

Oakwood Infant School

Windsor Avenue, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 2AH

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

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

- Pupils' achievement is not always as good as it could be, particularly that of the most able. Too few pupils gain the higher levels in the national tests.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they do in mathematics and reading.
- In some lessons, more-able pupils and those who need extra help lose interest because the work is too easy or too hard. As a result, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) does not enable some pupils to reach the levels they should by the end of Year 1.
- Not all disabled pupils and those who have special education needs make similar progress to others in school.
- Checks on the quality of teaching made by leaders and those responsible for subjects do not focus sharply enough on how well teaching is helping pupils to learn.
- Those who lead the development of different subjects do not identify clearly enough how teachers can improve their skills.
- Pupils' attendance continues to be below the national average.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make a good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. Pupils are polite and courteous and relate well to one another and to adults.
- The school works well with parents and carers, providing good support for families.
- Governors know the school well and have identified the right areas for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons and group activities. Senior leaders joined inspectors in two of the observations.
- Inspector listened to pupils read, sampled guided reading sessions and observed the teaching of phonics.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and talked to pupils during lessons, in the playground, in the lunch hall, and as they moved around the school.
- There were 11 responses to the online survey of the views of parents, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents.
- One assembly was observed.
- Inspectors observed the breakfast club and after-school football club.
- Meetings took place with staff, Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including national test data results, the school's information about pupils' achievement, improvement plans, the quality of teaching, and performance management of staff. Other documentation looked at included, safeguarding, child protection arrangements, risk assessments, attendance and exclusion data, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website.

Inspection team

Karen Feeney, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Chris Parker	Additional Inspector
Vanessa Love	Additional Inspector
Mina Drever	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school, is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special education needs supported through school action is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is slightly below average.
- A daily breakfast club, managed by the governing body, operates on the school site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
 - teachers set tasks for all groups of pupils that are not too easy or too hard so that they make the best possible progress
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work
 - pupils take pride in their work and present their work neatly
 - teachers' marking lets pupils know what they need to do next to improve.
- Improve the teaching of phonics by ensuring that all teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach the subject, especially at the higher levels.
- Improve attendance rates for the small minority of pupils who do not attend school regularly enough by engaging more effectively with parents and families.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - improving the programme of checking the quality of teaching, so that they are more sharply focused on how well pupils are learning, including those who need extra help and the more-able, and holding teachers fully to account for the progress of their pupils
 - improving the role of subject and other leaders so that they know how to provide the best support to teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because they do not make good enough progress. Whilst there has been an improvement in Key Stage 1 tests for reading, writing and mathematics this year, it is not enough to enable all pupils to reach the standard they should achieve by the time they leave the school in Year 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress. However, progress through to Year 2 is inconsistent because of unevenness in the quality of teaching.
- The most able pupils do not always achieve well enough. At times they are given work that is too easy, so they do not make the progress they could. The proportion achieving the highest levels has been low for some years, and school information for 2014 indicates that the trend has not changed.
- Actions to improve achievement in writing have had little impact and results continue to be lower than reading and mathematics.
- Although there was an improvement in results in 2013 for the phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1, it was below the national figure. School information shows that little improvement has been made in 2014.
- Although standards of reading are below the national averages at the higher levels, less-able readers are making better progress and can use their phonic knowledge well to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in Year 2 and reach national standards. This is because of the accurate identification of their needs and effective support.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding make good progress in Year 2. The gap is closing in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between those who are eligible for the additional funding and their classmates. In 2013, eligible pupils were around two terms behind their classmates in mathematics, and around six months behind them in reading and writing. In 2014, eligible pupils are, on average, about one term behind in mathematics and writing and slightly less than six months in reading.
- Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils in the school. Sometimes, because the work they are given is too difficult, they lose concentration and their learning slows as a result.
- The breakfast club provides good opportunities for pupils' to play and learn together and this helps to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, the games they play enable them to develop good social skills by taking turns and listening to each other.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable and does not lead to children making good progress in their learning overall.
- Teaching is strongest in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress because teachers organise exciting activities that interest them and help them to develop their skills. For example, Nursery children were asked to think about why an ice balloon had disappeared. They were helped by the teacher who asked questions such as 'What does heat do to ice?' and introduced vocabulary such as 'melted'. As a result children were keen to find out more and made good progress in their speaking and listening skills too.
- The most able pupils are not always given tasks challenging enough to help them make rapid progress. They have too few opportunities to write longer pieces of work because they write predominantly on small whiteboards. As a result, teachers do not have a record of what pupils have done to be able to give pupils advice on how it could be improved.
- The teaching of phonics is not always planned to secure the good learning of pupils of different of abilities. For example, in one lesson, the most able pupils were being taught the same letters and sounds as other pupils, which they already knew. Therefore, they found the learning easy and made little progress. While the least-able pupils make good progress, the most able do not make the progress they could and as a consequence, do not reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Work in books shows that progress is variable from class to class. This is especially the case in writing, where teachers' marking to let pupils know how successful they have been is better in some classes than in others. In mathematics, the marking for the most able pupils does not clarify precisely what they have done well and what they could do better, so their progress is not as fast as it could be.
- In the majority of lessons, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils. For example, in one guided reading session, a teaching assistant asked pupils to find the vocabulary and phrases in a book to support their view of a particular character.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective for those with statements, who receive good support from skilled teaching assistants. Similarly, those at school action make good progress. However, those supported at school action plus do not do so well because some are not getting the support they need. For example, pupils are asked to do tasks that are too hard and their progress slows.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. Pupils behave well in lessons, when activities provide the right level of challenge for different ability groups. When it is not, they do not concentrate well, are less enthusiastic to learn and, as a result, their progress is not quite so fast.
- In some books looked at, pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work, and it is untidy.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They develop good social skills and are polite to adults and friendly and courteous to one another. Pupils generally move around corridors well. In the dining hall they talk calmly as they eat their dinner. During playtime pupils play happily together. Inspectors saw no instances of poor behaviour, and the behaviour records

