>School address</b>	Long Road Canvey Island SS8 0JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 683257
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@canvey-inf.essex.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who visited 15 lessons taught by six teachers. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance records, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school development planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 28 staff and from 92 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What variations have there been in boys' and girls' attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and how have school leaders, staff and the governing body responded to these?
- How effective is the school's work with parents and carers to discourage avoidable absence?

## Information about the school

Although legally designated as a primary school, this school provides for children in the Reception Year and Key Stage 1. It is smaller than the average primary school but, with two classes in each year group, it is of above average size in comparison with infant providers. Most pupils are White British, with small numbers coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. An above average proportion have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mostly with moderate learning difficulties. The headteacher was appointed in April 2009 and was previously the deputy headteacher. Carvey Infant has an Activemark award and Healthy Schools status. It shares a site with a junior school, to which most pupils transfer, and a pre-school, which is separately inspected. The school is part of a partnership with other local providers to offer extended school services across the island, including activities run over the school holidays.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. In its vision statement, Carvey Infants proclaims its belief that 'learning is a journey not a destination'. To that end, much emphasis has been placed by leaders and staff on pupils' developing positive attitudes to learning. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to 'have a go', knowing that they learn by their mistakes. Children's work is celebrated well, with even those in the Reception classes trying out their early writing skills to label their efforts. Pupils enjoy their learning because subjects are linked together imaginatively through cross-curricular topics. Pupils in Year 2, for example, used what they had learnt in history about Edwardian beach attire and bathing machines to write their own 'diary' accounts of a 1901 trip to the seaside.

Teachers manage classes well and motivate pupils to behave well and work with concentration and sustained effort. As a result, they make good progress in relation to their below average starting points to reach average attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Children are also now reaching average levels in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is a big improvement on previous years. In both Reception and Key Stage 1, learning only slows in those lessons where teachers' introductions go on for too long and pupils have to listen passively when they are keen instead to get on with hands-on tasks. Learning support staff provide often very well targeted assistance to pupils when they are working individually or in small groups. However, teachers do not always make fullest use of this valuable resource during whole-class teaching. Pupils feel safe at school, and parents and carers are unanimous in their view that the school looks after their children well. The good arrangements for pupils' care and welfare ensure that pupils in potentially vulnerable circumstances, those who need extra help with their learning, and the small number learning English as an additional language, are all helped to make the same good progress as their peers. Attendance, however, is low despite the school's efforts, which have, at least succeeded in reducing the number of pupils with persistent absence. There is competition between classes to promote better attendance, but the results are not displayed to pupils and their families with sufficient clarity. Incentives to reward pupils with 100% attendance have had limited impact. Although the school has tried to emphasise to parents and carers the importance of their children's regular attendance, it does not routinely identify the causal link between pupils' academic performance and their attendance, nor publicise that to parents and carers.

Leaders have a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have demonstrated success in tackling pockets of underachievement in previous years, such as in 2009, when a change in the way mathematics was taught led to a dip in performance that was quickly reversed. This illustrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement as it continues its journey forward.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the start of the spring term 2012, accelerate pupils' progress in lessons, so that it is consistently good or better, by ensuring that:
  - lesson introductions do not go on for too long, and lengthy periods listening on the carpet are not allowed to limit the opportunities for pupils to get on with practical activities
  - teaching assistants are always given an active role during whole-class teaching.
- By the end of the summer term 2012, improve attendance rates by:
  - developing further schemes to encourage and reward regular attendance and discourage parents and carers from taking their children out of school in term time
  - monitoring more closely the correlation between individual pupils' attendance and achievement
  - demonstrating to parents and carers the importance of regular attendance, including by publicising examples where pupils with good attendance achieve well
  - displaying more clearly to pupils and their parents and carers the weekly scores in the competition between classes for the best attendance.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>2</b>
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Improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has led to children making better progress in the current Reception Year. In previous years, the children's skills and abilities at the end of the Reception Year have been below average. Attainment has been average at the end of Year 2 but, within this overall picture, there has been some variation in performance. Mathematics was below average in 2009, for example. Contrary to the national trend, boys did notably better than girls in 2010. This was in part because the curriculum had been particularly tailored to appeal to their interests. The gap has narrowed this year. In lessons, pupils learn best when they are engaged in active tasks. Target cards set out, for each pupil, individual goals to especially focus on when writing. These are used consistently throughout the school and they are having a positive impact in accelerating progress, including in the Reception Year. Throughout the school, pupils know and routinely refer to their targets so that, for example, children in a Reception lesson, writing about the 'mini-beasts' they had found, readily reminded themselves and each other of the need to start sentences with a capital letter, to leave 'finger spaces' between words, and to end each sentence with a full stop. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from support that enables them to make similar progress to their peers. This was evident, for example, in the behaviour group organised to help the few who need extra support in developing self-control.

Pupils get on well with each other and they enjoy the opportunities that they have to take on responsibilities, including as school councillors. They have contributed ideas to the local authority for the redevelopment of Carvey Island's town centre, and they have raised funds for charity and contributed to food parcels for starving families abroad. Even the youngest children are thoughtful and reflective in their responses. A Reception child, when asked why she was returning to the outside area the insects she had collected, explained,

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'Because they are living things'. She went on, patiently, to expound, pointing out that they could not be left in the collection pots as they would die from lack of food. Although pupils enjoy school, absence rates are high. Too many parents and carers keep their children off school unnecessarily. Nevertheless, their good team working, the basic skills they develop in literacy and numeracy, and their good information and communication technology skills, mean that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

Lessons throughout the school are characterised by good relationships that encourage children to develop and maintain orderly learning routines. As a result, from the start of Reception, children settle to individual and group activities quickly and without fuss. Although there are occasions when pupils of different abilities are all given similar worksheets or writing templates to complete, in the main, work is matched to pupils' different capabilities. Teachers take care to ensure that, when questioning the class, they do not just take answers from volunteers. They invite pupils to signal with 'thumbs up' whether they feel they have met the lesson's previously-agreed success criteria, but the teacher and support staff do not record pupils' responses and they do not always check that pupils are all giving an honest answer. Pupils benefit from often helpful marking, with teachers consistently using 'green for good' and 'think pink' markers to signal positive features of pupils' work and points for pupils to think about. There is variation, however,

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in the rigour with which teachers pick up simple spelling errors. What makes assessment good, however, is the consistent use from Reception through to Year 2 of individual pupils' target cards. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. The target cards are enabling pupils increasingly to become involved in self- and peer-assessment.

