

Frinton-on-Sea Primary School

Fifth Avenue, Frinton-on-Sea, CO13 9LQ

Inspection dates

07–08 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching across the school varies and not enough of it is good.
- The progress pupils make is broadly in line with national rates but it is not always rapid enough. This is particularly the case for the most- and least-able pupils.
- Teachers do not always plan their lessons to make sure that pupils of different abilities can build on what they already know, which limits their progress, especially for the more- and less-able pupils.
- The school has reasonable systems with which to monitor its work. However, school leaders are not always using these rigorously to provide them with an accurate view of the school's performance and to set easily measurable targets for improvement.
- Teachers are keen to improve their practice but leaders do not routinely provide them with advice as to exactly what they need to do to improve.

The school has the following strengths

- Throughout the school, relationships are good. Pupils are happy in school and say that they feel safe.
- Pupils make good progress in learning letter sounds and how to use these to read and spell (phonics) because these skills are taught well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and helpful and like taking on responsibilities around the school.
- Good teaching in the Reception (Early Years) class helps children make good progress. Their personal development and communication, language and literacy skills are considerably above those typical of their age group.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, as well as groups of pupils or individuals working with learning support assistants. They looked in on pupils during lunchtime and visited break times.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in all year groups and heard some pupils from Years 1 and 6 read.
- They held meetings with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils from Years 2 and 6. They spoke informally with many pupils during lessons and at break times.
- Inspectors looked carefully at safeguarding documentation, information about pupils' progress, self-evaluation documents and development plans.
- The views of 40 parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration, as were the views of parents and carers who spoke with inspectors at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Pentlow

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with seven classes, including the Reception (Early Years) class. The school serves the local community.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- There is a small number of looked-after pupils.
- No pupils are currently educated in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This extra funding is for looked-after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils from service families.
- At the time of the inspection, one teaching vacancy was being covered by the headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to a consistently good level in order to increase pupils' rate of progress, by making sure that all teachers:
 - check how well pupils are getting on with their work in lessons and adjust their teaching in the light of pupils' progress
 - do not underestimate their less-able pupils and make sure they have work to stretch them to help them make good progress
 - always provide the more-able pupils with work to make them think hard and make good progress
 - make sure that when they mark their pupils' work, they tell them how to improve and give them time to do this
 - and that all leaders check rigorously on the quality of teaching to make sure that inconsistencies are dealt with swiftly.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - there is a clear understanding of pupils' starting points from which their progress will be measured
 - efficient use is made of the information about pupils' progress to identify challenging improvement targets for pupils' progress and attainment, set realistic timescales for improvement within the school development plan, and show how the school will measure the success of its development work
 - the school's development plan has precise and challenging targets for each year group's progress and attainment
 - governors are aware of these targets and timescales so that they can check the progress of the plan and the impact of work done to improve the school
 - that lesson observations are sharply focused on the impact of the teaching on pupils' learning so that teachers are given precise points for improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When pupils start in Year 1, school data indicate that their attainment is just above the levels expected for their age. Inspectors noted that in linking letters and sounds to help them read and spell and in their attitudes to learning, children in the Early Years class demonstrate abilities well above those typical of their age group.
- Results of national teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 and national tests at the end of Year 6, indicate that pupils' attainment is usually around the national averages. The proportion of Year 1 pupils doing well in the 2012 phonics screening check was lower than that found nationally. The main reason for this is that more-able pupils corrected the nonsense words they had to read. For example, instead of using their phonic knowledge to read 'strom', they corrected the word and read 'storm'.
- In the 2012 Year 6 group, all pupils made expected progress in English but in mathematics, the proportion making expected progress was below average. Scrutiny of the school's pupil progress tracking data and pupils' work indicates that their rate of progress in English and mathematics is steady except in phonics in Years 1 and 2, where it is good.
- Outstanding teaching for Year 6 pupils has ensured that the progress of about two thirds of the class has picked up considerably. From their starting points in school, most of these pupils have made reasonable progress. A few have made good progress. However, less-able pupils have generally made slower progress and have more ground to make up. In other classes, the rate of progress is uneven.
- The school has recognised that pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics needs to improve. They have invested in software programs and bought in training from the local authority, with more planned. These are relatively recent moves, so the impact has yet to be seen.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. The good support provided for pupils with very complex difficulties ensures that they are fully included in all the school has to offer and make steady progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to their peers. Compared to this group nationally, pupils in the school make better progress in English and mathematics. Within the school, in 2012, the gap between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not, was around one year. However, the gaps between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not, are closing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There are differences in the quality of teaching across the school. Consequently, teaching does not enable pupils to make consistently good progress. Sometimes the tasks set are not sufficiently demanding, so pupils are not expected to think hard and come up with solutions. This is particularly the case for more-able pupils and, on occasions, for the less-able pupils.
- Work is not always precisely matched to what pupils need to learn next and teachers do not always notice how well, or not, pupils are learning and make changes in the lesson.