confirm the low level of incidents.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes play well together. They have many opportunities to develop good social skills in sharing and taking turns. For example, children in Nursery were encouraged to listen to each other's contributions in story time.
- Parents are positive about the school. They told inspectors that they are confident that the school keeps their children safe and they know their child is happy in school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is low. The figure for this year has been affected by significant illness, including chicken pox. Senior leaders continue to work with families and agencies to find ways to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know about different kinds of bullying and they know who to see in school if they are feeling unhappy. The incident log to record and address any incidents of a bullying or racist nature show that these are rare. When they happen, appropriate action is taken immediately.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders' self-evaluation of teaching is over generous. They do not focus enough on the impact teaching has on children's achievement. As a result, teachers are not held to account for the progress pupils make and achievement for all groups of pupils is not good enough, particularly for those pupils who find learning hard and those who find learning easy.
- Several subject leaders and others with leadership responsibilities are new to their roles. They have begun to provide some support for teachers on how they can improve the quality of their teaching. For example, they have undertaken joint lesson observations with senior leaders and have provided helpful feedback on ways to improve children's writing skills in Nursery and Reception. Nevertheless, they do not as yet always provide clear feedback to teachers on how they can improve their practice. Their work has yet to impact fully across the school.
- Leaders have good links with local schools, particularly the feeder junior school where teachers meet to check the accuracy of their assessment of pupils' work.
- Subjects and topics covered by the school are broad and balanced. They are enriched, for example, through the use of the school's field and woods to develop pupils' knowledge of the natural environment, and through art and spoken language. The school also provides a range of extracurricular activities and clubs, including football, ICT, dance and drama.
- The leader in charge of leading the work to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has rightly identified that pupils supported through school action plus would benefit from earlier identification of their particular difficulties, so that they can get the extra help they need. The school is now employing for example, a speech therapist who has trained staff and is working with pupils to help improve their early speaking and listening skills.
- The provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils show good cooperation and respect when learning together.

- Whilst there were only eleven responses to Parent View, a recent survey undertaken by the school indicated that parents were happy with the school and would recommend it to other parents.
 - The additional funding the school receives for sport is used to promote wider participation in a range of activities and to train staff. School information shows that there has been increased participation in sporting activity since the start of the funding.
 - The local authority has an accurate view of the school's performance and has brokered a partnership with a local academy and the feeder junior school to provide additional support. The partnership starts in September 2014.
 - Leaders and governors make sure that arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body brings a wide range of skills and experience to the school. They scrutinise national data and have a clear understanding of how well pupils do in relation to those in other schools. Minutes from governing body meetings show they ask challenging questions about the school's performance and hold the senior leadership to account on the differences in results between subjects. They know what needs to be done to improve standards and welcome the opportunity for support from the partnership with two other schools starting next term. They have a good understanding of how the funding for the pupil premium is spent and the impact for example, in the current Year 2 to close the gap in attainment with other pupils. They ensure that the pay of teachers is related to performance and will only give an award if it is justified. Individual governors visit the school on a regular basis and report back to the governing body. They take good account of the views of parents and pupils.

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	114722
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	442622

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Chadbourne
Headteacher	Carol Carlsson Browne
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2011
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