

# Cherry Tree Primary School and Speech and Language Unit

Holt Drive, Mersea Road, Colchester, CO2 0BG

## Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils are not attaining high enough standards or making sufficient progress over time. Too few pupils, including the more able and those receiving additional support, make expected progress or more than expected progress.
- Results in reading, writing, and mathematics have been below average for too long. Pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are weak.
- Teaching over time is inadequate. Expectations of pupils are too low. Tasks frequently fail to build sufficiently on what school data reveals about pupils' previous progress.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise key literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- The quality of marking and assessment is too variable and pupils do not act on the advice given.
- The presentation of pupils' work is often poor.
- Behaviour requires improvement because too many pupils do not have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Leaders and managers, including subject leaders and governors, have not acted swiftly or effectively enough to improve teaching and raise achievement. Leaders' judgements of the rate of improvement are optimistic.
- The Speech and Language Unit has lacked a full-time leader for the whole of this term.
- Not all teaching assistants work closely enough with teachers to support pupils effectively.
- Lack of leadership in subjects other than English and mathematics has resulted in only limited planning for the new curriculum in several subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils say they feel safe and their parents and carers agree.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by eight staff. Five joint observations were carried out with the headteacher. The inspector also observed several of the activities the school provides to support individuals and small groups of pupils.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, two representatives of the local authority and a group of pupils.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspector took account of the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to an inspection questionnaire from seven staff as well as the school's own survey of parents and carers. The inspector spoke to parents in the playground.
- The inspector looked at the school's improvement plan, data on pupils' attainment and progress, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and of monitoring by the local authority. He reviewed a wide range of policies and procedures and the school's arrangements for the safeguarding of children.
- The inspector attended an assembly. He carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector listened to pupils reading.

## Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average.
- The very large majority of the pupils are White British.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join the school part way through their primary education or at times other than the usual starting dates.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above the national average. This is additional government funding for particular groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This specialist unit has 15 full-time places for pupils with speech and language difficulties from across the local authority. At present, 11 pupils are catered for, all registered on the school roll.
- A very small number of pupils are educated away from the school by the local authority at a local pupil referral unit.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2012.
- Authority for the school's delegated budget is currently in the hands of the Strategic Intervention Board appointed by the local authority.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good by:
  - ensuring that teachers expect more from their pupils, including the more able, and encourage them to aim for much higher standards, especially in writing and mathematics
  - providing work that engages pupils' interest and attention, particularly that of boys
  - insisting that pupils concentrate in lessons and pay careful attention to what their teachers are saying
  - giving consistently clear guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve their work and checking that pupils act on the advice they are given
  - providing effective training for staff in the teaching of mathematics
  - improving the work of teaching assistants.
- Raise achievement, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
  - setting clear expectations for the standards of presentation of pupils' work
  - reinforcing pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics) as they move up

the school so that their reading skills continue to develop

- ensuring that the rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation are understood and accurately applied by all pupils
- encouraging pupils to write at length
- providing more opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge and practise their skills in mathematics
- using data from assessments to plan work which helps pupils to make more rapid progress by accurately identifying their specific learning needs, especially those eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as pupils who join at times other than the usual starting dates.

■ Improve all levels of leadership and management, including governance, by making sure that:

- leaders' evaluations of achievement and teaching are accurate and used for improvement
- the effectiveness of action plans is regularly reviewed so that they result in more rapid and demonstrable improvements
- the position regarding the leadership of the Speech and Language Unit is swiftly resolved
- leaders are identified for subjects other than English and mathematics so that all the requirements of the new curriculum are planned for and met
- governors hold leaders and managers stringently to account for the quality of teaching, and pupils' progress and attainment.

