

The Mayflower Primary School

Main Road, Dovercourt, Harwich, CO12 4AJ

Inspection dates 13–14 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been low for the last four years.
- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because there is too much weak teaching. Teachers do not expect enough of pupils. They do not plan lessons that provide enough challenge for pupils.
- Too often, teachers talk too much instead of giving pupils the opportunity to work independently or in groups.
- Adults who work with pupils who require additional support are not deployed effectively.
- Teachers do not always mark pupils' work. When they do, marking does not provide advice for pupils about how to improve.
- There are inadequate systems to ensure that the school building and the site are safe, especially for children in the Reception classes
- The school has worked with a local authority representative to develop the teaching of phonics, but this has not been effective.
- The lack of direction from senior and middle leaders limits the school's ability to improve teaching and pupils' progress.
- The governing body has failed to hold the leaders and managers to account for carrying out improvements identified at the previous inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils generally behave sensibly and politely, and are supportive of each other.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality have improved greatly. Attendance is well above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also met with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors analysed the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) from 42 parents and took their views into account.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including safeguarding policies, curriculum development plans and samples of pupils’ work.
- Information from the school’s evaluation of its work, tracking of pupils’ progress and monitoring records was scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 11 different teachers. Four of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.

Inspection team

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Gillian Bosschaert	Additional inspector
Janev Mehmet-Christofides	Additional 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

- The Mayflower is a larger-than-average sized primary school. It shares a campus with an Adult Community Learning Centre.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils come from homes where English is not the first language.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and those supported at school action plus is above average.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.
- There was a period when the school was without an Early Years Foundation Stage leader but a new leader has been appointed recently.
- The school has gained Healthy Schools status.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the school in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics to at least the level expected for their age, by:
 - raising expectations of the progress that pupils should make
 - strengthening the use of assessment information to plan challenging work for all pupils especially those supported by the Pupil Premium and lower attaining boys
 - developing teachers' skills in the teaching of phonics
 - using probing questions to check pupils' understanding
 - making sure that, through effective marking and feedback, pupils know exactly what steps to take in order to reach the next level of attainment
 - ensuring that pupils are given clear explanations of how to carry out tasks, and opportunities to develop as active and independent learners
 - making effective use of resources and adult support to maximise learning
 - building a curriculum that supports the development of basic skills and motivates pupils so that learning moves on at a good pace in lessons.
- Ensure pupils are kept safe and healthy in and out of lessons by:
 - creating a safe environment where pupils are taught to understand how to respond to risks
 - ensuring that all staff are provided with suitable training in child protection and that safeguarding policies are reviewed annually
 - securing a good standard of cleanliness in the building and on the school site.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's leadership by:
 - developing the role of the governing body so that it holds the school to account
 - ensuring that leaders, managers and staff accurately interpret and use performance data

- establishing a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the school’s performance, including teaching
 - strengthening performance management arrangements for teachers
 - including in improvement plans clear success criteria and dates for monitoring and review
 - ensuring that all leaders have the skills and confidence to drive forward improvements across the school and to manage change.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Children start school in Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding that are generally well below those expected for their age. Although the children make some gains in developing their confidence and positive attitudes to learning, they make too little progress and their attainment by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage remains low. Only a few children become independent learners by the end of Reception and their social, language and number skills are still below those expected for their age.
- In Years 1 and 2, there is currently a focus on the development of literacy through linking letters and sounds (phonics) and writing. However, these skills are not taught well enough and pupils are given too few opportunities to complete longer pieces of writing. As a result, pupils are not skilled enough in using phonics when attempting to read or write new words.
- The low levels of expectation and lack of challenge mean that pupils make less progress than expected. In a Key Stage 1 mathematics lessons, for example, the main task involved rounding numbers up and down and many pupils completed the task in less than half the time allocated for it. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently below average over the last four years.
- Although the school's current assessment data, as well as the monitoring of pupils' progress, indicate some improvement in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2, all groups of pupils make less than expected progress. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently below average for boys, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and for those pupils for whom the school receives Pupil Premium funding.
- Pupils made inadequate progress in more than a third of the lessons observed. This was due to inadequate teaching. The weak teaching does not give pupils the opportunity to apply their skills because the tasks given to them are often in the form of worksheets which are too easy for them. As a result, pupils' motivation to learn diminishes easily.
- Due to the school's intervention programme which targeted pupils in Year 6, there was a rise in pupils' attainment in 2012. Nonetheless, the achievement of too many pupils is still not good enough. In mathematics, many pupils are unable to apply basic number skills to solve the simplest mathematical problems. Changes to the curriculum and the deployment of staff have not had the desired impact on pupils' progress and attainment. A lack of structured plans for developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in reading, writing and mathematics is compounded by too much inadequate teaching.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Inspectors observed too much teaching that was inadequate. Most of the lessons seen required improvement, with too few lessons which were good. This means that pupils make inadequate progress.
- In the large majority of lessons, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their personal, social and academic skills. Although pupils are highly compliant and eagerly embark on the learning tasks set, too often these activities fail to build on what they already know or set them sufficient challenge.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage the environment is unsafe and unstimulating, with a

poor standard of cleanliness. There is a wide range of suitable resources, but these are not used well to support children's learning. The large outdoor area has not been developed to provide opportunities for the children to explore and discover as part of their learning.

