

Silver End Primary School

School Road, Silver End, Witham, CM8 3RZ

Inspection dates

11–12 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of their pupils or challenge them with work which matches their individual needs.
- Teachers do not encourage pupils' independence and resilience frequently enough.
- Teaching assistants are not always well directed.
- Marking lacks impact as pupils do not always respond to it.
- Achievement is not high enough. Pupils do not always reach the levels of which they are capable, particularly in writing.
- Teachers do not base their lessons on pupils' previous attainment closely enough.
- Teachers' assessments of writing are not always accurate.
- Middle leaders do not take sufficient responsibility for the quality of teaching in their subject areas.
- Governors do not always offer the level of challenge the school needs.
- The curriculum does not match the needs of pupils well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The new senior leadership team has achieved improvement in a short space of time.
- Achievement has improved in English and mathematics.
- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
- Staff morale is high and teachers share the ambition leaders have for the future of the school.
- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance has improved.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons or part-lessons. The deputy headteacher accompanied the inspection team on four lesson observations.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the online survey (Parent View). They also took into account the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documents, including: the school's own records of pupils' progress and attainment; monitoring documents on teaching and the school's performance; the schools' own self-evaluation and development plan; records relating to managing staff performance; and those relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.

Inspection team

Glynis Bradley-Peat, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Jane Guest

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding, in this case, for those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2012.
- The school meets 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 so that it becomes consistently good with more that is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have suitably high expectations of their pupils, especially those who are most able
 - providing work which challenges and matches the abilities of all pupils more closely
 - ensuring that teachers direct the work of teaching assistants more effectively so that their time is not wasted
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons which provide opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and resilience
 - following up whether pupils have put into action their next steps in their learning indicated by their teachers' comments.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in English and mathematics but in writing in particular by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information more effectively to pitch lessons which are based accurately on pupils' previous attainment
 - improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments of writing
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who gain the higher levels of attainment.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - providing further training for governors so that they can hold the school more effectively to account
 - ensuring that subject leaders take more responsibility for checking and improving teaching in their areas
 - reviewing the curriculum so that it enriches pupils' learning more creatively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children receive a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter the Reception classes with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress in their learning and in recent years have entered Year 1 with broadly average attainment. Communication and literacy are relatively weaker than other aspects of learning.
- Achievement has steadily improved over time in Key Stage 1 so that, in the last two years, pupils by the end of Year 2 have reached broadly average standards in reading and writing and just above in mathematics. However, pupils make better rates of progress in Year 2 than in Year 1. Progress in writing is weaker than in reading and mathematics.
- In the Year 1 national phonics screening check, pupils reached close to the average expectation this year, an improvement from the previous year. The school focuses well on improving reading and by the end of Year 2 almost all pupils know their letter sounds well. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about books they have read. Occasionally pupils do not use the strategies learnt in their letters and sounds work to tackle unknown words in their own reading books.
- Although rates of progress are improving across Key Stage 2, they are inconsistent across subjects and year groups. In Years 3 and 4, progress in writing is weaker and there are weaknesses in reading in one of the mixed Year 5 and 6 classes and in mathematics in the other. The provisional results for 2013 show that attainment has improved but that it is still likely to remain below average. Rates of progress have also improved.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are catching up well with their peers. This is because bespoke help and support, such as one to one sessions, ensure that individual needs are met well. Extra reading sessions are particularly effective and some pupils have made excellent improvements and are becoming independent readers.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve similarly to their peers. In 2012, Year 6 eligible pupils were about a term behind others in English but attained better in mathematics. Gaps are beginning to narrow in some year groups but this is not consistent.
- The school is not always clear enough about the amount of progress pupils make in writing. This is because the judgements some teachers make about the levels pupils reach are inaccurate.
- Work is sometimes pitched too low at the beginning of lessons because teachers do not check pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. This hampers the progress of more able pupils and consequently they do not always reach the levels of which they are capable, especially in writing. They make expected rates of progress rather than good.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is beginning to improve in the school as a whole and is consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers encourage children to be independent and confident which ensures that they take responsibility for their own learning. In a short session in Reception, children were involved in writing a menu for a picnic. They rose well to the challenges offered by teachers and assistants. Adults supported learning well through skilful questioning which secured

good progress. Children were happy to take risks and to make mistakes.

