

Trimley St Mary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124613
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380935
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Monk
Headteacher	Christina Ashford
Date of previous school inspection	9 September 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Additional Inspector

Chris Read

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Rudman

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors sampled 22 lessons taught by 13 teachers. In addition, they observed the support provided for pupils by teaching assistants. They looked at the work in pupils' books, heard a sample of pupils read in Years 1 and 2, and held discussions with pupils about many aspects of school life as well as visiting two assemblies. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the teaching staff and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school's improvement planning and data showing the progress made by pupils. Their scrutiny of safeguarding procedures included a detailed evaluation of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors analysed 144 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This larger than average primary school serves the village of Trimley St Mary on the outskirts of Felixstowe. Almost all of the pupils are White British. There are very few from minority ethnic backgrounds, although in the last few weeks the school has admitted several pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is in line with the national average. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the current government floor standards, which determine the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Since the previous inspection the school has reorganised to accommodate falling rolls. During that period there have been some staff absences. The pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught in parallel mixed-age classes; three classes for Years 3 and 4, and three classes for Years 5 and 6.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving after a period of staffing turbulence, but is not yet good because effective subject leadership is not firmly established and there is not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils achieve well in developing their key skills, especially writing. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory but improving. From starting points typical for their age, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average in English and mathematics. Pupils across the school, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. An increasing proportion is good, but there is some variation between classes and subjects and different ability groups are not always challenged at the right level in lessons. Well-targeted professional development opportunities for staff are helping to improve teaching, particularly in mathematics following a dip in attainment in 2011.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory in class, around the school and in the playground. Pupils are considerate. Bullying is rare and when it occurs it is dealt with effectively. Parents, carers and pupils agree that pupils are safe. Attendance is above average.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders review teaching and analyse pupils' performance appropriately. Development plans identify the right key priorities. There is a clear understanding by all staff of what needs to be done. Phase and subject leaders, however, do not monitor and evaluate pupils' progress sufficiently well in their areas of responsibility. The curriculum meets pupils' needs appropriately. A successful focus on sharpening mathematical skills is being extended to literacy, although the curriculum does not yet include a wide range of writing opportunities in different subjects.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress and raise attainment for all pupils, especially in writing, by:
 - providing opportunities for all pupils to apply their developing writing skills in a wider range of contexts across the curriculum
 - continuing to develop pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling
 - matching work consistently well to pupils' different capabilities, so that the most able pupils in particular are always challenged.

- Ensure leaders and managers in all phases and subject areas have greater impact on accelerating pupils' progress by:
 - focusing more sharply on evaluating pupils' learning across all curriculum areas and key stages through lesson observations and the analysis of work in pupils' books.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The majority of parents and carers who expressed their views of the school feel that their children make good progress in response to good teaching. Teaching and progress are clearly improving, and some notably good practice was seen in Year 6. However, the improvements are not yet fully embedded, and the learning and progress seen in many lessons and over time are typically satisfactory.

Children join the Reception class with skills that are broadly at the levels expected for their age, and make satisfactory progress in preparation for Year 1. They settle well because staff focus on developing their personal skills. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment in English, including in reading, and in mathematics is broadly average. Pupils' weak handwriting skills and the lack of opportunities to write for extended periods in other subjects hold back their progress in English. They currently make better progress in mathematics, which is improving at a faster rate than writing as a result of an effective training programme.

Pupils' skills in reading develop satisfactorily. In Year 2, the most-able readers make good use of their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to help decipher unfamiliar words, and read with fluency and good expression. Less-able readers are able to recognise the sounds that make up unfamiliar words. However, they sometimes lack the confidence to blend them into words so that they gain a secure understanding of the text they are reading. Nevertheless, improved teaching of letters and sounds is increasing many pupils' reading skills. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and the small but increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are making satisfactory and improving progress through a well-structured programme of intervention strategies and group

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work.