- Throughout the school, teaching does not support pupils to learn well and make enough progress because:
 - lesson plans do not always include activities that are closely matched to the learning needs of different groups of pupils
 - too often the pace of lessons is slow and does not sustain pupils' interest and engagement
 - teachers and teaching assistants do not use effective questioning as a strategy to probe learning and check pupils' progress
 - teachers do not explain clearly enough what pupils should do and, as result, pupils are not always focused in lessons
 - when moving around the classroom, teachers fail to assess pupils' progress accurately
 - teaching assistants' contribution is not as good as it could be, because often they do not support pupils when the teacher is explaining concepts to the whole class.
- The school's information and communication technology (ICT) resources are not used innovatively to stimulate pupils' interest and imaginations. For instance, in many lessons, the interactive whiteboards were not used to help explain key mathematical concepts.
- Teaching provides adequate opportunities that foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through visits to places such as churches and museums as well as through fundraising activities. However, these activities are not planned as part of the wider curriculum. The curriculum is inadequate as it lacks opportunities for pupils to develop as active and independent learners so that all achieve as well as they should.
- The teaching of reading and writing across the school is ineffective because the teaching of phonics is not focused enough to support the next steps in pupils' learning. There were examples of incorrect teaching of phonics which confused the pupils. In a Year 2 literacy class, more than half of the pupils, mainly boys, could not spell the words 'mum' and 'mine' correctly.
- Pupils' work is not marked thoroughly enough. Although there were some good elements, most marking and feedback to pupils on their work does not lead to improvement.
- In a very small minority of lessons, pupils make good progress because of good relationships and clear explanations that help pupils to achieve well. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher and teaching assistants demonstrated very explicitly how to double numbers. This ensured that all of the pupils understood the method and enabled them to complete the tasks set.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- Inspectors found that the school's systems to keep pupils safe at all times are ineffective. For example, the outdoor area for children in Reception was unsafe because:
 - there were sharp edges of pruned shrubs which could easily hurt children
 - a rusted hand shovel with pointed parts was lying on a table
 - the construction of a den using a piece of rope with a tarpaulin over it was hazardous.
- The school demonstrates a lack of capacity to recognise and address health and safety issues. Inspectors found that:
 - the staircase to the top floor of the school building has a big drop from which pupils

- could fall
 - broken fences with nails in them have been piled on the side of the school field where children play
 - the school compound is not cleaned and there is much litter
 - the number of pupils who hurt themselves each day is high.
- Before the end of the inspection, inspectors ensured that the school agreed an action plan to address all health and safety issues. The Chair of the Governing Body and the headteacher were asked to ensure that all health and safety issues are addressed before the end of the week following the inspection.
 - In lessons and around the school pupils behave well and show respect and courtesy towards each other and adults. Pupils and parents agree that behaviour has improved; there have been no fixed-term exclusions over the last year.
 - Typically, pupils are keen to do well in lessons. However, they sometimes lose concentration when teaching is unexciting and tasks are not closely matched to their differing abilities.
 - Pupils' attendance has improved significantly and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is low. In the main, pupils are punctual to school.
 - Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as when crossing the road or using sharp objects. However, pupils report that they do not feel completely safe because the school does not deal with bullying effectively and this view is held by a significant proportion of the parents who completed the online questionnaire. Pupils have some understanding of the different forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying or racism.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Although the school's improvement plan identifies the main priorities, actions are not specific enough to secure rapid improvements. The improvement plan lacks clear criteria for measuring success and no dates have been set for monitoring or evaluating progress.
 - Leaders and managers have failed to identify the weaknesses within the school, because systems for checking on the school's performance are not accurate or rigorous enough, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching. There is lack of understanding of data about pupils' performance so the school's efforts have not effectively targeted underachievement. There is no shared sense of urgency to tackle the weaknesses within the school.
 - Systematic checks on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' achievement are not in place. Performance management arrangements are weak. When classroom performance is reviewed, there is not a clear enough focus on helping teachers to improve their practice. The role of middle leaders has not been developed. Consequently, the leadership of teaching is inadequate and there is too much teaching which fails to provide enough challenge for pupils.
 - The curriculum is inadequate, because it does not provide a sufficiently effective framework to meet the learning needs of groups of pupils. It fails to address the weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics and literacy, especially the teaching of phonics. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
 - The local authority provides support for the teaching of phonics but there has been no
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observable impact in improving standards in reading and writing.

- The school does not demonstrate capacity for further improvement because the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have not been addressed fully.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The Governing Body has failed to check the school’s performance and to ensure that it provides a safe environment.
 - has been ineffective in holding school leaders to account for securing necessary improvements.
 - Although the governing body has been strengthened by the appointment of a vice-chair who has considerable experience and understanding of school improvement, the governing body as a whole lacks an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and outcomes for pupils. Governors do not undertake focused visits in order to gain a first-hand view of the school’s performance, but rely on scant and sometimes overly positive information presented to them. They have not taken any actions to ensure that standards and teaching improve.
 - Although the school has taken appropriate steps to check the suitability of all adults to work with children, action has not been taken to ensure that all other safeguarding requirements are met. For example, the governing body does not review the child protection and safeguarding policies as often as required. Staff training in child protection and safeguarding is not up to date.
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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	114747
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	405533

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	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Macaulay
Headteacher	Steven Springett
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2010
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