

King's Ford Infant School and Nursery

Gloucester Avenue, Shrub End, Colchester, CO2 9AZ

Inspection dates 11–12 July 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

- Pupils have not made enough progress over time in writing and mathematics because there has not been enough good teaching.
- The pace of learning in writing and mathematics, although improving, is not raising standards fast enough.
- Pupils are not always active enough in learning in lessons because they are, sometimes, required to spend too long listening, unnecessarily, to their teachers.
- The work that teachers set is sometimes too easy for pupils. As a result, not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- The higher expectations and many of the changes the new leadership team have introduced have not been in place long enough to make a sustained difference to pupils' learning and progress.
- Until recently, checks on how well pupils were doing have not been robust enough to identify pupils who were underachieving.
- Not all leaders are fully involved in checking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- The school's plans for improvement are not always clear about how teaching and pupils' achievement will be improved and how and when the developments will be checked.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of good and better teaching is increasing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the helpful support they receive.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe.
- Governors have responded well to the local authority's recent review and training to ask more searching questions of leaders about the quality of teaching and the school's performance than they have done previously.
- Support and nurturing for families and for pupils are effective and well managed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons involving seven teachers; four lessons were observed jointly with school leaders.
- The inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including: improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils read and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Account was taken of the 23 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by those parents who spoke with inspectors at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Balvinder Sarl

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized infant school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is above average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one Nursery class with morning and afternoon sessions for 26 children and two full-time Reception classes.
- The school shares its site with King's Ford Junior School.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2012. Many of the leadership team and several teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all teaching is good or better in order to raise standards and to increase pupils' rates of progress in mathematics and writing, by ensuring that:
 - teachers always set work at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils so that learning moves at a rapid pace
 - activities in lessons help pupils to improve their basic skills in number, spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction
 - teachers give pupils clear examples of the steps to follow in producing good-quality writing and accurate calculations, so that pupils can refer to them when completing their own work
 - pupils have time to complete independent tasks fully by not being required to spend too long listening, unnecessarily, to teachers
 - the marking policy is consistently applied well so all pupils understand how to improve, and have time to respond to teachers' comments, including about errors in writing and mathematics.
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - fully implementing plans designed to raise attainment, particularly at Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that the improvement plan contains specific targets linked to pupils' achievement and specific criteria to measure performance are used
 - extending the role of the governing body in holding leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
 - developing the role of subject leaders to assist senior leaders in checking school developments, pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and ensuring that the school's assessments are a true reflection of pupils' work in books.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- In 2012, standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were below national levels, with few pupils attaining the higher Level 3.
- Many pupils do not write confidently, often making errors in spellings, punctuation and sentence construction. Basic mathematical skills, including those of calculation, have not been reinforced sufficiently over time.
- The school's own data for 2013 show that, while attainment is still below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, increasing numbers of pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those supported by the pupil premium, are making better progress than previously.
- Children enter the school with levels of development below those expected for their age. A significant minority enter with skills well below those expected in communication and language. They are now making good progress across all areas of learning so that the majority of children currently in Reception and Nursery classes are at expected levels for their age, which is an improvement on previous years.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make accelerated progress due to the additional support being well organised and precisely meeting their needs.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding make similar progress to that of their classmates. The overall attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium in 2012 was equivalent to one term behind that of their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's current information shows that the gaps have closed slightly in 2013.
- Most pupils enjoy reading. The recently introduced lessons in phonics (the sounds that letters make) are having a beneficial effect on pupils' ability to tackle unknown words. A large majority of pupils in Year 1 did not reach the required standard in the national screening check in phonics in 2012. Present school data shows that pupils currently in Year 1 are much closer to national levels.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Teaching has not been good enough to ensure all pupils make consistently good progress. Expectations have not been high enough. In some lessons, pupils do not have time to work independently and fully complete tasks set because teachers talk, unnecessarily, to the whole class for too long.
- Sometimes the work is too easy and pupils, particularly those who are more able, are not challenged sufficiently, so their learning slows. In many classes, pupils are not given opportunities to write at length. Teachers do not routinely give clear examples of what is expected from the pupils' learning, particularly in writing and with mathematical calculations.
- Book scrutiny during the inspection showed that in a few cases the work in pupils' books did not reflect the school's assessment information on their standards, and much work was poorly presented.

