

Winter Gardens Primary School

Hilton Road, Canvey Island, SS8 9QA

Inspection dates

8–9 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders' actions to tackle weaknesses in teaching have been weak in the past and recent action has not had time to make a significant difference. As a consequence teaching is inadequate.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 has been well below national averages for three years.
- The school has been unable to close gaps in achievement by Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations. Planning does not take account of what the pupils already know so work is often too easy or too hard.
- Governors are too reliant on the school for information and are not holding leaders to account for the progress of pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement. Teachers do not always check that pupils are listening, and when the work is too easy or too hard some pupils lose concentration and this hampers progress.
- Children's progress in the early years slows because teaching and leadership in the early years are inadequate. As a result, children, including the most able, are not achieving well.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has begun to raise expectations of all staff, so that they are held more accountable for pupils' progress
- Pupils say they enjoy school, and feel safe. They behave well around the school and play happily together.
- Teachers who are newly qualified are given good support by the headteacher and as a result are developing well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons or part-lessons. Seven observations were shared with the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of other short visits to classrooms.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, and looked at work from each year group, much of this with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan and records on behaviour, safety and attendance. They also looked at information on individual pupils' progress and 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 representatives from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 17 responses to the on-line Parent View survey. Written comments from nine members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Diana Songer-Hudgell	Additional Inspector
Christopher Birtles	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

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils, more than average, are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom additional funding known as the pupil premium is received, is just above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high and is well above average.
- The school provides a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body.
- The school shares the site with Winter Gardens Pre-School. This was not part of this inspection.
- The school's Lake View Hall is used extensively by the local community, for example for grandparents and toddlers' groups.
- The school uses 'Canvey Support Services' to support a small number of pupils through alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, a headteacher was appointed in June 2014, and a new chair of governors was appointed from September 2014. The school had an acting headteacher for two and a half school terms. There is currently a vacancy in the senior team. An Early Years leader was appointed in September 2014.
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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
 - eradicating weak teaching as quickly as possible by sharing the good practice within the school so that all teachers meet the required standards
 - giving children in the early years choices about their learning and encouraging them to investigate more widely
 - insisting that pupils take greater care in the presentation of their work.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress particularly at Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, so that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and the most able, achieve well, by:
 - making sure that teachers plan activities at the right level of difficulty
 - making sure that teachers and other adults explain carefully what pupils need to do, and check pupils' understanding.
- Make sure that actions taken to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance are followed up by:
 - ensuring that all adults manage pupils' behaviour in ways consistent with the school's policy
 - keeping better records of any incidents or concerns and sharing these with appropriate staff so that action can be followed up.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by
 - making sure that governors develop their skills to support and challenge the school rigorously
 - helping teachers with extra responsibilities to carry out their roles so that they can support improvements in teaching, in particular in reading, writing and mathematics

