

Thomas Willingale School

The Broadway, Loughton, IG10 3SR

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Pupils achieve well. Most pupils make good progress from their generally low starting points and pupils in Year 6 make outstanding progress.
- Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. From starting points that are below those typical for their age, children make good progress.
- Teaching is good in most classes. Teachers explain clearly what pupils are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. They plan lessons well.
- Most work in lessons is matched well to pupils' ability. They are given the right amount of challenge which makes them think hard and learn well.
- The quality of marking is good. Pupils know what they have done well and what they must do to improve.
- Pupils are keen to learn and behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe and say there is no bullying of any kind.
- The headteacher is an outstanding leader and inspires staff and pupils to do their best. She makes sure teachers know they are responsible for the progress pupils make. She has high expectations of those teachers with management responsibilities. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and pupils are making progress much more quickly than in the past.
- The Chair of the Governing Body knows the school's strengths and weaknesses and is making sure that all governors carry out their responsibilities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils who need extra help are not doing as well as they could in every class.
- Pupils do not learn the wide range of words they need to explain their ideas and thinking quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 17 lessons; most of these visits were made jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, phase leaders and subject leaders. In addition, the inspectors visited every class to look at how well disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are getting on.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work to check their progress and to see how well the work is marked.
- Pupils of different ages were heard reading.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and phase leaders, the leader for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Seven parents responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents. These included self-evaluation documents, the school's own data on pupils' progress, policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Cousins

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- Slightly higher numbers of pupils than average are eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those from families where a parent is in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had no changes in teaching staff since the last monitoring inspection.
- The headteacher started at the school in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in Key Stage 1 by making sure that pupils have every opportunity to learn the words they need to explain their ideas and feelings from when they enter the Nursery.
- Speed up the progress of pupils who need extra help so that all are achieving equally well in every class by making sure that:
 - teachers plan work that is set at the right level
 - other adults in the classroom know how to help pupils learn well
 - extra help is given to pupils who need it by experts from outside the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin school with skills and experiences generally below those expected for their age. They make good progress and are beginning to catch up but their ability to explain their ideas and feelings lags behind. This is also the case in Years 1 and 2. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils could only think of simple colour and size words to describe a dinosaur.
- Pupils' attainment across the school is improving speedily but remains below average. This is because of the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills due to previously inadequate teaching. Most pupils are catching up to where they should be for their age because of the good progress they make in lessons.
- Pupils recognise letters and sounds (phonics) well in the early stages of reading and writing. They read with confidence and enjoyment and are using their knowledge of sounds when they write. Older pupils also enjoy reading and are making good progress.
- Pupils are making good progress with writing across the school. This is because of good teaching and also the many different writing projects pupils take part in, both in lessons and for homework. For example, most pupils take part in the monthly writing competition.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving and they are making good progress in most classes.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are not always making the same level of progress as other pupils in the school. This is because the tasks they are given in lessons are not always a good match to their learning needs. Adult helpers are not always given enough guidance on how to work with them and there is not enough expert support from specialist teachers where this is needed.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress. They have benefited from extra adult help and from the classes to help them relax and learn better. This is closing the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils.
- Pupils' pride in their work has made a huge improvement over the last year. They write neatly and accurately in mathematics and English. They know their learning targets and what these mean. They are clear about what they must do to achieve the next level in their learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lesson observations and the work seen in pupils books show that teaching is usually good in most classes. This is why pupils make good progress and achieve well. In Year 6, the outstanding progress pupils have made since September 2012 indicates that some teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers in the same year group plan lessons together carefully, taking account of what pupils already know, understand and can do. This is why tasks are matched well to most pupils' ability levels. There is a good level of challenge for higher ability pupils. For example, in mathematics pupils are encouraged to be creative and find different ways to solve problems.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are taught number skills well and some are beginning to write simple sums. They are also taught the sounds that letters make and make a good start with early reading and writing skills.
- Activities in lessons are lively and varied. Teachers are beginning to make good use of the new interactive whiteboards and visual aids which grab pupils' interest and motivate them to watch and listen carefully. Teachers are now skilled at using a range of paired and group activities to make sure all pupils take an active part in lessons.
- Marking is good in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils can explain exactly what they have done well and what they must do next to make their work even better. One pupil explained that the 'RAG' (red, amber, green where green means the pupil has good understanding) rating is very helpful so the teacher knows when pupils need extra time on a topic to help them learn better. Pupils are given time to read teachers' comments and they reply to them, for example, by trying out a different mathematics problem or adding to a piece of writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are typically polite and well behaved around the school and on the playground. They listen well to their teachers and work hard during lessons. They enjoy answering questions and understand the ways teachers make it fair so that everyone gets a chance to answer. Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups. They respect and listen to other adults they work with in school.
- The very small number of parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school makes sure pupils behave well. One parent did not agree that the school deals well with bullying. Pupils have no concerns about bullying and say if there is any unkindness it is dealt with immediately and well.
- Pupils like their school and are pleased to have special jobs including being school councillors.
- Pupils understand risks; they know about different kinds of bullying and about how to keep themselves safe, especially on the internet. The school has introduced 'facebook' books where older pupils can write their 'status' as part of writing activities during the school day. This is proving popular with them, as pupils know it will be looked at by their teachers.
- Attendance has improved term on term and is now average. The school is active in improving attendance and tackles unauthorised absence promptly. The school has begun to address lateness and the attendance difficulties some families have in more detail.