Vibrant curriculum links make activities such as writing more meaningful because pupils are made to feel that they are writing for a specific purpose. The needs of different pupils are catered for well, including those who need extra help with their learning. For example, a behaviour support group, led by a support assistant with specialist expertise, encourages pupils to think more carefully about their actions. Parents and carers voice particular praise for this aspect of the school's work and for the assistance given to those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. One parent described their child as explaining that staff 'help me if I am being naughty because they ask me if I am making a good choice or a bad choice'. The parent adds: 'What Carvey Infants has achieved for our child in a short period of time is amazing to us.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, governing body and leadership team know the school well and have had success in maintaining and building upon the school's many good features. Their monitoring has given leaders an accurate picture of the strengths of teaching and of where improvements are needed to accelerate learning. However, the school has not established systematic arrangements to ensure that areas identified for improvement are formally followed up in subsequent lesson observations. Members of the governing body visit regularly and challenge leaders over the quality of provision and outcomes. The governing body is fully involved in school self-evaluation and in overseeing the school's strategic direction, although governors acknowledge that they have not set rigorous enough success criteria in the school development plan. The governing body ensures that arrangements for safeguarding meet current regulatory requirements.

Equal opportunities are promoted well and any discrimination tackled. Pupils from different backgrounds and of different capabilities and needs all make similarly good progress. The gender gap between boys and girls has narrowed. The school functions as a friendly, harmonious community. Pupils take an interest in the local community and wider world, for example in learning, in religious education, about different beliefs. They have developed a stereotyped view of the world, however, thinking, 'Everyone in Africa is poor and all the people in America are rich.' The school has plans to broaden pupils' contact

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with children in other parts of the United Kingdom and wider world, but these remain embryonic.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school but not all do enough to support their children's education by ensuring their regular attendance.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are settled and happy in the Reception classes and are keen, willing learners. In this well run provision, a very good induction programme for both children and their parents and carers ensures a strong partnership and good start to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children enter a nurturing, welcoming and motivating environment which provides good support for their personal development. Staff know the children well and give them good individual attention so that, from a starting point that is below age-related expectations, they make good progress and join Year 1 with almost all achieving at least the levels expected for their age. The acquisition of reading, writing and speaking and listening skills is given a high priority, with many opportunities for children to talk together, be creative and label and write about their work for others to see and value. Activities such as exploring natural objects inspire a sense of awe and wonder. A boy and girl shared together what they had seen through a magnifying glass and when listening to a shell. This led to the boy writing thoughtfully: 'The shell is a whisper. The leaf is fancy'.

High quality observational drawings of pineapples, fir cones and vegetation encourage children to look closely and represent what they have seen in fine detail. Children's computer skills are well developed and they draw, independently, imaginative candle-holders and modify their ideas, having looked at and commented on each other's work. Children concentrate for long periods and cooperate and play together well. They are respectful of others' views and are confident to express their own ideas. The staff



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members provide good opportunities for children to reflect on their thoughts and feelings. However, sometimes children are expected to sit on the carpet for too long listening to teachers' explanations, which limits the amount of time they have to finish their work. Opportunities are sometimes missed for children to do things for themselves. For example, staff collected leaves for children to draw when the children could have explored and collected them for themselves as part of their learning. The school recognises that its baseline assessments of what children can do when they start school have not always been accurate.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

More than half of the parents and carers returned questionnaires. The overwhelming majority express positive views about every aspect of school. They especially appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and staff, and the quality of care and support that the school provides. A small minority of parents and carers express concerns about behaviour, though many wrote to commend both behaviour and discipline at the school. As one parent put it, 'The staff are kind but firm.' Inspectors saw consistently good behaviour throughout the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Carvey Island Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	68	28	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	75	82	17	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	49	53	38	41	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	66	27	29	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	74	23	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	55	38	41	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	64	32	35	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	52	57	38	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	62	33	36	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	55	32	35	6	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	51	36	39	7	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	65	30	33	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	72	26	28	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



18 July 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Canvey Island Infant School, Canvey Island, SS8 0JG**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. Canvey Infants is a good school. It is well run. Staff take good care of you and the good teaching and interesting things you get to learn all help you to make good progress in the Reception Year as well as in Years 1 and 2. We were pleased to see how well behaved you are and how well you all get on together. This all helps to make Canvey Infants such a happy, friendly place to be. It was especially good to see how well you know your targets and the regular use you make of them when you are writing. This is enabling you to improve your work, and you all can help with this by always doing your best to achieve your targets and challenging yourselves with new ones.

Although there are lots of good things about your school, attendance is lower than it should be. We have asked the school to do more to ensure that none of you miss school unnecessarily, including working even more closely with your parents and carers on this. We would like staff to make it easier for you all to see at a glance which class is winning the race for the best attendance. We have also suggested some ways to help you to make even faster progress in lessons. We could see that you especially enjoy getting on with practical activities, so we have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities for these.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly, and our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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