Quality of teaching

In the lessons where teaching is best, teachers convey high expectations and engage pupils well through interesting activities that are closely matched to their different ability levels. Pupils are given rigorous timescales in which to complete work, and oral feedback that is effective in increasing their progress. In a mathematics lesson in Year 1 where teaching was good, pupils were encouraged to use positional language well through highly engaging practical activities and good use of technology. Although marking and feedback of pupils' work have improved, some inconsistencies still remain. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, some teachers talk for too long and, as a result, the pace of learning slows. This is particularly the case for those pupils who could do more challenging work, especially in writing. In order to help raise teachers' expectations, data from a new progress tracking system has recently been used. This provides teachers with a clear picture of the extent to which pupils are on track to achieve the targets they need to reach. It is also helping them to modify the tasks they set for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

An increasing focus on basic skills, particularly aspects of English such as grammar, punctuation and spelling, is enabling pupils to make faster progress. This was observed in a literacy lesson in Year 5, where pupils were well engaged in writing for a purpose. They made good progress due to highly-focused activities, good pace and challenge. The performance poems they produced were of good quality and they were confident enough to share them with the whole school in the assembly held on the following day. In most respects the curriculum is suitably planned to enable pupils to apply and practise their key skills in different contexts. However, they have insufficient opportunities to engage in extended writing in subjects other than English.

Pupils work well together and take opportunities to reflect on symbolism in assembly and the contributions and achievements of their classmates. They consider moral and cultural themes in their reading, history and geography lessons, and through a range of outside visits.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy many aspects of school life and the friendships they make. They are well informed about safe use of the internet, including the risks of using social networking sites, bullying by mobile phone text messaging, and road safety. While most parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire think that the overall standard of pupils' behaviour is generally good, fewer think that behaviour in lessons is good or that bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils expressed similar views regarding behaviour, but most say that they feel very safe in school because adults look after them well. The school's behaviour records show that the few instances of unacceptable behaviour are quickly

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and sensitively dealt with. Pupils understand the systems for promoting good behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Safe practices, such as careful use of equipment, were observed in all lessons. There is a clear moral code within the school, and pupils know right from wrong. Pupils' social development is good. They work and play together amicably, respect the feelings and ideas of others and have a well-developed sense of fair play. Attendance rates are consistently above the national average, demonstrating parents and carers' confidence in the school and pupils' enjoyment of their education.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development which is shared by the governing body. Leaders and managers have made appropriate changes to accommodate the falling school population. This has included restructuring leadership, with changes in phase and subject leadership responsibilities. Since the restructuring the leaders and managers have ensured the accurate assessment of pupils' work, focused on improving the quality of teaching and raising attainment. Rigorous monitoring of lessons is improving their quality and raising teachers' expectations. As a result, pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment across the school is rising. All staff have had a significant amount of focused training and this, alongside rigorous performance management, is further securing improvements. Phase and subject leaders are increasingly supporting this drive for improvement, although they have yet to fully developed their leadership skills or focus on monitoring and evaluating progress. The school clearly has the capacity for sustained improvement.

The school's work to promote equality of opportunity is satisfactory and improving. Personalised programmes to support pupils' basic skills, such as phonics and mathematics interventions, are improving progress for all pupils. The curriculum now has a clearer focus on progressively improving basic skills. Teaching and the curriculum promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Pupils say they enjoy the wide range of visits and visitors to the school, because it makes their learning more interesting.

The governing body has recently developed a greater understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Its members are now in a good position to challenge and support the school to improve, particularly by establishing governors to monitor key areas of the school's work. Procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are robust, and the governing body is vigilant in ensuring that related policies are carefully enforced.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Trimley St Mary Primary School, Felixstowe, IP11 0ST

I would like to thank all of you for being so welcoming and helpful to the inspectors when we visited your school, and for telling us your views in person or through the questionnaires some of you completed. The school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that there are a lot of things it is doing right and some things that need to be improved. I know that all the adults who help to run your school want it to be a good school. For this to happen, you need to make better progress in your work. These are the best things about your school.

- It is a happy place, and you enjoy coming to school.
- You told us that you feel safe in school.
- Your attendance is good. Well done.
- Teaching is improving, and an increasing proportion is good.

Your headteacher agrees that some important things need to be improved to help you to make better progress. To ensure that this happens, I have asked the teachers to give you work that always makes you think hard and challenges you to do better, especially in writing, and lots of opportunities to practice your writing in all subjects. In addition, I have asked the senior leaders to look more carefully at your work and your progress so they can help you to improve.

I would like you all to play your part in helping the school to become a good school. The best way for you to do this is to always try your hardest and let your teachers know if the work they give you is too easy or too difficult.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Thomas-Pounce
Lead inspector

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