

Frobisher Primary and Nursery School

Frobisher Drive, Jaywick, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 2QH

Inspection dates 24–25 April 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Standards have been consistently below average over time. Although improving rapidly, they remain below average overall. Although pupils' progress is good in reading and mathematics, too few reach the higher levels.
- Pupils are not developing their writing skills at a fast enough pace. Many do not form letters accurately and neatly, and do not have a sufficiently wide vocabulary to enable them to write well.
- Although there is some good and outstanding teaching, and the amount of this is rising, the quality remains inconsistent and this means pupils' learning is too variable.
- Teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve and do not insist on the neat and careful presentation of their work.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety require improvement because a small number of pupils take advantage when teachers do not manage them effectively.
- Leadership of some subjects is not yet well developed. The governing body has not tracked and monitored the impact of the use of pupil premium money on pupils' progress sufficiently. This means their understanding of all data is not secure.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is providing good, strong leadership and, as a result, there are rapid improvements evident, particularly in standards in reading and mathematics and in the quality of teaching.
- Better teaching is helping children to link sounds and letters (phonics), and has already led to pupils making above average progress in reading.
- Pupils are very positive about school and clearly enjoy their lessons.
- The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Consistently effective teaching ensures the youngest children have a good start to their education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons and parts of lessons. Many of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, governors, pupils, staff, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. Some pupils read books with the inspector.
- The inspectors analysed and took account of the 10 responses from parents and carers to the online survey (Parent View).
- Responses to 31 staff questionnaires were considered.
- The inspectors looked at key inspection documents, including performance data produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, self-evaluation work, reports to the governing body and the school improvement plan.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Beale

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Frobisher Primary and Nursery School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of the pupils are White British. There are very few pupils currently at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- A very high proportion of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club on the school site.
- The headteacher took over the leadership of the school in an acting capacity a year ago and was appointed to the substantive role in October 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring the marking of pupils' work and the feedback provided to them by staff helps pupils understand the next steps in their learning
 - providing activities that more effectively extend what pupils already know and understand
- Raise standards in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to improve and broaden their vocabulary
 - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work.
- Ensure more pupils reach the higher levels in reading and mathematics by providing more work that challenges them and makes them think.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics
 - ensuring the governing body has a clearer grasp of data, especially that showing the progress made by pupils entitled to free school meals.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average. This has been a consistent picture over time. Even so, from their very low starting points this represents sound progress in acquiring basic skills, although progress has been inconsistent due to turbulence in staffing and leadership. However, standards in reading and mathematics are rising rapidly in all year groups and progress is now better than that expected due to improved teaching methods and recent staff training.
- The Year 6 pupils are on track to meet the current government floor standards, although standards remain below average. Standards in writing throughout the school remain below average. The school is aware of this and clear plans are in place to speed progress and raise standards.
- Most children in the Nursery class start school with personal and social skills, and skills in language, communication and number that are exceptionally low. Children make good progress and quickly become used to school routines and expectations. Good provision continues in the Reception classes and children develop their personal, social and emotional skills well.
- Progress in writing is not fast enough. The school is at a very early stage of investigating ways to improve this and has rightly recognised the need to improve the quality of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Many pupils' vocabulary is too limited and does not have sufficient richness and breadth to support their writing.
- Progress is good in reading due to much improved teaching of phonics. Progress in mathematics is also much improved through the recruitment of a specialist mathematics teacher and very well-focused professional development. Basic calculation skills have improved. However, too few pupils reach the higher levels, especially in reading and mathematics, as there are missed opportunities to extend the use of their skills in problem solving and more independent activities. The recently refurbished library is yet to be used effectively to develop research skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often make good progress. Pupils in Year 2 have made exceptional progress this year as a result of some very effective support. In Year 6, pupils have made at least the expected progress which again represents an improvement on the previous year. This is the result of good, well-taught small intervention groups and one-to-one work, both within and outside the classroom.
- The 2012 national test results show that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals attained standards that were about two terms behind the other pupils. However, this gap has narrowed significantly. In Year 2, they made better progress than other pupils within the school. The current data show that in Years 2 and 6 they are making progress that is better than that expected.
- There are no significant differences in the progress made by boys and girls, or the small proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic heritages. The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and good relations, and this supports these pupils' learning effectively.
- Progress in reading is accelerating under much improved and more consistent leadership, and more effective teaching. Improvements have been made to the teaching of how letters and sounds are linked. In one good lesson, for example, pupils in Year 1 created words with an 'dge'

