

Thomas Willingale School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115309
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	379059
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Philip Mann HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	484
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Giddings
Headteacher	Nicky Barrant
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. In total they observed 22 lessons. These were taught by 13 teachers in the main school and, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by one teacher and five support staff. Several shorter observations of teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 were undertaken. Inspectors held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, governors, staff and the newly appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's documentation related to safeguarding, improvement planning, records of pupils' progress and past work. The latest financial audit report, minutes from governing body meetings and important policy documents were scrutinised. Inspectors analysed responses from 191 questionnaires submitted by parents and carers, the 102 from pupils and the 20 received from the staff.

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

- How effectively is the school addressing the differences in achievement between girls and boys?
- Have school and subject leaders effectively increased the opportunity for pupils to extend their writing skills across the whole curriculum?
- How consistent is the quality of teaching and learning within year groups and across the different key stages?
- How effectively do teachers use marking and assessment to inform pupils about what they need to do next to improve?
- How effectively do school leaders use data to track pupils' progress and inform school self-evaluation?

Information about the school

The school is above average in size. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds but about a fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with a growing number coming from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Activemark and Investors in People awards continue to be held.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post from the start of the current academic year.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of 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.

Despite average attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 2, too many pupils do not make enough progress in lessons and during the school year. School leaders have failed to intervene with effective strategies to improve teaching and learning and address the underachievement of pupils, especially that of boys in English and mathematics. There is too much inadequate teaching in Key Stage 2 and too much that is satisfactory within the school. Little use is made of imaginative resources and information and communication technology (ICT) in these lessons to motivate and engage pupils in learning.

Insufficient progress has been made in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Assessment data are not used effectively to track the progress of individual pupils or set challenging targets for them to work towards. Middle leaders and subject coordinators have had little opportunity to develop their roles and tackle areas of weakness. Consequently, the school is unable to demonstrate the necessary capacity for further improvement. However, inspectors recognise that the new headteacher has swiftly implemented changes to some procedures and has quickly established a positive rapport with pupils, parents and carers.

School governance is inadequate. To date, the governing body has not monitored the school's work and asked challenging questions of the school's leaders. Self-evaluation and monitoring are very rudimentary in nature and fail to provide an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A number of important policies are out of date and statutory requirements related to the staffing arrangements within the Early Years Foundation Stage are not fulfilled. The school's promotion of community cohesion is inadequate. The governing body fully recognises the need for significant improvement in its operational procedures. However, the governing body is yet to implement a committee structure to oversee the school's financial arrangements and other areas of responsibility in response to the last audit report.

Some aspects of the school's work are satisfactory or better. Pupils are polite and courteous towards visitors. Relationships between the staff and pupils, and pupils

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themselves, are positive. Attendance is broadly average and pupils want to come to school. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is satisfactory. The school's safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and the vast majority of pupils say they feel safe in school. They state that there is very little bullying and that when it does occur, it is readily dealt with. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to live a healthy and active lifestyle. Many take part in the wide range of after-school activities and planned trips to places of interest.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in English and mathematics by:
 - making sure all groups of pupils and especially boys make consistently good or better progress in all lessons to eradicate underachievement
 - ensuring that tasks in lessons are sufficiently challenging and fully meet the needs of pupils
 - providing clear targets for pupils on what they need to do next to improve.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school by ensuring that teachers:
 - use assessment information effectively to plan lessons that fully cater for the needs of all pupils
 - use time, resources and information and communication technology, effectively to motivate and inspire pupils in lessons
 - provide opportunities for pupils to work with each other and be more active in their learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing leadership expertise across the school
 - establishing effective monitoring and evaluation practices by all those with leadership and management responsibilities
 - using data effectively to track the progress of pupils and set challenging targets for improvement
 - implementing plans for the promotion of community cohesion within a local, national and international context
 - fully engaging members of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and holding school leaders to account.
- Ensure that all statutory requirements are fulfilled related to the:
 - staffing arrangements for provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