Ofsted has made recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school. An external review of governance has taken place fairly recently. However, a further review should be undertaken, including the school's use of the pupil premium, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Attainment is low and pupils are not making sufficient progress over time. In 2013, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 left with attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that was exceptionally low. They were nearly two years behind pupils nationally. Although pupils join the school with skills well below those typically seen at their age, especially in social and speaking skills, results fell well below the government's floor standards this year. This represents inadequate progress over time.
- Data held by the school for the current Year 6 indicate some improvement in pupils' achievement, but the outlook for subsequent years, based on the same data, suggests a declining trend over time. The achievement of pupils currently on roll, based on an examination of pupils' books and school data on their progress, is too variable.
- A number of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual starting points achieve less well than others. The school has had to work hard, and with only limited success in some cases, to manage their learning and behaviour. Weaknesses in pupils' attitudes to learning contribute to lower than expected outcomes for some members of this group.
- Progress and attainment rates have picked up in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to close monitoring of children's progress and careful planning, but this improvement is only recent.
- Results for the national screening check on linking sounds and letters (phonics) were very low in 2012. They improved in 2013, but remained below the national average. Current data show that they are likely to fall again this year, demonstrating continued poor reading knowledge and skills.
- While some pupils read accurately and expressively, and can explain what is likely to happen in the book, others are less fluent and are more inclined to guess at difficult words than to break them down into sounds. The rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation are not consistently understood or applied by pupils to ensure that reading and writing skills improve swiftly.
- Attainment is beginning to pick up in Key Stage 1 but, given that results have been below national levels since before the last inspection, this is a case of too little, too late.
- Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs in speech and language are currently not making enough progress, either in their communication skills or in aspects of their behaviour. Support staff and a part-time special educational needs coordinator are managing provision at present but the unit has been without a full-time leader for the whole of this term.
- A very small number of pupils are educated in a local pupil referral unit. The school checks on their attendance to ensure that such pupils are present there each day, but has not checked regularly on their rates of achievement.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is inadequate. The school points to recent improvements in progress rates but, in 2013, the proportions of eligible pupils making expected and more than expected progress were below others in the school and well below that of similar pupils nationally. Gaps between their attainment and their peers are beginning to close, but eligible pupils are currently still a term behind in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress. Too many pupils are making slow progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Support staff work regularly with individuals and small groups, but expectations of the effort pupils will make or their rates of progress are not consistently high enough.
- More-able pupils are not consistently challenged, with the result that, over time, attainment at the higher levels has been well below that found nationally, especially at Key Stage 2. Too few make expected, let alone better than expected progress in mathematics.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **is inadequate**

- Weaknesses in teaching have led directly to poor achievement over time. Expectations have been too low, especially in writing and mathematics, particularly for the more able.
- Although a number of pupils have language or behavioural difficulties, the quality of their contributions in class shows they are often capable of more than they have produced in their books.
- Teachers mostly have secure subject knowledge, although some require further training in how to deliver mathematics effectively. However, they have not always ensured that their questions extend pupils' thinking sufficiently, especially in mathematics. Teaching to help move learning on is not based closely enough on the data available about individual pupils and what they already know and can do.
- The quality of marking and assessment is variable. Pupils have targets in their books and these are often, but not always, signed by teachers when they are met. However, pupils do not consistently respond to the detailed guidance they are given about next steps in their learning and, as a result, progress is slower than it might otherwise be.
- In too many classes, reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills are not well taught. Teaching in these subjects does not consistently ensure that pupils develop secure skills or provide enough opportunities for them to practise those skills. Support staff are used effectively in some classes but less so in others, where their role is less defined. At the moment, support staff are working hard to maintain work levels in the speech and language unit, but the lack of a leader and full-time teacher means that teaching here is not always as effective as it needs to be.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are generally positive. Where teaching is most effective, teachers carefully model the outcomes they require so pupils understand what is expected of them and pupils respond enthusiastically. In a Year 6 English class, effective use of information and communication technology, visual links, and a topic about aliens engaged both boys and girls with writing. Clear expectations of the progress to be made and careful guidance from the teacher ensured that pupils rose to the challenges set. These strengths in teaching, however, are not consistently present in many classes across the school.
- Children are taught well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Carefully planned work, good use of the indoor and outdoor areas and careful monitoring provide children with good opportunities to learn.

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

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because their attitudes to learning are not always

good; pupils lose interest and concentration too easily, and produce too little work.

