

Spring Meadow Primary School

Pound Farm Drive, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex, CO12 4LB

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils make good progress, especially across Key Stage 2, where progress is now accelerating. This comes as a result of consistently good teaching.
- A stimulating and vibrant environment and well-targeted questioning and support give children a secure start to the Reception class. They quickly gain confidence to find out for themselves.
- Pupils who experience emotional difficulties are helped to improve their behaviour and achievement. Pupils behave well and say they feel safe.
- Exceptional leadership from the experienced headteacher, ably supported by governors and other senior and middle leaders, is continuing to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The topics and subjects provide pupils with diverse experiences and challenges, and make a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors play a significant role in helping the school to improve. They have a well-informed understanding of the school's main priorities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in Key Stage 1 is inconsistent and leads to uneven progress in writing. Lesson plans do not always take into account how well pupils are doing.
- Sometimes pupils are not given sufficient chance to improve their writing. Opportunities to practise their writing skills are too infrequent in lessons other than English in Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 13 lessons or part-lessons. Three observations were seen alongside the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of other short visits to classrooms, some of these shared with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, and looked at written work in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2, alongside the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement planning, and records on behaviour, safety and attendance. They also looked at information on individual pupils' progress, anonymised records of teachers' performance and records of meetings held by the governing body.
- Inspectors met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. They also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 15 responses to the on-line Parent View survey. Written comments from 43 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kelvin Simmonds

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional funding provided for children looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and those from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The school provides a breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher provides support for headteacher colleagues in other schools.
- Since the previous inspection, a new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed, during the autumn term 2013. There have been several changes in teaching staff particularly in the Reception class and in Key Stage 1.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in writing in Key Stage 1 so that attainment rises to at least national averages by the end of Year 2, by:
 - making sure that teachers make better use of the information they get about how well the pupils are doing to plan their next steps in learning
 - ensuring that pupils are helped to improve their writing so that they are better able to correct any mistakes in spelling, punctuation and vocabulary
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in subjects other than English.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with skills well below those typical for their age. Their interests are quickly captured by stimulating equipment and well-directed activities. They make good progress in all areas of development so that they have almost achieved the expected levels by the time they move into the Year 1 class. Pupils' skills on entry to Year 1 in recent years had not been as high.
- In 2013, pupils' attainment in writing was above average at the end of Year 6. Progress in writing continues to be good across Key Stage 2. However, across Key Stage 1 pupils' progress in writing is more variable. Year on year, different groups of pupils make less than expected progress from their different starting points.
- Standards in reading and mathematics are higher than writing at Key Stage 1 and represent good progress. Attainment in reading and mathematics was average in 2013 at the end of Year 6, but pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar were well below the national average. However, progress across Key Stage 2 was well above expected rates.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check (linking sounds and letters) has improved from 2012 but is still below the national picture. However, this represents good progress from low starting points for those pupils. Pupils have a secure foundation for developing reading skills. These are applied well in tackling unfamiliar or nonsense words.
- Current tracking information shows that all groups of pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Progress is accelerating in Key Stage 2. The work offers challenges at different levels, so pupils who are more able achieve the higher levels, especially in writing.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is good, as high quality additional support is provided for them in small groups or one-to-one. They start school well behind their peers, but by the end of Key Stage 2 they are only four months behind in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also benefit from good support and achieve well. Their needs are identified quickly, and support is specific to these needs.
- The school places a high priority on the health and well-being of the pupils. Plans are in place to develop this through an outdoor multi-gym using the sports premium.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers create a very positive climate for learning. Pupils are expected to start learning as soon as they enter the classroom. Teachers plan activities which are interesting and which offer challenges to pupils of different abilities.
- Letters and the sounds they make are taught in small groups across Key Stage 1 and in the Reception class. Adults provide a range of stimulating materials and activities which help pupils to improve their reading. For example, children in the Reception class confidently used the interactive whiteboard to identify real and nonsense words. Adults modelled the sounding out of

unfamiliar words and used magnetic letters and mini-whiteboards to help pupils in Year 2 use and apply their knowledge of different digraphs (where two letters are combined to make one sound).