- making sure that teachers' plans make effective use of information on how well the pupils are doing
- ensuring that teachers are held to account for the progress made by pupils in their class, so that only the best performance is rewarded
- producing a more specific plan to tackle weaknesses in achievement and in teaching which helps all leaders and managers to take more urgent action
- ensuring that the best use is made of funds to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils, so that gaps in achievement are closed.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership is inadequate because leaders have failed to tackle weaknesses in teaching and achievement quickly enough. Although strengthened by the recent appointment of a headteacher following a long time without a substantive headteacher, changes made have not yet had time to consolidate. The achievement of significant groups of pupils is inadequate, including in the early years, as a result of some weak teaching over time.
- Poor teaching has not been dealt with effectively in the past. Teachers have not been held to account for the progress made by pupils in their classes. Systems to check on how well teachers are doing and for rewarding those who are the most effective are only now being introduced. Checks on whether teachers meet the required standards have had little impact to date.
- The school timetable and teacher's roles have been changed so that those who have additional responsibilities can support their colleagues. This also enables pupils to be placed in smaller groups so that their needs are better targeted. However, it is too early to see any impact on pupils' achievement, and information about how well the pupils are doing is not used effectively and is sometimes inaccurate.
- The school's plans to improve achievement lack urgency. They do not give precise enough deadlines and are not sufficiently challenging to tackle weaknesses. Although the school has correctly identified these weaknesses, not enough has been done to tackle them.
- Teachers have been supported through recent training and a few have had the chance to benefit from observing good teaching in the school. Support given to newly qualified teachers is particularly effective since the appointment of the new headteacher. However, other aspects of leadership overall have rendered this aspect inadequate. Therefore, in order to maintain the quality of support evident in the inspection, inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not appoint more than two newly qualified teachers.
- As there are significant differences in achievement across different groups of pupils, the school's promotion of equal opportunities is inadequate. Disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than their peers and pupils nationally. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make inadequate progress. The most able pupils do not achieve well enough.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive additional support particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Funds are spent so that they are given more targeted support in small groups from Year 3 onwards. However this support has not yet had time to narrow gaps in their achievement with their peers.
- The school uses its sports premium to buy into a sports partnership, so pupils benefit from specialist sports teaching. This is helping pupils to take part in a variety of different sports and health related activities. Year 2 for example are learning the skills of country dancing.
- Some elements of learning are very successful. Topics excite and engage the pupils. During the inspection, pupils asked questions of an astronaut in a United States space station. They asked about sleep patterns, and whether they had night and day. Pupils said this awe inspiring event was a once in a lifetime experience. Pupils in Year 4 dressed up to experience what life was like for Victorian children in school. These sorts of opportunities contribute substantially to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school encourages pupils to learn about life in other parts of Britain. Tolerance and a respect for people from different faiths and backgrounds is effectively promoted.
- Parents spoken to and the small number who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) are on the whole very positive about the school. They recognise the improvements that have recently got

underway since the appointment of the new headteacher.

- During the period when the school was unable to appoint a full-time headteacher, the local authority has provided support and challenge through the services of an adviser. Checks on how well the pupils are doing have helped the school to have a more accurate view of achievement.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors currently are too dependent on information provided by the school. This means that they are not able to hold the school to account, for example to help improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement. They do not have a clear understanding of how the school checks on the quality of teachers, or how pay awards are given for high performance. Although aware of how the pupil premium funds are used, they have not challenged the school to evaluate how effective it has been in reducing gaps in achievement. They have an inaccurately positive view of the school's strengths. Actions governors have taken to tackle areas of weakness in the school have yet to make an impact. As a result, some statutory requirements with regard to policies are not met, though policies in relation to safeguarding do meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Whilst behaviour around the school is good, a significant minority of pupils lose concentration in lessons when the tasks given to them do not provide the right challenge.
- Although most pupils are positive about learning, a small minority distract others with silly behaviour. Not all teachers use the school's behaviour code in a consistent way to help improve behaviour. Systems for recording incidents are haphazard and sometimes incidents are not followed up appropriately.
- Pupils mix well, are polite and welcoming to visitors, and enjoy learning. Class ambassadors greet visitors to classrooms to inform them about what they are learning. Older pupils behave with responsibility and care around the school, helping younger pupils at lunch.
- The breakfast club is well attended, and this provides a warm and friendly start to the day for those who attend.
- Work in books is sometimes presented poorly, and some pupils take little care in their writing. Not enough is being done to encourage pupils to produce work of which they can be proud.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Although regular contact is made with pupils in alternative provision, record keeping does not take sufficient account of the achievement and attendance of the pupils.
- Pupils feel safe in and around the school. They say that the school does not allow bullying and that adults help them if there is a problem. They understand what language is acceptable so as not to offend others, and say, for example, that racism is not tolerated.
- Attendance has improved and is around the national average having been well below that average for three years.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching over time has been inadequate as it has failed to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well. The recently improved expectations of what pupils can achieve and recent training and support for teachers have not had sufficient time to eradicate weaker teaching, including in the early years.