- Where teaching is good, lessons are planned effectively and are well thought through. In a number of lessons pupils were actively engaged through carefully-considered group-work which was well matched to the needs of particular pupils. Teachers had suitably high expectations of what pupils could achieve. In a Year 3/4 lesson pupils worked together well, collaborating effectively, sharing ideas and demonstrating a real enjoyment of their mathematics.
- Teachers generally employ a variety of activities in lessons to motivate and encourage their pupils. In one lesson, good use of video clips to aid pupils' imagination as a stimulus for writing worked well. As a result, pupils were able to talk at length about how they should tackle their persuasive text.
- Where teaching required improvement or was inadequate, learning was over directed by teachers. Some talked for too long which hindered pupils' ability to take command of their own learning. Teachers' modelling of what pupils were expected to do was not always good enough for them to make progress. For example in art, the teacher's own drawing skills were too limited to demonstrate teaching points or to secure understanding of the intended learning. Occasionally, teachers did not manage behaviour well enough which resulted in slower rates of progress.
- Less effective teaching sometimes fails to challenge learners because teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. For example, in mathematics more able learners mark time when work provided for them is too easy and they are given too long to complete simple tasks. As a result, pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunity to develop their independence and resilience.
- Teachers do not always direct the work of teaching assistants well enough and consequently their time is wasted. Some spend too long inactive during periods when the teacher talks or they are used to take control of pupils' behaviour. They are not directed well enough to enable groups of pupils to make accelerated progress in their learning.
- Teachers generally mark books regularly but the marking has less impact than it should. Helpful hints and tips are not put into action by pupils because sometimes they cannot read them. In other cases they are not provided with sufficient time to act upon comments made.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and state that they feel safe. Most parents who responded to the parent survey would agree.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school has worked hard to bring about an improvement over time. They have worked well with the parent liaison officer from the local secondary school. Pupils are usually punctual to school.
- Pupils are well behaved in the vast majority of lessons and around the school. Most take responsibility for their own behaviour and are polite and courteous to other adults and pupils. In lessons pupils enjoy working in pairs and groups and think it is good for them to discuss ideas with other pupils they don't really know. Pupils like to offer each other support, for example through the peer mentoring system and reading buddies. This contributes well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Pupils are able to explain the system in place to support good behaviour. They are aware of the different forms bullying can take but say that the school works effectively to deal with instances when they occur.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher evaluate their school well. The development plan is accurately focused on areas for improvement and is regularly checked to ensure that there is increasing impact.
- Senior leaders have a clear vision for the school and share this with all staff. Under their leadership teachers are committed to this vision and demonstrate ambition to improve. The work of middle leaders is beginning to develop but they do not yet take sufficient responsibility for checking the quality of teaching in their areas.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have implemented a more systematic evaluation of teaching. They have eradicated most of the inadequate teaching and very little remains. The proportion of good and outstanding teaching is improving.
- Performance management is in place for all teaching staff and is linked closely to the 'Teachers' Standards'. Plans are in place to link it with pay and progression from the start of the next academic year. Training for teachers is personalised as well as being aligned closely to the priorities of the school.
- Although the curriculum is broad and balanced, the school has recognised that there is work to be done to make it more engaging and creative so that it is better matched to pupils' interests and needs. Teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics does not yet excite or stimulate pupils well enough.
- The school has worked hard to raise achievement by investing in literacy across the school. Some pupil premium funding has been spent to boost levels of achievement in English. The impact has been seen in a rise in the proportion of pupils making expected and good rates of progress. Plans are in place to develop literacy skills through other subjects and not just in English.
- The local authority support and challenge the school well and have provided focused help in a number of areas. Teachers have benefitted from support with planning and advice about their teaching. They have been supported with moderation of their judgements of writing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body are becoming increasingly aware of how to hold the school to account. They have a growing understanding of the school's performance data but this is not yet fully secure. As a result the level of challenge offered to the school in the past has not been high enough. Governors are aware of how the pupil premium funding has been spent and how the performance of teachers is managed. They understand the link between performance and progression through the pay scale. They keep track on the school's overall performance through regular visits and checking the school development plan. Safeguarding currently meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

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	114828
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	412709

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Young
Headteacher	Julia Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	15 July 2010
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