

Shalford Primary School

Church End, Shalford, Braintree, CM7 5EZ

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has declined and is now inadequate. In 2014, the most-able pupils made inadequate progress. There has been a declining trend in pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Weak teaching in the past has left pupils with significant gaps in their basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. This is holding them back. While teaching has improved, it is not yet good enough to enable pupils to catch up on previously lost ground.
- Teachers' expectations of what the most-able pupils can achieve are not high enough to enable them to reach their full potential.
- In some classes, teachers move too quickly to new tasks without ensuring pupils' have mastery of current skills.
- Pupils do not find teachers' marking as helpful in mathematics as it is in writing. Pupils do not fully understand what they need to do to improve their work in mathematics.
- Although provision and the rate of children's progress in Reception are much improved this year, teaching in the early years is not yet good.
- Teachers with leadership responsibilities are new to their roles and the effectiveness of the work they do is varied. Not all subject and other leaders are driving whole-school improvements with sufficient haste.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's evaluation of its own work is accurate. The school is improving because the headteacher's checks on the quality of teaching are rigorous. Weak teaching has been tackled robustly.
- Governors are now more effective in their role. They have the skills and knowledge to hold the school to account.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Effective partnership working with other local schools is helping teachers to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They say there is always a teacher on hand to talk to if they have any worries.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well through a lively curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons, four of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- A short visit was made to observe the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). A number of pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read to the inspector.
- The inspector attended a whole-school assembly. She also spent time with pupils during their breaks and at lunchtime.
- Two meetings were held with pupils to seek their views, to talk about how their work is marked and to find out how they respond to this marking.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, teachers with special responsibilities, members of the governing body, a local authority representative, and the director of the Chelmsford Schools Teaching Alliance, in her capacity as adviser to the school.
- A range of school documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement, policies and procedures related to safeguarding, school checks on the quality of teaching, school data related to current pupils' attainment and progress, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector, together with the headteacher, undertook a review of pupils' work in their books and on public display.
- Account was taken of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of a number of parents who spoke to the inspector at the start of the school day. The views of the 27 staff, who completed the staff questionnaire, were also considered.

Inspection team

Judith O'Hare, 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 significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There are four classes in total. The Reception children attend full time and are taught as a single group. All other pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The pupil premium provides support for approximately a quarter of the pupils at this school. This is similar to the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- Around a fifth of the pupils are disabled, or have special educational needs. This is above average.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2014 for the government's floor standards to be applicable.
- There have been a number of staffing changes since the last inspection. In the last year, new leaders have been appointed, including the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The school is part of a collaborative partnership working with two local primary schools, Lyons Hall and Newlands Spring.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment and rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can do, especially the most able
 - checking the work that pupils do in mathematics to ensure that they have fully mastered their key numeracy skills
 - improving the quality of marking, particularly in mathematics, so that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - equipping all subject and other leaders with the skills they need to monitor pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring all subject and other leaders monitor teaching carefully and play their part in driving school improvement forward.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, there have been a significant number of changes of staff, including the headteacher and assistant headteacher. Staffing is now more stable.
- Teachers' responsibilities have been redefined to place a higher emphasis on improving pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics. However, some subject and other leaders are new to their posts. Not enough of them are currently making an effective contribution to their subject, or influencing school improvement at a fast enough rate. Consequently, leadership and management still require improvement.
- Overall, the contribution made by subject and other leaders is growing stronger. This is evident in leadership of English and of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Better progress this year can be seen in pupils' written work and in Reception children's 'learning journals'. Regular checks on pupils' work in English are now undertaken; school data related to pupils' performance is carefully analysed. However, the checking of teaching and learning in mathematics is not as thorough and, as a result, teachers are not receiving the advice and guidance they need to improve their teaching in this subject.
- Good links have been formed with two local primary schools. Teachers are benefiting from the support this now brings to help them increase their subject knowledge and to improve their teaching. The partnership has also enabled the school to develop a rigorous approach to checking the quality of its work. These are two of the reasons why pupils' achievement is improving this year.
- The headteacher has the confidence of staff and of parents, who recognise the improvements that have been secured this year.
- Changes have been made to the way the curriculum is taught, how pupils' work is marked, and new assessment procedures have been introduced. These initiatives are addressing pupils' past underperformance and improving teaching. Improvements are evident in all key stages, and more especially in reading and writing. This demonstrates the school has the capacity to make further improvements, although the pace of change in mathematics remains too slow.
- The monitoring of the performance of staff is more rigorous. Clear targets are set and support is provided to help teachers improve their practice. They are positive about the training they receive. Nevertheless, teaching across the school remains variable. It is not yet good enough to enable pupils to make the rapid progress needed to overcome the legacy of past underachievement.
- Careful tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress enables leaders to identify pupils at risk of falling behind and to provide support. The success of this strategy is evident in the better progress now being made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Leaders recognise that there has been insufficient attention given to raising the attainment and progress of the most able. Currently, these pupils still underachieve, particularly in mathematics.
- Use of the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils is effective. In 2014, for example, these pupils made better progress than their peers in reading and writing, and similar progress in mathematics.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The school is effective in working with families and children experiencing difficulties. Good partnership work between school staff and other agencies ensures that all pupils have equal access to the full curriculum. Consequently, all pupils are gaining the skills they need to help them to become responsible young people.
- The curriculum offers pupils the opportunity to study a wide range of different topics and themes. Pupils