The leadership and management are good

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher means that the school has moved from requiring special measures to good in just four terms. She has driven school improvement at a very fast rate and successfully won the hearts and minds of pupils, staff and parents along the way. She has made sure that all teachers are held responsible for pupils' learning in their classes and that the targets they are given are challenging but achievable.
 - The headteacher has helped teachers with management responsibilities to understand what is
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expected of them. They have grown in confidence and in their ability to challenge teachers and pupils to do their best. It is because of the excellent team work in the school that teaching has improved and pupils are making good progress.

- The deputy headteacher keeps a very careful eye on how pupils' progress is tracked across the school. This helps teachers identify any pupils who are not doing as well as they could, including those eligible for pupil premium and those who need extra help. This also helps the school to review how well it is getting on and to adjust improvement plans where necessary.
 - The special needs coordinator is new to the school. She is at the early stages of reviewing individual learning programmes for all pupils with statements of special educational needs and others who need extra help in class. She is beginning to find out where she can get expert support for those pupils who need this.
 - The new Early Years Foundation Stage team have worked together to improve children's learning. They make sure that staff are well trained and know how to help young children to learn well.
 - Pupils are taught a broad and interesting range of subjects. The school has made sure that there are lots of opportunities to practise and improve pupils' skills in English and mathematics through these subjects. The school runs a good range of clubs. There are lots of visits to interesting places, for example the Natural History Museum to look at dinosaurs, and lots of visitors come to the school. During the inspection, a visiting theatre company taught pupils more about mathematics.
 - Equal opportunities are promoted strongly. Every pupil, whatever their background or need, is able to take part in all the activities the school has to offer. Leaders ensure there is no discrimination of any kind.
 - The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, there are strong links with local faith communities. The improvements in the school have been reported in the local press, raising its profile in the community.
 - The local authority has supported the school very well. It has contributed to improvements in teaching with its regular assessments of the quality of teaching and learning. The human resources team has worked exceptionally hard to help the headteacher and governors with some challenging staffing issues. As the school has improved and is now good, support is at a lower level.
 - Safeguarding meets current government requirements and is effective. The school carries out the necessary checks on staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children. All staff have been trained at the right levels.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body work in close partnership with the school and the local authority. Its members have a clear understanding of data about standards and a determination to improve these; this is underlined in their action plan. Governors make sure that money is used to help pupils achieve well; for example, they visited the school recently to check on whether the new white boards are improving pupils' learning. Pupil premium funding has been used to provide extra help for pupils who are eligible for this and as a result they are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. The Chair of the Governing Body is determined that every governor
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should play an active part in school improvement. The two new parent governors are clear about the level of commitment and understanding being a school governor requires. Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and the way in which performance management is effective in bringing about improvement, including linking teacher's salaries to the progress pupils make. The governing body has supported the headteacher well through difficult staffing issues but has also checked that the decisions made help pupils make the best progress. Governors know their own strengths and weaknesses and make sure they choose the best training courses to help them understand and monitor the school.

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	115309
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	410237

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rhian Jenkins
Headteacher	Nicolette Barrand
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2011
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