

Rettendon Primary School

Main Road, Rettendon Common, Chelmsford, CM3 8DW

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led and managed and staff training is rapidly improving the teaching of basic skills.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because the teaching of English and mathematics is well structured.
- Teaching is good, particularly when pupils have opportunities to discuss their work and share ideas with each other.
- Well-trained support staff contribute well to structured literacy and mathematics lessons and to special programmes that help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- This is a welcoming school where good relationships flourish in a friendly atmosphere and where behaviour is good.
- The school communicates well with parents through a home-school book, which includes regular updates on pupils' progress.
- The range of subjects pupils learn is wide and varied. Pupils particularly enjoy afternoon lessons and the range of after-school clubs and activities.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have taken achievement and teaching forward since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' comments on pupils' work are not always clear about how to improve and pupils do not have time to respond and make corrections.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to check each other's work and progress during lessons.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematics skills across the curriculum.
- Some aspects of the school development plan lack timescales and evaluation criteria to direct the work of leaders and governors.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes, visiting seven part-lessons and a range of groups. She observed all teachers and some support staff.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and members of the governing body, an officer from the local authority and pupils.
- A range of documents were considered, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, minutes of the meetings of the governing body, safeguarding arrangements and work in pupils' books.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day, as well as those of the 33 parents and carers who contributed to the online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Jennifer Barker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, serving a rural community, with children taught in four classes.
- There is a nursery on the same site as the school, but it is not managed by the governing body.
- The school leads Early Years Foundation Stage activities with a group of other schools.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, which provides additional resources for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children from service families, is average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is above average, but is well below average for those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils are educated onsite. There is no regular alternative provision of education elsewhere.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching even more, so that more pupils make outstanding progress by:
 - developing an effective marking policy, so that teachers' comments are linked to pupils' targets and next steps for improvement and that all pupils are clear about how they can improve their work
 - ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to respond to teachers' marking, practise their skills and correct mistakes
 - involving pupils fully in discussing and assessing their own and other pupils' work during lessons.
- Develop a range of planned tasks and activities across all subjects so that pupils are able to apply their good reading, writing and mathematics skills more widely.
- Ensure that key priorities in the school development plan always have clear timescales and methods of monitoring and evaluation to direct, even more closely, the work of leaders and governors.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter school with starting points that are variable across the small year groups and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter Year 1 with skills at least in line with those expected nationally.
- Attainment is above average, overall. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading are above average. A high proportion of pupils make progress above national expectations in reading and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Leaders have made writing a priority for improvement and involved pupils' in what would help them. As a result, standards have risen. Literacy lessons focus on punctuation, with pupils grouped according to their starting points. Regular pieces of writing show that pupils are making rapid progress in this skill, competently using more complex sentences, speech marks and dialogue. Consequently, writing skills have improved across all year groups.
- Daily opportunities to read to adults or for silent reading are developing good reading habits for all pupils. The most able pupils, in particular, enjoy reading a wide range of texts by different authors.
- The linking of letters and sounds they make (phonics) is taught through a daily structured programme for younger pupils. As a result, younger and lower-achieving pupils are developing effective strategies to work out words they do not know. They make good progress in reading fluently and with understanding.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with a wide range of activities both indoors and outside, based on the children's interests, such as scientific investigations. They make particularly good progress in communication and literacy, and in personal and social skills, sometimes from low starting points. However, although a range of resources, such as writing boards, pens and calculators are available and used by pupils, opportunities are, occasionally, missed to develop writing and numeracy skills through different activities.
- Funding through the pupil premium for eligible pupils is used well for additional support, and the extra help enriches their experience through visits and after-school activities. The extra funding mainly helps these pupils to make progress above that expected nationally. For example, the extra money to help those eligible for free school meals enabled them to attain standards at least as high as those gained by all pupils nationally, and some achieved better than most pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are accurately identified and they are helped to do well. Consequently, they make good progress in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils from all ethnic heritages develop good basic skills in English and mathematics. However, there are too few planned opportunities for them to apply their skills across all subjects, for example, to practise different styles of writing or solve numerical problems to make them more confident and competent in using their skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and support staff create a calm working atmosphere in lessons and pupils are attentive and listen well to the teachers. In this helpful environment, pupils learn well and make good

progress. Pupils confidently ask teachers to clarify any uncertainties in understanding and willingly share their work with others from the front of the class.

- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics is good. However, teachers give pupils too few opportunities to use their competent reading, writing and mathematical skills in all subjects. Therefore, pupils' skills are not practised as much as they could be and successful learning is not reinforced.
- Teachers give pupils opportunities for discussion and scope to work together. Consequently, pupils learn well from each other. For instance, in a science lesson, pupils were keen to show the inspector how they were setting up a range of fair tests to research the conditions in which mould grew, creating predictions and writing up their results. The outcome was excellent progress in science.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to check pupils' learning during lessons. For instance, they direct pupils to write down their own ideas on small whiteboards so these can be checked for understanding and initiative, and misunderstandings corrected. In a mathematics lesson about time, the teacher selected pupils who had used different methods to calculate the number of hours that had passed. Sharing their ideas promoted good progress and pupils learnt from their mistakes.
- Although pupils are clear about the progress they are making, marking is of variable quality across the school and across subjects. Teachers' comments are, sometimes, not evaluative enough in helping pupils know what they did well and what the next steps for improvement should be. Sometimes, there are too few opportunities for pupils to correct their mistakes and practise the new skills they have learned.
- Support staff are helpful to pupils' learning. They encourage pupils' independence as learners by breaking down tasks for those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs and give these pupils additional resources to use. These staff are also skilful in delivering structured phonics and other learning programmes. They listen to pupils read and support reading skills well, playing a big part in the progress that pupils make with their literacy and numeracy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and they attend regularly. They concentrate and contribute well when discussing their work.
- Pupils like the reward systems which have virtually removed low-level disruption from lessons. Parents overwhelmingly think that behaviour is good. Opportunities to take responsibility – such as 'buddies' to younger pupils – are valued by pupils. Work in small groups in lessons give good opportunities for friendships across different ages.
- Parents and pupils are very confident that the school is a safe place. A fall of snow was a good opportunity for pupils to bring appropriate clothing to school and, in a well-supervised playground and field area, enjoy the fun that snow brings.
- Bullying is rare in the school. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, name-calling and physical bullying. They are confident that any incidents will be followed up by staff, involve parents and other pupils. As a result, they are able to discuss moral issues, such as homophobic bullying, and have ways to deal with incidents at an

early stage, such as ignoring comments or blocking people from access to websites.

- The school works well with pupils whose behaviour is a cause for concern. For instance, individuals who transfer from other schools where they have refused to attend, build a good relationship with adults, and are provided with support for their work. There are examples of such pupils making good progress and becoming valued members of the school community.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher is driving the school forward and developing a team that works well together. All staff have improvement targets linked to developing the range of subject learning and improving teaching across the school.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching, which is good. The performance of each teacher is checked regularly and opportunities are given for them to advance their skills. Staff promotion and salaries are dependent on the progress pupils make, with particular emphasis on the teaching of reading and writing.
- External links are very helpful. Good working relationships between staff, parents and governors ensure that the continuing cycle of school improvement is raising standards well. The local authority has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and gives help when needed.
- The use of effective systems for tracking progress ensures that pupils beginning to fall behind are picked up quickly and additional help is given to speed their progress.
- School development planning includes all essential priorities. However, the timescales stated are not precise enough, and strategies for checking and evaluating progress towards the targets set do not always inform leaders precisely enough what has been achieved. Nevertheless, the school has moved forward well since its last inspection and shows strong capacity for continued improvement.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They say that the school 'caters for every child' and that each child is treated individually with an expectation that all can reach their potential. Consequently, all pupils have equal opportunities to participate fully in the life of the school and there is no discrimination.
- The range of subjects and topics taught broaden pupils' experience. They particularly enjoy opportunities to visit museums, and learn in the open air. They enjoy a wide range of club activities, including sports, building bricks clubs and cooking and have opportunities to learn to play musical instruments. These activities and opportunities for working closely with others in lessons, promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills well.
- The school has effective partnerships with other schools, especially with the onsite nursery. There are regular weekly visits to take part in school activities, such as physical education. The school also leads a successful partnership with other schools in developing provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Close links with the secondary school and the development of basic skills ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors play an active part in school improvement and have steered the school well through a difficult time, financially, linked to fewer pupils joining the school because of demographic

changes locally. Their support for the headteacher in the development of the onsite nursery, although not managed by the school, is contributing to a significant rise in numbers attending the school. Governors ensure that procedures for safeguarding are thorough and meet requirements. They have clear understanding of the progress pupils make and understand the data on attainment and progress available. They check the use of additional funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. Consequently, these pupils achieve well from the additional provision made for them. Governors have a good grasp on the quality of teaching and ensure that the management of staff performance is used effectively in relation to targets and training for staff. Staff promotion is linked to pupils' success in making progress. While governors are closely involved in school development planning, their meetings and visits are not yet always closely focused enough on all priorities in the plan, so their checking on developments is not as well informed as it might be.

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	114856
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	401473

The 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	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Ride
Headteacher	Jacquie Barber
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2009
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