sound in them, confidently using the correct vocabulary. Both boys and girls have very positive attitudes to reading. Those who read to inspectors talked about books and showed pleasure in their skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The teaching has been ineffective over recent years at helping pupils make good progress. There have been significant changes to staffing over the past few years and this has made raising standards difficult. At times, extra training was provided but the teachers then moved on so the benefit of the training was lost. The school has found it difficult to recruit staff in the past.
- Not enough is done to extend the learning of the more able, especially in reading and mathematics. This is because teachers do not always provide suitably demanding activities that are matched to the learning pupils have already done. Insufficient opportunities are provided to improve pupils' vocabulary and their speaking and listening skills.
- Where the teaching is less successful, teachers do not provide sufficiently useful feedback to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants often provide very effective support for pupils but, at times, teachers and teaching assistants provide too much help rather than extending pupils' thinking. However, teaching now meets the needs of pupils, although the expectations of the quality of handwriting and the presentation of their work are not high enough.
- The best teaching is extremely well planned, imaginative and supported by good resources. Lessons are lively and interactive and the pupils are fully involved in their learning. In Year 6, for example, excellent outdoor activities built very positively on pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to find the perimeter of a compound shape. This encouraged cooperation and collaboration as well as promoting pupils' understanding of mathematics.
- The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. Adults are well deployed, activities effectively planned and resourced, and the use of the outdoor areas clearly supports children's ability to play and work together. In one excellent session, four children cooperated to build a 'bridge' from construction blocks to cross the tarmac and reach another area. They did this successfully and showed real pleasure and pride as they walked along it.
- The teaching of reading has improved. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved following extensive training. New methods of teaching and updated resources are providing pupils with more appropriate activities to help develop their skills.
- There is clearly a very positive ethos throughout the school and all staff are committed to the school's philosophy of 'Aim High, Work Hard, Achieve Together'. A major strength is the way teachers have worked together to observe and learn from each other, and also to look outside the school for training to develop their skills further. All of this is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and thus the rapidly improving progress pupils are making.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour around the school requires improvement because there are still a small number of occasions when the pace of lessons is hindered by inattention and pupils who have less positive attitudes towards school. When significant issues arise they are dealt with appropriately by the school and parents kept correctly and appropriately informed. The number of exclusions is falling.

- During the inspection pupils were polite, pleasant to be with and very happy to talk to inspectors about their work. Many pupils have positive attitudes towards school and many of the activities in which they take part. They speak positively about others' behaviour and their views are supported by the small number of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire or met with inspectors. At lunchtime and break time, pupils generally play together well. Breaks are well supervised and any bumps or accidents are dealt with appropriately.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school. This is supported by the views of parents and carers. Pupils say that bullying is rare and are confident that it is well dealt with if it occurs. Pupils have a good awareness of safety and different types of bullying such as through the use of new technology.
- The work of the family liaison officer plays a very effective and vital part in ensuring pupils' safety and close links with parents and carers. She supports families and children to access appropriate support and encourages regular attendance in an area that for two years has been recognised as the most deprived in the country. Even so, although attendance was broadly average for similar schools last year, it is currently below average. Pupils are also well supported by the school's breakfast club which provides them with a good start to the day.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because standards remain too low and the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good. However, the headteacher is providing very good, strong leadership and is addressing weaknesses. Because of this, there have been recent improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement, especially in reading and mathematics. These improvements, backed by her leadership, and the knowledgeable leadership of the English and mathematics subject leaders, demonstrate that the school has the capacity to improve further. However, the leadership of other subjects is less well developed.
- The headteacher has made good use of focused training, performance targets and advice and support for individual staff to ensure a firm focus on improving pupils' progress. This has had a positive impact already in reading and mathematics. A particular strength has been the work to share best practice between teachers in the school and with teachers from nearby successful schools.
- The money available through the pupil premium is used effectively to help pupils known to be eligible for free school meals to take a full part in school life, and receive, where appropriate, specific resources and adult time. The progress made by these pupils is closely monitored by the headteacher and the data clearly indicate that any gaps in attainment are narrowing.
- The school has improved the way that subjects are planned and taught. Planning provides links between subjects so that pupils can use the skills learned in different ways. A good range of enrichment activities support pupils' academic and personal development as well as supporting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is providing effective support and is working closely with the newly appointed headteacher to support the continuing improvement needed at the school. There has been a good range of training for governors and teaching staff and this has had a good impact on provision.
- The education of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is led and managed well. This is reflected in their progress. The teaching provided for them is well

organised and focused, and their progress is closely tracked. Links with parents and carers are very positive.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has recently changed its membership and methods of working. This has already had a benefit on its work with better-managed meetings and better use of individual governors' skills. The governing body is effective and has further extensive training planned to ensure that it can challenge leaders even more successfully. Currently, governors do not have a clear understanding of data relating to the progress of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, there is a good system for visiting the school and observing activities and watching children at work. This helps governors to see the impact of their decisions. They have an appropriate understanding of the school's performance management and appraisal systems, and how these have been used in the past. Decisions about teachers' pay are closely linked to performance and responsibilities, so the system meets requirements. Governors track finances well and support the school in deciding how to spend the money to support pupils entitled to free school meals. However, they have not analysed the impact of its use sufficiently.

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	114757
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	405535

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Aldis
Headteacher	Julia Hall
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2011
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