

# Cherry Tree Primary School, Basildon

Church Road, Basildon, SS16 4AG

## Inspection dates

2–3 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- This is a hugely improved school. Last year's interim executive headteacher and acting headteacher ensured that the achievement of pupils rose sharply, and there has been significant improvement in all aspects of the school. The new headteacher and leadership team are building well on these improvements.
- Current pupils make good progress throughout the school in a range of subjects and especially in English and mathematics.
- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Training has been used very well to improve teaching and especially the teaching of mathematics and phonics (the linking of letters to sounds).
- The school is a friendly place where pupils are very well cared for. Very good behaviour and improved attendance reflect that the school is a happy and well-ordered place.
- Through well-targeted spending of the extra money provided, staff have eliminated the gap that existed between the achievement of pupils receiving additional funding from the government (the pupil premium) and that of other students.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives pupils a strong base of skills upon which to build in their later learning.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics, teaching is not always matched well enough to the different needs and abilities of pupils.
- Although pupils of all abilities make good progress, attainment in national tests at the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics is still below average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 14 lessons, including two joint observations with senior leaders. Brief visits were made to other lessons as part of tours around the school and observations of phonics teaching.
- Inspectors observed assemblies, break-times and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils across the age and ability range to discuss achievement, teaching, behaviour, safety and improvements in the school. Inspectors spoke to parents bringing their children to the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and the teaching staff. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- By the end of the inspection, there had been no responses to the Ofsted on-line survey Parent View.
- Inspectors listened to pupils of different abilities read.
- Inspectors checked the school's records of attainment and progress, lesson monitoring documents and teachers' performance management records. They also looked at the school's figures for attendance and exclusion, safeguarding and child protection records, behaviour records and the minutes from governing body meetings. They evaluated the ways in which the school checks the quality of teaching and the plans for improvement.

## Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Liz Kissane

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

- This is a larger than average size primary school.
- A new headteacher was appointed from September 2013.
- At the previous inspection in March 2012, the school was placed in special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Inspectors subsequently visited the school on three occasions to monitor its progress, and re-inspected the school in September 2013. Between these two inspections, there have been changes in leadership and teaching staff. An interim executive headteacher ran the school during the academic year 2012 to 2013.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The overwhelming majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion from other ethnic groups is low.
- The proportion of pupils who speak a first language other than English is low.
- 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?

- Build upon and share existing good practice to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible teaching, so that a greater proportion of pupils gain Level 5 and above in English and mathematics
- Build upon the good practice in mathematics and English to ensure that in all subjects work is well matched to pupils' different abilities.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- When they start school, children's knowledge and skills are below those expected for their age, particularly their language skills. Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage create a supportive environment so children settle in quickly, develop social skills and become confident learners. Pupils make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils now read well because of an effective early introduction to systematic phonics (the regular practising of linking letters and sounds). In consequence, results from the Year 1 screening were above both the local and national average. Elsewhere in the school, progress in reading is good and standards are above average. Pupils use a variety of strategies to work out new words. They enjoy reading.
- Standards are rising rapidly in mathematics. Pupils in each year group now make good progress in this subject. In English, the proportion reaching the expected level by the time they leave is in line with most schools. Progress in English is good.
- The school carefully uses the pupil premium to target support for groups of pupils in danger of falling behind. As a result, the gap that previously existed between the achievement of pupils entitled to this support and their classmates has not only closed, but pupils entitled to the pupil premium often make better progress and have higher attainment than other pupils. Checks on pupils' progress, by both teachers and senior leaders, ensure that underachievement is identified and dealt with promptly through extra support.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, those known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make just as good progress as others because support is carefully thought out and specifically tailored to their needs, such as through small-group work.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting events and activities. These develop pupils' physical abilities and understanding of healthy lifestyles. Sports premium funding is supporting an increasing number of opportunities for competition through partnerships with local primary and secondary schools.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Most of the teaching seen by inspectors was judged good or better. The school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching over time agrees with this. Parents, carers and pupils concur. Teachers use the time well to ensure that pupils make good progress through varied and well-planned activities.
- In the best lessons, teachers are skilled at tailoring their questions and comments to groups and individuals, so that pupils' learning is accelerated through working things out for themselves. Excellent examples were seen of setting different work for different ability groups within the same class. For example in a mathematics lesson each table was different and set appropriate levels of challenge for the pupils. The planning enabled all pupils to make excellent progress due to the fast pace of activity planned for. In a few lessons, pupils did not make such rapid progress because the teaching was not appropriate to their ability.