spoken to say this helps to make learning fun. Visits to local places of historical and cultural interest are regular and varied. Pupils frequently engage in fundraising activities to cover the cost of trips and to ensure that everyone can be involved.

- The school has used the sports premium funding to pay for a specialist sports coach to work with staff and pupils to improve their sporting skills and physical fitness. The range of available activities has also been widened. Pupils are now learning how to play both dodgeball and basketball, in addition to other more familiar games and sports. Attendance at after-school clubs has also increased. As all pupils now take part in regular sport, general levels of fitness have improved.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well. The importance of promoting British values of tolerance, respect and endeavour are evident in lessons and in the way pupils care for each other. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrated this clearly in their stories about Peter Pan and his lost shadow. Their message of hope to Peter, and the need to include everyone in the community, was very touching.
- The local authority has not provided effective support for the school in the past. More recently, it has helped the school by brokering a support network with two local primary schools. The local authority continues to monitor the work of the school through half termly meetings. Additional training has also been provided for teachers and governors.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are now more rigorous in holding senior leaders to account, as a result of additional training they have undertaken. This is helping the school to move forward at a much faster rate.
- Regular visits, to observe teaching and to examine work in pupils' books, are giving governors first-hand knowledge of the quality of teaching across the school.
- Because governors have a better understanding of data related to pupils' performance, they know how pupils are achieving and how this compares to other schools nationally. This means they are able to provide effective challenge to the school.
- Checks governors make on performance management arrangements ensure that teachers' progression through salary scales are closely linked to their performance in the classroom.
- Governors know how the pupil premium is being spent and how effective this is in raising the attainment of eligible pupils. They have analysed the impact on pupils' health and well-being of the coaching provided through the primary sports funding. Governors have noted improved attendance in school and the increased number of pupils now engaged in sporting activities on a regular basis.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is a happy school where pupils enjoy good relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils are friendly; they have good manners and speak politely to everyone.
- Pupils are now demonstrating more positive attitudes to learning and to achieving their best. In lessons observed, pupils listened carefully to instructions and followed them without fuss. Pupils settled to work quickly and concentrated well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 say a good attitude to learning is important. In their words, 'You have to try hard. That's how you learn.'
- Behaviour at break times and in the playground is good. Special 'play leaders' help to organise games and activities. They make sure that everyone is included. In the hall at lunchtime, pupils relax and chat happily with each other. Year 5 and Year 6 lunchtime 'manner monitors' make sure this space is left clean and tidy.
- Pupils willingly take on roles and responsibilities. Opportunities to become elected members of the school council are fiercely fought for. Pupils explained the voting system for election to these posts. They told the inspector this system is fair. Even if not successful in their applications, they respect the majority decision.

This process is helping pupils to understand fundamental British values and democracy.

