

Tiptree Heath Primary School

103 Maldon Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0PG

Inspection dates

10–11 December 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		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

- Teaching is too variable. In some lessons, expectations are not high enough for what pupils are capable of achieving. The planned activities and marking of written work do not always lead to good learning and progress.
- Pupils' achievement currently and over time is not showing signs of marked improvement other than in writing.
- While pupils are respectful and polite in their interactions with adults, in lessons they do not always show good learning habits such as concentration and perseverance.
- Leaders, managers and governors check the effectiveness of the school's work regularly but they do not always evaluate what they find with sufficient rigour or set sufficiently sharp and precise targets for teaching and learning to raise achievement.
- The school's self-evaluation is too generous. Leaders and managers are not always getting to the heart of the reasons why pupils' achievement and teaching are not yet good.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils find the curriculum interesting. They develop skills that build on what they have learnt before, and they practise them in different contexts. Extra-curricular provision is plentiful, offering many opportunities for enrichment and enjoyment.
- Teamwork among staff is strong, ensuring that all are on board to achieve common goals.
- Governance provides the right level of support, with confidence to challenge school leaders when appropriate.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed all seven teachers at least once, sometimes jointly with the headteacher, as well as dropping in briefly to other lessons. They looked at the school's monitoring records of teaching and performance management.
- The team sampled written work in pupils' books and heard pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6. They examined the school's data showing pupils' progress for this term and the previous school year and information about attendance.
- Safeguarding records, those for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff and health and safety logs were checked.
- Inspectors met with 24 parents and carers at a meeting; spoke to others informally in the playground; and took into account the 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, two letters received from parents, Parent View, as well as questionnaires received from 19 staff. Meetings were held with pupils, governors and staff and a local authority representative was contacted by phone.
- Inspectors looked at the school's most recent evaluation of its work and its strategic plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Linda Killman, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary.
- Most pupils are White British. A few are from minority ethnic heritages, and none speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below national averages.
- Very few pupils are in receipt of pupil premium compared to most schools nationally. Pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and other groups.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides childcare on the premises before and after school at the Strawberry Club. This provision is managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers set higher expectations for good learning and progress by:
 - avoiding unnecessary or repetitive tasks that do not advance pupils' learning at a suitable pace
 - taking account of pupils' responses to questioning or discussion and adapting teaching quickly when they struggle to grasp concepts or require a greater level of challenge to make good progress
 - encouraging pupils to reflect on and respond to teachers' marking, so that they are able to improve their work and make faster progress
 - making sure that teachers' plan more effectively for activities both inside and outside the classroom for all seven areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - insisting on suitable noise levels for learning and re-engaging pupils as soon as their attention begins to drift.
- Injecting more rigour into leaders' and managers' self-evaluation and strategic planning for improvement by:
 - recognising what the school is doing well and digging deeper into the underlying reasons why standards are not rising more rapidly so that self-evaluation is not overly generous
 - ensuring that improvement plans are precise and measurable, outlining how each planned action will lead to better outcomes for learners
 - setting targets, especially for teaching and pupils' achievement, that are challenging and quantified, so that staff and governors are clear about what the expectations are
 - stating clearly who is responsible for leading on each planned action, who is monitoring it and who will evaluate whether or not it is making a difference.
 - increasing the pace of improvement, with tighter timescales for the completion of planned actions and dates set at intervals along the way to measure progress towards achieving them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The trajectory of pupils' progress over time and currently is flat. Pupils begin and end each key stage with broadly average attainment in most subjects compared to pupils in similar schools. Too few pupils, especially the most able, exceed expected progress other than in writing and, as a result, attainment is not rising rapidly into the above-average range.
- Children start school in Reception with skills and understanding that broadly match expectations for the age range. Most make steady progress and move into Year 1 having reached a good level of development and ready to press on in advancing their skills as early readers, writers and mathematicians. Children settle in quickly and enjoy learning right from the start because of the thoughtful preparation and introduction the school provides well before their first big day.
- Pupils' skills in using phonics (letters and sounds) to break down words for reading and to build them up for spelling are secure. This helps them to read and write independently. Recently, staff have raised the profile of reading so that more pupils are reading often, widely and for pleasure at both home and school. It is too soon to determine if this is leading to improvement in their achievement.
- The first release of 2013 national data and the work seen in pupils' books show attainment in Key Stage 1 is broadly average. Many pupils are capable of making more progress but often, in lessons, expectations are too low. In these situations, the learning is broken down into very small steps when some, especially the most-able learners, could press on. As a consequence, some pupils lose sight of the end goal and their interest fades.
- Over time and currently, pupils' progress is too variable in Key Stage 2. A significant drop in the percentage of pupils making sufficient progress between Year 2 and Year 6 in 2012 was corrected in 2013. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make the progress they should when more, especially the most capable learners, should be pressing ahead to achieve higher levels.
- Too few pupils receive pupil premium funding to report on their achievement as a separate group without risk of identifying individual pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups generally achieve as well as other pupils. This is testament to the school's effective promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The new primary school sport funding is used well to promote healthy lifestyles through physical education and sport. Pupils develop very positive attitudes towards exercise. They are keen participants in a very wide range of different sports and games including, for example, swimming and squash.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children experience a full and often creative range of activities. Planning for children's learning is adequate but could be more closely aligned to the seven areas of learning children are required to access both indoors and outside. Staff are skilful at questioning but are inclined to steer the learning so that children do not always have enough opportunity to explore their own ideas and interests.
- Across the school, some lessons are taught well; most are taught competently but, in a few, teaching is weak. Not enough teaching secures good progress effectively term on term and year after year in literacy and mathematics.