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

The quality of learning is inadequate and pupils do not make enough progress. Generally satisfactory progress is maintained across Key Stage 1 from age-expected levels at the start of Year 1. However, standards in writing are below average, with very few pupils attaining the higher Level 3, and with girls performing better than boys. Standards are broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 but progress is inconsistent for pupils between years and classes across Key Stage 2. Girls continue to outperform boys in both subjects and especially at the higher Level 5 in writing. Too often pupils listen passively and/or are given too little opportunity to write at length in lessons. Pupils told inspectors that the work is often too easy and said that they would like to see improvements in the quality of their lessons. This view was also expressed by several parents and carers who are unhappy about the progress that their child is making.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of appropriately targeted provision in lessons or specialised support outside the classrooms. The progress of those pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory because appropriate procedures are used to support those pupils at the very early stages of learning English. Some examples of carefully targeted support were seen during the inspection for those pupils who have developed greater competency in speaking English.

The pupils value their school community and willingly take on responsibilities such as being a monitor or helping in the dining hall and playground. Their behaviour around the school and in the classrooms is orderly. Pupils feel safe and said that they can go to a member of staff if they have any concerns. They demonstrate a good understanding about how to live healthily and appreciate the need for regular physical exercise. Their contribution to both the school and local community is satisfactory and those in the school council are keen to have a voice in school improvement. However, pupils feel that targets set for them are not sufficiently challenging to ensure that they are prepared for secondary school. Pupils’ appreciation of the arts is good but their understanding of other cultures is limited.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

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

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is too inconsistent to ensure that all pupils make enough progress in lessons. In the several inadequate lessons observed during the inspection, and those that were satisfactory, teachers talked too much and made very little use of resources to make learning interesting. Assessment is not used effectively to ensure that tasks are matched carefully to the different levels of ability in the class or set. Tasks are often mundane or too easy and little work is completed in the time allowed. Very few classes have interactive whiteboards. This limits the ability of many teachers to use ICT and different media to fully engage pupils in imaginative learning activities. This is of particular concern in relation to boys. In the several good lessons seen, teachers fully engaged pupils in activities that included group problem-solving and discussion. These lessons benefited from the use of interesting visual aids. These teachers make effective use of assessment, both before and during lessons, to ensure that pupils of all abilities are fully challenged. For instance, a more-able pupil in Year 2 was asked to use similes when writing about a character. This was tackled with relish and duly completed. Pupils in these lessons work hard to complete their work to a good standard.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and includes appropriate opportunities for information and communication technology. All pupils are taught French from Reception to Year 6. There are also good opportunities for extra-curricular activities and further learning outside of lessons. This remains a strength of the school. Music is taught by specialist teachers and there are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play an instrument. However, the school has not yet fully implemented an effective arrangement for the teaching of phonics.

The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is satisfactory. The school provides a welcoming learning environment where pupils and staff can work in a climate of mutual respect. Pupils are well supported by staff and pupils know who to go to if they need help or guidance. Effective procedures ensure that the pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are well cared for. Transition arrangements between each key stage are satisfactory and pupils are helped to make informed choices about their future. Appropriate steps are taken to encourage regular attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Until recently, monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance has been insufficiently rigorous. This has led to inadequacies in provision and pupils' underachievement. Teachers have lacked clear guidance on how to improve their teaching. Significant variations in the quality of teaching and learning across the school exist as a result. Data related to the attainment of pupils are collected regularly. However, there is little evidence of these data being analysed with sufficient rigour to identify any variations in the performance of different groups of pupils and promote equality of opportunity. The posts of middle managers and subject coordinators have only been in place for a year. These staff recognise that much needs to be done to address weaknesses in provision but until now they have had little guidance or opportunity to develop their roles fully. Consequently, the school's leaders have made limited progress in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The newly appointed headteacher has been quick to recognise a number of important weaknesses and issues related to staffing in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The development of partnerships with local secondary schools to foster pupils' sporting skills and their understanding of the natural environment are satisfactory. The school's partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Relationships with parents and carers are positive and they are regularly informed about what is going on in school. Lines of communication between home and school are appropriate. Many parents and carers, but not all, value being able to pay for their child to take part in the wide range of activities available for them after school.