- Pupils are given many opportunities to practise their writing skills. Teachers provide different stimuli for pupils to respond to in an individual way, such as pictures and videos. This helps them to write creatively and with imagination. Opportunities to write in subjects other than English are more limited in Key Stage 1.
- The teaching of mathematics makes use of different materials so that pupils can understand number patterns in a visual way. Work is planned well to meet pupils' different needs. Pupils in a Year 2 class used dice, number lines, weighing machines and other materials to practise solving subtraction and addition problems. They made good progress in understanding about number patterns because they could see the outcomes of their investigations and test their thinking.
- Occasionally, teachers present tasks which are not adequately explained. As a result some pupils find the tasks too difficult and this can lead to them losing concentration and becoming restless. This is the case particularly in Key Stage 1 classes.
- Work is marked thoroughly. Throughout the school, teachers provide pupils with feedback which is both written and spoken. This lets them know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This is particularly evident in the Reception class. Pupils know what targets have been set for them. Not all teachers however use information about how well the pupils are doing to change their plans for their next steps in learning. This is particularly so for lessons in writing in Key Stage 1.
- In some classes in Key Stage 1 there are too few opportunities for pupils to check their writing, and makes changes where necessary to the spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good because all adults have high expectations and there are clear routines in most classrooms. As one said, 'Teachers show us the best way.' Pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, respond positively to these standards. They work well together whether it is as a whole class, in small groups, or learning by themselves.
- Most pupils enjoy learning and are excited by the challenges which lessons provide. Their positive attitudes towards learning help them to maintain enthusiasm in everything they do and contribute to their good progress.
- Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils are friendly and polite, and generally get on well together. They routinely hold doors open for visitors. They say that bullying is rare and that adults quickly sort out any falling out. Inappropriate language is not tolerated. 'People care for me', one pupil said. Pupils show a great deal of respect for their extensive school grounds. This is evident, for example, in the well kept garden and 'poly tunnel' which they help to maintain.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe, and many enjoy the breakfast club, which gets them off to a secure start to the day. School records show that any serious incidents are managed well. Exclusions are rare. Pupils and, where appropriate, families are given support to ensure serious incidents are not repeated. Most parents agree that behaviour is good.

- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are given good support. The school strives hard to work with families so that pupils can achieve well. Parents value the support, which ensures that pupils' behaviour improves so that they can continue to improve academically.
- The school has worked hard with parents to reduce the amount of regular absence. The work of key people like the learning mentor and family liaison officer is helping to improve attendance so that it is at the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has gone through difficult times with many changes in staff. Exceptional and determined leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has helped to keep the school on track. Consequently achievement continues to improve and expectations have been raised as pupils' attendance has improved. Strong team work and an increasingly effective contribution from subject leaders and governors ensure that the school has the capacity to maintain these improvements.
- The school correctly identifies the main areas for improvement. Regular checks on learning ensure that teachers are held to account for the progress of the pupils, so that they are rewarded appropriately. Staff have responded well to the challenges and their morale is high. All teachers have accepted additional responsibilities and as a result teaching is improving.
- The school has targeted some of the pupil premium funding on additional adult support. This has helped children to settle quickly and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as accelerating progress in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- The topics and themes are planned so that all pupils are interested and engaged. As such they promote creative thinking and make a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, writing linked to films has helped boys in Key Stage 2 in particular to develop their writing skills. Pupils speak enthusiastically of Harry Potter and Percy Jackson as characters that they write about with great skill.
- The topics are supported by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs as well as visits. A strong focus on health and sports encourages pupils to think about healthy lifestyles. Subject leaders have already taken effective steps in readiness for the new curriculum.
- The local authority acts as a commissioner of services, and supports the school within the local network of schools. The headteacher has given her support through coaching and mentoring to colleague heads in neighbouring schools, and has acted as an executive headteacher in another school in the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been considerable improvements in the work of the governing body since the last inspection. Governors keep a well-informed oversight of the school, and contribute significantly towards the main school priorities. They receive regular reports from the headteacher, and alongside first-hand evidence, this helps them evaluate the work of the school and understand the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Training in making effective use of data about how well pupils are doing helps them to hold the school to account. They understand the local community well, and support the initiatives in raising parents' awareness of the importance of good attendance. They have an active involvement in checking the rewards given to staff based on their performance. Governors are also involved in decisions about how funds are spent, including the pupil premium and the sports fund purchase of high

quality outdoor equipment. They help to ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority and that procedures meet 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	114834
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	440357

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Cohen
Headteacher	Linda Gildea
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2011
Telephone number	01255 504528
Fax number	01255 240957
Email address	admin@springmeadow.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 2014