- Basic skills in mathematics and English are developed well in other subjects such as in science.
- Teaching assistants generally make a good contribution to the learning of pupils they support in lessons, particularly in group work and where the learning planned for different groups of pupils is clear in teachers' plans.
- Very positive relationships between teachers and pupils enable learning to proceed at a good pace.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally promoted well by teachers. Examples include the 1960s theme in Year 6 where pupils' learning ranged from developing a cultural understanding of pop art to moral issues around the civil rights protests in the United States of America and the work of Martin Luther King as part of 'Black History Month'.
- Assemblies developed a sense of belonging through the new school song and an understanding of the importance of fruit and vegetables as pupils practised a popular song in readiness for next week's harvest festival. Pupils are making contributions to this for distribution to needy families in the area. Pupils told inspectors that raising money for charity is one of the best things they do in school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage the needs of all pupils are met well. There is good interaction between adults and children which helps them rapidly develop skills in all areas and especially in speaking.
- There is clear evidence that teaching has improved as a result of the school's training. Teachers are ambitious for their pupils to exceed their challenging targets.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Behaviour around the school, in corridors, at lunchtime and at the end of the day is very good. Pupils are friendly, courteous and helpful. While establishing a more rigorous approach to achievement, the caring ethos of the school has been maintained.
- Attitudes to learning are positive and any low-level disruption in lessons is rare. Parents questioned by inspectors were overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and safety. However, teachers do not yet give pupils enough opportunities to demonstrate a thirst for knowledge and do things for themselves.
- Pupils feel safe and free from all forms of bullying, and know which staff to talk to, should incidents occur. They know the staff's expectations of them and following a recent 'we feel positive' focus week, understand the procedures for using computers safely. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Attendance is above the national average, and has improved due to the school leaders working hard with the education welfare officer. Any poor attendance is not linked to specific groups.
- There have been few recent exclusions and the numbers have fallen since the last inspection. Disruptive behaviour is rare and any problems are immediately discussed with parents or carers.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The highly positive impact of leadership and management can be seen in the great improvements over the last 18 months in attendance, pupils' progress, behaviour, the quality of teaching and the curriculum. This has meant that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively to bring about improved classroom skill leading to improved achievement for pupils. The areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report have been resolved very well. Pupils are very positive about changes and speak enthusiastically about the school. One pupil astutely told inspectors that the school still has 'the old poor reputation but it is an amazing school'. The school has been transformed.
- Robust action has been taken to confront and deal with ineffective teaching. Teachers' progress up the salary scale is linked to their performance.
- Safeguarding requirements are met.
- Parents value the improved communication from the school. Senior leaders meet parents at the beginning of the day. Increasing events such as the recent charity coffee morning are improving links with parents, carers and the community. Some of these opportunities offer training for parents, for example in phonics to help their children read.
- Over the last year the local authority and governors have worked well together to improve the school. They quickly secured highly effective interim leadership. The local authority has provided training on teaching and learning and on governance. Effective use has been made of other schools to enable teachers to see outstanding practice and to bring ideas back into school.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils develop skills in a good range of subjects. In English and mathematics the subjects are well taught. The quality of teaching is sometimes not as good in other subjects as it is in English and mathematics. The school does not yet teach a foreign language.
- The governance of the school:
  - Governors are well informed and visit the school frequently. They have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses as a result of training in understanding performance information. They know about the quality of teaching. They have helped to drive through the improvements needed since the school became subject to special measures. The governing body has been strengthened by new appointments although there remain some vacancies for parent governors. The governing body has received support from a national leader of governance and carried out a review of how it could work better.
  - The large number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has resulted in the school receiving substantial extra funding through the pupil premium. The school is now clear about how this money has been used and has evaluated its impact. Governors have accelerated the performance management process for teachers. They know what the school is doing to reward good teachers and to tackle any underperformance.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132833
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	424245

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	284
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Becky Walsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicky Barrand
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 523017
<b>Fax number</b>	01268 534784
<b>Email address</b>	admin@cherrytree-pri.essex.sch.uk



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