- Since September 2012, teaching has improved as the result of effective staff training. Teaching in an increasing number of lessons is good. However, activities are not always planned to meet pupils' different abilities, particularly those who are more able.
- In the best lessons, teachers plan tasks that rapidly build on what the pupils are already able to do. All groups of pupils are fully engaged throughout and make rapid progress. Teachers use questioning well to find out what pupils know and build on this well. This was seen in a Year 1 art lesson where pupils were engaged in a range of stimulating activities around Van Gogh's painting of sunflowers.
- Although marking is encouraging, pupils do not always act on teachers' advice and, sometimes, careless errors are not corrected. The over-use of photocopied sheets restricts learning and sets a ceiling to the standards that can be achieved.
- Well-planned activities in the Reception and Nursery classes promote children's learning well. Consistently good teaching this year has raised children's achievements considerably. Teachers constantly interact with children, seeking out opportunities to develop children's language and social skills. Children are confident and independent, initiating much learning for themselves. Overarching themes, for example 'Hats' make the activities fun and meaningful. The high level of engagement allows teachers to work with small groups of children to accelerate their learning further.
- Reading is promoted well. Teachers and teaching assistants are successfully promoting the pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make and giving additional support to pupils who do not read regularly at home.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support both in and out of the classroom. The focus on individual learning needs ensures that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the few who have recently joined the school are supported effectively and progress as well as their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They demonstrate positive attitudes that support their learning well.
- School records confirm that pupils' behaviour is good on a daily basis and is improving over time, although it is not yet exemplary. The few pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are supported well.
- Most parents who responded to the online Parent View survey indicate that their children feel safe at school and behave well.
- The school values and celebrates the diversity within its community. It works hard to support all its pupils and makes them feel welcome, particularly the few who move into the school at times other than the start of term. Relationships with all pupils and their parents are fostered well. Any discrimination is tackled with vigour and the promotion of equality of opportunity is improving with gaps in attainment between groups closing.
- Pupils understand different types of dangers, including those associated with roads, fire and the internet. They say that they feel safe in school and refer to many occasions when safety has been promoted well by teachers.

- Pupils show good awareness of the different types of bullying appropriate to their age and indicate that, when incidents occur, school leaders deal with them swiftly.
- The school has good working relationships with outside agencies to support pupils and families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.
- Attendance has shown a steady increase since the previous inspection and is now broadly average for an infant school. Most parents have responded well to the school's procedures for encouraging good attendance but there are a few who are regularly late to school.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Until recently the school's leaders have not taken sufficient action to ensure all pupils achieve well. Systems for checking how well pupils were doing were not robust enough to identify pupils who were underachieving.
- Senior leaders' more detailed analysis this year has enabled the school to identify underachievement and to provide pupils with effective additional support, although subject leaders are not yet fully involved with the process. Gaps in attainment between groups of pupils have started to close.
- Leaders, including governors, have been successful in creating a vision that all staff share. Morale is high. However, this focus has not yet resulted in good achievement for all pupils.
- The headteacher's evaluation of how well the school is performing is accurate. However, the school's plan for improvement is not always explicit enough about how teaching and pupils' achievement will be improved and how and when the developments will be checked. Where efforts have been concerted, such as in the teaching of phonics and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, achievement has improved. The improvements made since September 2012 show that leaders have the capacity to improve the school further.
- Other new initiatives, for example, raising standards in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and involving new leaders in checking school improvements and pupils' progress, have been introduced too recently for the impact to be accurately evaluated.
- Revised procedures for checking how well teachers are doing now enable leaders to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. Decisions about the salary that each teacher receives are now based on the progress made by the pupils in their care.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. Transition into the school is well planned and children quickly settle into the vibrant, learning environment. Good links are developed with parents who contribute to their children's 'learning journey' and enjoy learning alongside their children on 'Welcome Wednesdays'.
- The support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is managed well by the special educational needs coordinator. Additional support is well planned to meet pupils' needs and closely monitored.
- The range of subjects and topics taught contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learning is enriched well through a wide range of visits and visitors to the school. After-school activities and opportunities to sing and to perform add further

enhancement.

- The local authority has recognised the weaknesses in the school and provided good support for school leaders and governors which are resulting in more rapid improvements. The school works effectively with a range of schools in the local area, although this has not been utilised for the comparison of work and checking assessments at Key Stage 1.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school well because they are in regular dialogue with school leaders. Following the recent local authority review, all governors are attending training to improve their ability to hold the school to account because not all have, previously, had a good knowledge of how the school's data on pupils' achievement compare with other schools nationally. Governors recognise the strengths of the school but understand that the rate of improvement has not been fast enough in recent years. The governing body has not monitored the work of the school effectively over time, but this is changing. Governors have made good decisions on the rewards that teachers receive, the effective allocation of the school's finances and the support utilising the pupil premium, although they have yet to scrutinise the data in detail. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils are well managed, regularly reviewed and meet the regulatory requirements.

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	114717
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	405527

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Canning
Headteacher	Pam Rose
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2010
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