- Pupils take pride in their school and in their work. They respect their learning environment and play their part in ensuring all classrooms, shared spaces and outdoor areas remain well cared for. Pupils' written work is neatly presented and all corrections indicated are completed carefully. Pupils strive hard to achieve the 'golden envelope' award which celebrates hard work, good attendance and good behaviour.
- The school has taken effective action to reduce absence. Pupils understand the importance of good attendance and good punctuality. Attendance has improved and is now close to the national average. Punctuality is good. There have been no exclusions in the last few years.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. School staff and visitors are checked carefully for suitability. All visitors are monitored while on site. Staff are highly visible at all times of the school day. There is no public access to the buildings or to the outdoor areas.
- Parents agree their children are safe at school. Regular updates they receive via the school newsletter provide helpful advice; for example, information relating to safe behaviour in school, parking outside the school gates and e-safety.
- Pupils say they have no concerns about safety at school. They say this is highly promoted in learning activities such as 'bike-ability', working with the police and with fire safety officers. 'Buddy group' assemblies also provide pupils with opportunities to discuss their own responses to the need to ensure safe behaviour at all times in and around the school.
- Pupils respect and uphold the school behaviour code. They play their full part in ensuring good relationships with staff and with their peers. Pupils say incidents of unacceptable or unkind behaviour do not happen in this school. When asked about this, pupils were unable to think of any examples. Pupils say there is always an adult on hand to resolve any disputes and to listen to their concerns.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils understand the consequences of wrong behaviour and take great pride in doing the right thing. They care deeply for each other and demonstrate this in their respectful behaviour towards all members of their school community.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching over time has not enabled pupils to make good progress and to achieve as well as they should. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have led to gaps in pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This is holding them back.
- Actions taken by senior leaders are helping to bring about improvements in teaching. However, these improvements still have further to go because pupils have much ground to make up as a result of the legacy of past underachievement. In particular, pupils are still not being helped to make enough progress in mathematics.
- Teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils' response to this is positive. They have confidence in their teachers and enjoy the subjects they study. Pupils, at all times, listen carefully in class, work hard and do their best to be successful. However, the challenge set for more-able pupils is still not high enough across the school and so these pupils continue to underachieve.
- Progress in English is now more rapid. There is a greater emphasis on writing at length and on using and applying the correct rules related to spelling, punctuation and grammar. As in other subjects, teachers' expectations for the most-able are still not consistently high enough.
- In mathematics, additional work set is sometimes more about quantity, rather than more difficult work. In this subject, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills or

to find the solutions to problems without support. Better practice was seen in Years 5 and 6, where pupils, engaged in an 'enterprise' project, were observed using their knowledge of mathematics to calculate potential profit and loss.

- New assessment processes have been introduced. Teachers are now more adept in identifying what pupils already know and can do. This information is being used more effectively to plan appropriate work and support in lessons, although practice remains variable across different year groups. In some classes, pupils move too swiftly to new tasks before they have mastered the basics. In others, the move to more difficult work is not as fast as it could be.
- Marking policies have been revised and the quality of marking is improving. Corrections are identified, such as to spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils now follow these up as a matter of course. However, in mathematics, corrections made to pupils' calculations do not sufficiently highlight the next steps they need to take to speed up their progress.
- Teachers now work more effectively with teaching assistants. This ensures that the support and guidance given to pupils who need extra help is appropriate. As a result, disadvantaged, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making better progress.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- As a result of weaker teaching over time and previously low expectations, of what pupils can achieve, pupils across the school and in all year groups make inadequate progress.
- Attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 1 have been variable since the last inspection. For most-able pupils in 2014, progress was below expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Very few pupils attained the higher Level 3 in reading and writing. In both key stages, the progress made in mathematics by the most-able pupils was exceptionally weak.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been on a declining trend. In 2014, the results pupils achieved in the national tests dropped significantly. Standards achieved in spelling, punctuation and grammar were a year behind pupils nationally. Very few pupils achieved Level 5 in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Over the last two years, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made inadequate progress. This means pupils in Years 1 and 2 have serious gaps in their learning. While these pupils are now gaining ground in reading and in writing, their progress in mathematics still lags behind. As a result of improved teaching, pupils in the current Reception class are now making better progress.
- Pupils make good progress in learning phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check dipped slightly in 2014 but remained in line with those seen nationally.
- The school uses the funding it receives to support disadvantaged pupils well. These pupils make good progress and their attainment is often better than their peers. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well in reading and writing because of the targeted support they receive. Their progress in mathematics is slower.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in relation to their starting points. Teachers and teaching assistants take special care to ensure that these pupils' individual learning needs are met.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children start in Reception with skills which are typical for their age. In previous years, progress at this stage has been inadequate but there has been rapid improvement this year. This means that the children currently in Reception are on track to leave the early years much better prepared for their start in Year 1.
- Changes made to the teaching staff and to leadership and management, have led to notable

improvements. As a result, teaching in Reception is improving and children are developing their skills at a faster rate.

- Provision has improved. Indoor and outdoor learning spaces have been enhanced and the curriculum content revised. Nevertheless, leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is not yet good because the new leader has not been in post long enough to have an effective impact on children's achievement.
- Teachers now have a better understanding of individual children's starting points. Assessments made are more accurate, routinely updated and shared with parents. Detailed 'learning journals' chart children's progress through all their learning goals. Current data show that most children in the current Reception Year are now making better progress in all areas of learning than was previously the case.
- Children in the current Reception class enjoy their learning. They behave very well and work and play happily with each other. Children follow all instructions carefully. They know and understand the class routines, take turns and share resources sensibly with their classmates.

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	114844
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	453681

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Moss
Headteacher	Justin Wrench
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2013
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