

# Walton on the Naze Primary School

Standley Road, Walton on the Naze, CO14 8PT

## Inspection dates

17–18 October 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make consistent progress in English across Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they should.
- Weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the quality of pupils' written work and result in achievement in writing which is significantly lower than in reading and mathematics.
- Although teaching has improved under new leadership, the quality remains inconsistent and, as a consequence, pupils' progress is variable.
- Teachers and additional adults sometimes over-direct pupils' learning in class. This limits the opportunities they have to work and learn independently.
- The most able pupils sometimes receive work which is too easy for them and so do not achieve as well as they could.
- Not enough pupils achieve the higher levels of attainment in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving because leaders are doing the right things to improve pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body holds the school to account effectively and supports the school well.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved because they have good opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving activities.
- Children in the Reception class are making good progress because of the good opportunities they have to develop independence.
- Pupils enjoy reading and do so well. Phonics (knowledge of letters and sounds they make) is well taught across the school.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. Their behaviour at school is at all times friendly and courteous.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed substantial parts of 16 lessons. All of these were jointly observed with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. An additional visit was made to the Reception class to observe a phonics lesson (the teaching of letters and the sounds they make).
- Inspectors attended a whole-school assembly and visited the breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, two groups of pupils, teachers with special responsibilities, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A number of pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read to inspectors.
- Examples of pupils' work in their books and on public display were examined.
- Pupils interviewed explained to inspectors how their work is marked and how they respond to this marking.
- Time was given to looking at a variety of school documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plans, behaviour, safety and attendance records, minutes of staff and governing body meetings, and documents relating to the management of staff performance.
- Account was taken of the views of the 20 parents and carers who completed the online Parent View questionnaire. The views of the 17 staff members who completed the voluntary staff questionnaire were also considered.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils, parents and carers during lunchtime, school breaks and before the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Judith O'Hare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Liz Kissane

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Three of the nine classes cater for mixed-age groups.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is additional funding schools receive to support certain groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the teaching staff. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2012.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and more pupils reach higher levels of attainment by:
  - creating better opportunities for pupils to work and learn independently in lessons
  - ensuring that there is always enough challenge in lessons for pupils who are more able, and so maximising their potential to excel
  - ensuring that lesson introductions are not too long so that pupils can make a brisk start to learning.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing by ensuring that pupils consistently and correctly apply all rules related to the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar in all their written work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because weaker teaching in the past has held back pupils' progress. This is particularly the case in English, where pupils' performance in writing has lagged behind other subjects.
- Pupils' attainment in reading and writing is below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are now achieving results at the end of Key Stage 1 which are in line with national outcomes in reading and above in mathematics. However, too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in the national assessments at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' current work, as seen during the inspection, shows that the school has addressed past underperformance through better teaching, and standards are rising. Nevertheless, attainment in English remains below the national average because standards in writing are still significantly below those in reading and mathematics.
- Some pupils, and in particular the more able, find some of the work they do too easy. In some lessons, there are too few opportunities for pupils to complete their work independently or to undertake more challenging tasks. Weak spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are hindering pupils' progress and are the main reason why pupils achieve less well in English.
- The teaching of mathematics, an area noted for improvement at the time of the last inspection, has improved significantly. Results in 2012 and 2013 at the end of Key Stage 1 show good performance by pupils in this subject. While remaining below the national average at Key Stage 2, results show that, here too, pupils are now making better progress.
- The teaching of reading is now an area of notable strength, and younger pupils are making rapid progress. The results of the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in both 2012 and in 2013 were above average for all pupil groups. This is because pupils are taught well how letters and sounds link together (phonics).
- The school is working well to address all issues related to past and current underperformance. There are increased opportunities, for example, for pupils to engage in more active learning which is improving both motivation and concentration. One such activity is 'Rhyme Challenge', where pupils chant rhymes and poems to the rhythm of music. In one lesson observed, for example, pupils made rapid progress in writing, when listening to sounds encouraged them to find alternative adjectives to complete a written text.
- Improvements made to the curriculum are providing better opportunities for pupils to use and apply key literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. This was seen, for example, in a project on Italy where pupils were asked to use these skills to work out how and explain why the tower of Pisa is leaning.
- In the past, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs has lagged a long way behind their classmates. In 2012, pupils in Year 6 who were known to be eligible for free school meals were the equivalent of a year behind their classmates in English and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding has been spent on additional teaching time. Results for 2013 and work seen during the inspection confirm that disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress.

The gap between their performance and other pupils has narrowed markedly, especially in reading and mathematics.