- Teachers do not make the best use of information about pupils' progress to plan activities which accelerate their learning. As a result pupils get confused and are unable to complete tasks. Tasks are not clearly explained and pupils' understanding is not checked. In a Year 3 lesson for example, pupils were unable to improve their sentences using adverbs as few knew what an adverb was. Progress in writing was inadequate.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is a relative strength. It is taught consistently well, as pupils can learn at a pace that suits them. Teachers and other adults make the learning fun and questioning and repetition helps the pupils grasp new sounds.
- Despite the inconsistencies in teaching, there are some strengths drawn from effective strategies that teachers have learned. For example, encouraging pupils to talk about their ideas before writing them down inspired Year 1 pupils to share their ideas and develop a richer vocabulary. Effective questioning helped the pupils gain confidence in their writing.
- Calculation skills are taught increasingly so that pupils are given activities which are not too easy. Regular practice helps some pupils to show they can apply these skills in different contexts. Pupils in a Year 2 class used their skills in partitioning to help them make adding simpler. A good range of resources helped them devise practical ways to count, and as a result they achieved well. However, the teaching of mathematics is inconsistent across the school, and results in inadequate progress for some groups of pupils. This is because the tasks are sometimes too easy or too hard.
- Some support for small groups is effective. However, teaching assistants vary in their effectiveness across the school. Too often they do not take part when the teacher is talking to the whole class. At other times they complete the work for the pupil rather than helping them to gain an understanding of the task.
- In the early years, teachers and adults provide effective support particularly when working with small groups of children. However, the quality of children's learning is not good because they are not encouraged to investigate and try things for themselves.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has been low since the last inspection. Gaps in achievement for disadvantaged pupils widened in all areas in Year 6 and show no sign of improvement. The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is inadequate. The most able pupils do not attain the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- In 2013 attainment at the end of Year 2 was well below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in the grammar and punctuation test in Year 6 was also well below. Information from the school indicates that there is little sign of improvement at the end of Year 6. However, standards in reading, writing and mathematics rose to around the national averages at the end of Year 2 in 2014.
- Although results from the Year 1 phonics (the sounds letters make) check have been above the national expected levels, reading outcomes are still weak across the school. Pupils are less confident when asked to read and explain a text or to describe a character.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not given enough support to help them to achieve well. Gaps in achievement with their peers are wide across the school.
- Gaps in achievement for disadvantaged pupils compared with others have widened, particularly at the end of Year 6. In 2013 the gap in reading was eight months with their peers and with pupils nationally. The gap in writing was just over eight months with both groups. In mathematics the gap was nearly one year with their peers, and was over one year compared with national data. Information provided by the school show that these gaps widened in 2014.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is inadequate. Their attainment in reading, writing and

mathematics at the end of Year 2 has been well below national averages. This is also the case in mathematics and grammar and punctuation at the end of Year 6. Expectations are not challenging enough for them to reach the higher levels. Although there are now extra teachers to help with these skills, it is too soon to judge their impact on the progress of the pupils.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- Leadership of the early years is inadequate because adults do not make accurate checks on the children's learning when they arrive. This leads to inadequate teaching because planned activities are not meeting the needs of the children. In consequence, children are not prepared adequately for Year 1.
- Children mix and play well together. When they are with an adult they concentrate well. However, because behaviour is not managed consistently, on occasions time is wasted and some children become easily distracted. Staff keep children safe and provide a supportive environment that help children develop good social skills.
- Children join the Reception classes with skills broadly typical for their age, and also leave with skills similar to children of the same age. There are good links with the on-site pre-school, so this makes it easier for some children to make the transition to the Reception classes.
- Children are given too few opportunities to try things out for themselves. As a result, more able children do not develop their skills quickly. On occasion time is wasted so children quickly lose interest. Too often children respond to instructions rather than questions to help them reflect on what they are learning.
- Children have many opportunities to develop their physical skills. The outdoor area provides them with different challenges to use their physical skills.
- Progress in early mark-making and writing, and in using and recognising numbers, is weak, because these skills are not promoted sufficiently. However, phonics is taught well so children quickly learn new sounds.

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	135363
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	448635

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	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yvette Billings
Headteacher	Christopher Hayes
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2010
Telephone number	01268 699305
Fax number	01268 630840
Email address	admin@wintergardens.essex.sch.uk

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