- Pupils appreciate the rewards on offer for good behaviour and attendance. They generally behave acceptably around the school. They conduct themselves well as they move to assembly or class, but become more boisterous if left on their own.
- Pupils feel that behaviour is mostly good. An adult is always nearby to help with any difficulties, which are usually quickly resolved.
- Attendance is slightly below national averages but has improved over time as a result of the school's efforts. The breakfast club and a number of sporting activities and other clubs have helped to draw pupils into school. The school is increasing its work with families to ensure that pupils attend; it discourages holidays in term time.
- Fixed-term exclusions have risen, especially among boys and for pupils who arrive other than at the usual starting points. These exclusions most often arise in the case of pupils who struggle to cope when the school raises expectations for behaviour and works to make those expectations clear.
- Behaviour incidents are carefully logged. One racist incident has been recorded in the past year with the follow-up recorded. Fire drill logs are kept up to date.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. This includes in the speech and language unit. Safeguarding procedures meet all current requirements.
- Pupils feel safe and their parents and carers agree. Policies to keep pupils safe are reviewed at regular intervals.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, including when they are using the internet.
- Pupils say that bullying is seldom more than 'just pushing' and name-calling. They know about the different forms which bullying can take.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leadership and management are inadequate because actions to address underachievement and improve teaching have not led to sufficient or sustained improvement over time. Leaders and managers, including the headteacher and assistant headteachers, have begun to address the areas for improvement outlined at the previous inspection and in subsequent local authority visits, but with limited impact so far. Achievement is still too low, not enough teaching is good or better and improvement plans are not reviewed and adjusted regularly enough.
- The assistant headteachers are subject leaders of mathematics and English, and are implementing initiatives to bring about improvement. Subject leaders are not yet in place or sufficiently experienced for most other subjects. There is consequently insufficient planning for the introduction of the new curriculum to ensure pupils have equal opportunities to thrive in all subjects. Pupils are not well prepared for the next stage in their education because of weaknesses in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics resulting from poor teaching.
- The continuing vacancy in the leadership of the speech and language unit has contributed to



weaknesses in teaching for these pupils and has adversely affected their progress.

- The school improvement plan has not yet had sufficient impact on the trends and weaknesses indicated by data on pupils' achievement. The school's self-evaluation is generous. Together with the weaknesses in teaching and its poor record of achievement, this shows that the school is not demonstrating the capacity for sustained improvement.
- Procedures for checking on teachers' performance are now tightening, with a greater focus on attainment and progress. However, improvements in teachers' accountability and their progress up the pay scales are only recent developments.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.
- Sports funding is used to provide additional clubs, sport and support with the aim of keeping pupils fit and healthy. The increased provision is appreciated by pupils, who were keen, for example, to work on their basketball skills at lunchtime.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is adequately promoted. Pupils have some opportunities to use their imagination through the work done on different topics. Most pupils get on well with other pupils and are clear about the boundaries between right and wrong. Visits and visitors contribute to their developing understanding of the world around them and its different cultures.
- The school has been closely supported by the local authority. The support provided is based on an accurate diagnosis of what needs to be done and has contributed to the small improvements now seen in the school, although the support and challenge has not been sufficient to halt the decline into inadequacy since the previous inspection.
- The school has improved its links with parents. Parents spoken to during the inspection, and in the school's own surveys, were positive about the school then, but only a few parents responded to the online survey.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has not been effective, although it has recently been reconstituted. Responsibility for the budget is currently in the hands of the Strategic Intervention Board. The present governing body is keen to see the school progress and has sharpened the challenge it offers. Following training, governors have a clearer understanding of data so they can now ask the right questions. However, over time governors have not held leaders and managers rigorously enough to account for improving the teaching and tackling underachievement. Good teaching has not been quickly enough identified and shared to ensure improvement. The management of staff performance has been tightened and the emphasis placed on pupils' achievement, with a corresponding link to pay progression is only a very recent change. Governors are trained in safeguarding and safer recruitment, and ensure that child protection procedures are sufficiently rigorous.
  - Procedures for tracking the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and measuring the impact of spending have not been thorough enough to ensure that the needs of this group are fully met.



## 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>	114815
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	440406

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	143
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Bullock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Edward Constantine
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 575224
<b>Fax number</b>	01206 769142
<b>Email address</b>	head@cherrytree.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