- Planning for learning is careful and methodical ensuring that pupils practise the skills they have learnt and build on them methodically. It takes into account the interests of pupils so that they are enthused. Assessment of pupils' learning is regular and accurate so teachers have the right information to plan for their different needs and abilities.
- During lessons, some teachers do not adapt their teaching when pupils are either struggling or showing that they have understood and are ready for a tougher challenge. Some activities are included when they are unnecessary and, for these reasons, pupils, including the more able, do not always make the progress they should.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly using 'tickled pink' comments for what pupils have done well and 'green for growth' to advise where improvement is needed. This is applied consistently across the school but it is not always leading to better learning. This is because some pupils are not showing that they are taking the advice on board so that their work improves.
- Information and communication technology is used extremely well to draw pupils' attention to key points, stimulate discussion and to model methods and approaches. Pupils use information and communication technology usefully and skilfully to support their learning.
- The school's behaviour code is applied consistently so that pupils know when their behaviour requires correction. That said, sometimes the noise level in class becomes a distraction and some activities are not modified quickly when pupils lose interest.
- Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teaching staff. They are briefed well so that their input is useful and purposeful in helping lessons to run smoothly and to support pupils' learning.
- Staff support and develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development suitably through the well-developed curriculum.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- When teaching is not good, pupils' attention is inclined to waiver and they lose interest becoming either complacent or inappropriately exuberant.
- Out in the playground, when supervision levels are high, the pupils generally play well together. Occasionally, they are boisterous.
- In class, where teaching is good, pupils settle quickly to their work and apply themselves well so that they make the most of each learning opportunity.
- Pupils treat adults with respect and courtesy. Some told inspectors that most get on well with one another; others noted some name-calling and occasional bullying. While parents and carers confirmed that the school takes bullying seriously, the action taken by the school does not always lead to a lasting resolution.
- At Strawberry Club, before and after school, the atmosphere is extremely calm and harmonious. Pupils of all ages socialise over breakfast or engage in quiet, thoughtful play that gets them into the right frame of mind for learning when school starts. After school, they have opportunities to

burn off some energy outside or in practical activities building, making and being creative.

- Pupils enjoy school and attend every day unless they are unwell: attendance is well above average as a result. Parents and carers confirmed that their children are enthusiastic about the topics they are studying and often want to find out more at home. No pupils have been excluded.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders monitor teaching, check pupils' work and use data about pupils' performance to pinpoint what is going well. Self-evaluation consistently emphasises the school's strengths but sometimes masks the weaknesses, resulting in an overly generous view of the school's work and a skewed picture of what is good.
- Following evaluation of the school's work, leaders do not subsequently set challenging targets for improvement that are sharp, clear cut and measurable; timescales for completion are not explicit. An intention to increase the proportion of good teaching, for example, is not quantified by how much and by when. The link between 'jobs to do' and how these will help pupils to learn better is not always obvious.
- The performance of staff is managed methodically and is linked to the professional standards for teachers. Documentation includes a review of current targets, overall performance and agreed objectives for improvement. However, some of the targets are not quantified and, therefore, measurable.
- The headteacher is a dedicated professional who is skilful at developing teamwork and positive relationships.
- Senior leaders and governors have the capacity to move the school to good, as seen in pupils' improving achievement in writing and in the way the school has developed stronger partnerships with parents and carers.
- Most staff feel well supported with suitable training, coaching and opportunities to share good practice and develop their skills as teachers and leaders of subjects. Teaching staff have been supervised well to develop their skills in leading and managing subjects or aspects of the school's work, including Reception. The literacy leader has made a strong contribution to improving pupils' achievement in writing by introducing new ideas and ways of working.
- Leaders and managers have made significant changes which are recognised by pupils, parents, carers and governors as drastically improving the school. Parental involvement is on the increase; the environment for learning is bright, well organised, clean and welcoming; resources are up to date and plentiful. In particular, the curriculum is developing well with plenty of opportunities for enrichment that are appreciated by everyone – especially the pupils.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and all staff are trained suitably to the right levels in first aid, child protection and staff recruitment.
- The school has developed effective partnerships with other schools locally. It draws upon the expertise of specialist teachers in the secondary school readily to enhance pupils' access to resources and specialist teaching that the school could not otherwise provide.
- The local authority provides suitable, albeit light touch, support, which the school welcomes. The

governing body benefits from its training programme. Staff attend all local authority meetings that are relevant and appropriate to the school's work.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school well and are able to form an independent view of its work using a range of information gleaned from visits, data, and conversations with leaders and staff. The governing body has a well-balanced professional relationship with the school, providing support if needed and challenge where necessary. Even so, there has not always been a strong enough challenge about pupils' achievement and improvement in teaching where it is less than good. Governors oversee the management of staff performance and understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression. Governors are trained appropriately and have the necessary skills to be effective in monitoring the school's work and ensuring that they fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The governing body knows where additional government funding is allocated to support vulnerable pupils and to increase pupils' health and achievement through sport. Governors rightly expect to receive information about the impact of this spending on pupil outcomes, including any eligible for pupil premium.

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	114733
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	424675

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Puttick
Headteacher	Tracey Oram
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2013
Telephone number	01621 815445
Fax number	01621 819893
Email address	admin@tiptreeheath.essex.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