Consequently, more-able pupils are not always challenged to think hard. On occasions, teachers underestimate what their less-able pupils can achieve so work planned for them is too easy.

- Teachers always mark their pupils' work. However, there is variation in the usefulness of the comments made to help pupils know how to improve. Similarly, discussions with many pupils indicate that they are not sure about their personal targets for improvement and how they are to achieve them.
- Staff establish good working relationships with pupils and pupils get on well together. Teachers manage their pupils' behaviour well and pupils like to work hard to please their teacher. Where teaching is outstanding, as in Year 6, pupils respond very well and persevere to meet the challenges set by their teacher.
- Teaching of early literacy skills is good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils make good progress in learning to blend sounds together to read and to break words up into syllables to help with spelling. A particularly good feature is the introduction of exciting vocabulary for pupils to learn and use.
- In the Early Years class, teaching is good. Expectations from all staff are high. As a result, children develop very positive attitudes to learning and good social skills. For example, they tidy up their classroom in a brisk and business-like manner and settle very quickly to listen to their teacher. Children learn at a good rate. For example, over two thirds of the class can read and spell words such as 'sheep' and 'want'. They also read words which cannot be easily worked out with letter sounds such as 'some' and 'there'.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. When these pupils are taught in small groups by learning support assistants, they usually make good progress because the activities are closely matched to what the pupils need to learn. In class sessions, however, their learning requires improvement because of inconsistency in planning work at the right level for them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are proud of their school community and enjoy taking on responsibilities within it. All staff, and most parents and carers have positive views about behaviour in school. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations set for them to be kind, courteous and respectful.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning. They particularly enjoy lessons where teachers have made good links between subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils worked very hard to measure the length and the perimeter of Victorian artefacts. They shared and took turns very well and tried hard to be accurate with their measurements.
- Most parents and carers agree that their child enjoys school and feels safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have a clear understanding of what constitutes various forms of bullying, including through mobile phones and e-mails. Older pupils take a responsible approach to keeping themselves safe, and prevent or deal with any such bullying.
- Pupils offer thoughtful responses when given the opportunity to reflect on spiritual or moral issues in lessons. For example, in Year 6, pupils gave considerable and mature thought to the conservation of tropical rain forest and the needs of people who lived there to be able to supply themselves with food and a livelihood.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually for school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders' judgement of how well the school is doing (self-evaluation) is not always sufficiently rigorous to pinpoint exactly what needs to improve and bring this about at a rapid rate. For example, the monitoring of the quality of teaching is not critical enough to note all aspects that teachers need to improve.
- Because self-evaluation is not precise, school development planning lacks explicit, measurable targets for improvements in attainment and pupils' rates of progress. As a consequence, it is difficult for leaders to measure success and for governors to hold the headteacher to account. The lack of realistic timescales means that it is difficult judge the rate of improvements.
- When provided with good guidance, teachers improve their practice very effectively. For example, teachers have benefited from good training and guidance from the deputy headteacher in how to develop pupils' writing. Improved teaching of writing resulted in a better than average proportion of Year 2 pupils attaining the higher levels in writing and all Year 6 pupils making expected progress in English in 2012.
- Newly qualified teachers are mentored well by the deputy head teacher and have good support from colleagues.
- School leaders and governors share a strong commitment to making sure that there are good links with the local community and that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to do well and there is no discrimination.
- There have been reasonable improvements in areas identified by the last inspection. A strength is the improvement in linking subjects together such as geography and mathematics, to make learning more relevant.
- Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors were very positive about the school, especially the approachability of class teachers. Responses to Parent View indicate that parents are less positive in their views about how well the school provides them with information about how their child is getting on and how the school deals with their concerns and suggestions. There is more to do to provide parents and carers with information about how their children are getting on and to deal with their concerns and suggestions.
- As part of its strategy to monitor the performance of schools which were judged 'satisfactory' at their last inspection, the local authority is monitoring the school's performance. The local authority does not have any direct input to the school as the school buys in the services of a school improvement consultant.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are thorough in making sure that they perform their legal duties, including the safe recruiting and vetting of staff. They know the school reasonably well and make good use of their individual professional expertise in supporting it and asking questions. Governors visit regularly. They receive comprehensive reports from the headteacher and improvement consultant about pupils' performance. From these reports, they are also aware of the quality of teaching and the strategies used for helping teachers to make further improvement, such as linking pay closely to pupils' achievement, how the school rewards good teaching and deals with any underperformance. They check on spending decisions, including the use and impact of pupil premium funding. However, they do not routinely question the amount of progress

pupils make from their start in school. Weaknesses in development planning limit the scope for governors to check on the effect of developments and whether targets are completed in a timely fashion.

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	114723
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	405528

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	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Lowe
Headteacher	Joan Dear
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2010
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