The governing body is supportive of the school's work. However, monitoring and evaluation activity is limited to a few informal visits and attendance at governing body meetings. Currently there are no committees to distribute the workload and ensure good financial oversight. Actions are already being implemented to address these matters. There are no formal procedures for evaluating the work of the school and asking challenging questions of school leaders. These are significant weaknesses. The improvement plan appropriately identifies priorities for school development but there is too little focus on raising standards or staff performance. There is no strategy for the promotion of community cohesion and the development of pupils' cultural understanding within a local, national and international context. The school does not currently meet the requirement that a qualified teacher is responsible for the Nursery classes. However, safeguarding procedures fully comply

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with requirements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage, most have skills and knowledge that is in line with what is expected for their ages. A small minority have communication difficulties. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning. Children get on well together and behave well. They enjoy using the outdoor play areas. Children in the Nursery classes respond well to learning experiences planned for them outside. However, opportunities are missed to fully use the Reception outdoor area to promote good learning opportunities that reflect the more productive learning experiences made for these children indoors.

Staff use an adequate range of teaching styles and most children willingly take part in activities. However, the use of assessment to support learning is not sufficiently robust in planning future learning and work is not differentiated to provide suitable challenges for all children. Outcomes of assessments are not used to identify key priorities for individual children or to help the school to address areas for improvement. Adults look after children well. However, they direct activities so that children do not have enough opportunities to become independent in their learning, such as in writing. When they do have opportunities to demonstrate their independence, for example in managing their personal needs, they respond well. Children show that they have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles by washing their hands and choosing fruit to eat.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has monitored teaching within the Nursery and Reception classes appropriately and given sound advice on ways to improve

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provision. However, there has been little use of data related to tracking the progress and attainment of children to support self-evaluation. Effective procedures are in place to ensure the smooth running of both the Reception and Nursery classes during a long period of staff absence, although these do not include the deployment of a school teacher in the Nursery classes. Adults work closely with parents and carers and communication between home and school is good. However, transition arrangements from Nursery to the Reception Year and from the Reception Year to Year 1 do not always provide full support for all children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The responses of many parents and carers about the school in the questionnaire and through discussion are positive. The vast majority say that they are very pleased with the progress that their children are making and that the school is led effectively. Inspectors found this not to be the case because of the significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching and shortcomings in leadership. Several parents and carers expressed similar concerns to inspectors about these areas. They indicated that they had been worried about the lack of challenge for pupils and the slow progress that their child was making at school. Many parents indicated that they could already see improvements in communication between the school and home with the appointment of the new headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thomas Willingale 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 191 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 484 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	122	64	67	35	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	129	68	60	31	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	105	55	79	41	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	108	57	68	36	10	5	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	116	61	68	36	4	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	103	54	76	40	8	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	111	58	70	37	4	2	1	1
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)	92	48	67	35	13	7	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	96	50	76	40	6	3	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	83	43	92	48	2	1	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	72	38	90	47	8	4	8	4
The school is led and managed effectively	90	47	83	43	7	4	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	118	62	65	34	4	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



23 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thomas Willingale School, Loughton, IG10 3SR

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly at your school. We are particularly grateful to those of you in the new school council who talked to us. We were interested to hear what you had to say and we agree with much of what was said. We agree that the school does some things well, like providing you with a good range of extra activities after school. The school is also welcoming and you behave thoughtfully towards each other. You enjoy playing with your friends, know about living a healthy lifestyle and feel safe in school.

Some of you also told us that the work set for you is often too easy and that some lessons are not good enough. Inspectors agree because we found that some of the teaching was not good enough and too much was just about satisfactory. This means that many of you are not doing as well as you could. We have decided the school needs 'special measures'. Other inspectors will visit your school to see how well it is improving. These are some of the things that need to be done to make your school better.

- We have asked that all lessons in the future be at least good so that you all achieve well in developing your literacy and numeracy skills.
- Teachers have been asked to plan more interesting and challenging tasks for you.
- Teachers have also been asked to use information carefully about your progress to make sure that these tasks meet your needs well.
- The governors have been asked to work together with leaders of the school to make it more successful.
- We have also asked them to make sure that you are given plenty of opportunity to learn more about people from different cultures and backgrounds to your own.

Your new headteacher has already made changes to the school to make it better and you can all help by working hard in lessons. We all wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector

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