- Thanks to better teaching since the last inspection, children make a good start in the Reception class. They learn to work and play independently and cooperatively, and are developing useful skills in literacy and numeracy. Although they start slightly behind age-expected levels, children are now achieving average attainment by the age of five.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- There are differences in the quality of teaching in all key stages and in the different subjects taught. Sometimes, teachers over-direct the tasks they set their pupils to complete. This limits the opportunities pupils have to work independently. Teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion or to respond to questions.
- In some lessons, teachers spend too long explaining tasks. This limits the time available for pupils to practise their skills and slows the pace of learning.
- Pupils' written work can be quite inaccurate. While teachers are working to address weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar, a legacy of weaker teaching in English in the past is still holding pupils back.
- Teaching is most effective in lessons where teachers make it clear what pupils are expected to do. In these lessons, questioning is used well to probe pupils' understanding and to develop their thinking skills. In one mathematics lesson, for example, pupils discussed and considered the properties of different shapes. They were encouraged to use this knowledge to identify, contrast and then explain different types of triangles.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good support in lessons. They sometimes work in small groups or with a teaching assistant to ensure that they complete their tasks successfully. This is helping them to make similar progress to that of other pupils.
- Teachers give good advice to pupils about how to improve their work. Marking in books is frequent and helpful. Pupils understand the next steps they need to take to improve. Their responses to marking received are clearly evident in the corrections and revisions they make to their work.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support for learning. Under clear direction, they help the pupils in their charge to make good progress, both in and out of the classroom. They are particularly effective in one-to-one and small-group work sessions.
- Classrooms are well-organised spaces and create a positive climate for learning. Good use is made of display to provide prompts for learning. For example, pupils spoken to all commented positively on how they use the learning and working walls to guide and support them.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve. Resources are used well to ensure that the tasks and activities that are planned for children are closely linked to the early development of reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children talk very positively about the work they do.

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

- This is a happy school. Both the indoor and the outdoor environments are welcoming spaces where pupils work and play harmoniously.
- Pupils take an active part in maintaining good standards of behaviour. They have been proactive in deciding and monitoring rules that ensure playtime activities are safe and fair. They willingly take on roles and responsibilities. For example, older pupils act as 'problem busters' in the playground.
- Pupils say they enjoy school life. They get on well with their peers and with the adults who teach them. They support each other in class and respond quickly and appropriately to their teachers' instructions.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe; for example, when crossing roads or using the internet. They say they feel safe in school and that there is no bullying or inappropriate name-calling. They are confident that, should this ever happen, there is always an adult on hand to listen and help them.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View were in agreement that pupils behave well, are well looked after and are safe in school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and demonstrate their commitment to working hard. Just occasionally, however, they lose their concentration in lessons. This is when the activities they are set are not well matched to their individual needs and the work they are asked to do is not sufficiently challenging.
- The school puts considerable effort into ensuring that all pupils attend regularly. Initiatives such as the 'early gate' reward system are highly effective. Attendance has improved from well below to now broadly average. Punctuality is good.

**The leadership and management are good**

- Actions taken by the headteacher since her appointment have had a considerable impact on the quality of teaching and behaviour across the school. This is clearly evident in pupils' improved performance in national tests in both Key Stages 1 and 2. While teaching remains inconsistent, it has improved and there is none which is inadequate.
- Effective leadership is providing the school with a clear sense of direction. Lines of responsibility are clear and, consequently, leaders and teachers work well together as a cohesive team. There is a shared and united endeavour to ensure that progress for all pupils continues to accelerate.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. All aspects of school performance have been carefully reviewed; the school development plan is focused on the right areas for improvement. There are robust systems to ensure that improvements to pupils' progress are sustained.
- Teaching is improving because of the way in which leaders set targets for staff and check how well teachers are performing to those targets. Leaders' observations made of teaching identify strengths as well as areas for further development.
- The curriculum is rich in content and is sensitive to the interests, needs and aspirations of the local community. For example, pupils in the Reception class have most recently focused their

activities on building, health and safety, as prompted by the on-going construction work at the school.

- Music, art and dance are strong elements of teaching at the school and support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, the topic on Aboriginal art in Years 5 and 6 has helped pupils to gain an understanding of cultural differences as well as the impact of modern society on cultural identity.
- Plans are already underway for the use of the new primary sports funding. The school has bought the services of a local sports coach and pupils are already receiving specialist coaching in tennis, team sports and gymnastics.
- The local authority has provided effective consultancy support to the school in evaluating the quality of teaching. Good partnerships have also been developed with local schools. This additional training opportunity is helping teachers to develop their teaching skills and to share good practice. This, in turn, is helping to improve pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors support the school well. They have received good training; for example, in data analysis. As a result, they have the necessary skills to challenge leaders over past and current performance, including how this compares with the national picture. Through regular visits to the school, they have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and what the headteacher is doing to improve this. Governors understand fully the school's performance management systems. They ensure that there is an appropriate link between pay and performance, as gauged by pupils' achievement. The governing body ensures that pupil premium funding is being spent appropriately. This funding has been spent on additional staffing to support pupils to improve their skills in English and mathematics through small-group work and one-to-one tuition. Governors are rigorous in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met; for example, those for keeping pupils safe and for the safe recruiting and vetting checks on staff appointed to the school.

## 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>	115300
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	425242

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jonathan Geldard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzie Bliss
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01255 675657
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