

Canvey Island Infant School

Long Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 0JG

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well with governors to lead the school effectively. They work in strong partnership with all staff to continually develop and improve teaching. This ensures that it is well matched to pupils' needs.
- Teachers carefully plan lessons that engage pupils and move their learning on. They teach pupils key skills very capably. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and use their new abilities to learn in other subjects enthusiastically.
- Teachers create a sense of fun and excitement in classrooms. Strong relationships encourage pupils to try hard, learn well and not worry about getting things wrong.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They concentrate well in lessons and share ideas generously. Pupils are polite and courteous as they move around school. They enjoy each other's company at lunchtime and play together happily during breaks.
- Well-planned training enables all staff to provide good teaching and support for pupils. This means that pupils are taught equally well. The dip in outcomes from the above-average attainment seen in 2013 and 2014 has been addressed.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after at school; their parents agree. Parents have high levels of confidence in leaders and staff and believe their children are supported well to make good progress.
- Children in the Reception classes make a very good start to their learning. They engage in an exciting range of tasks, which are well matched to the progress they make. The new outdoor area is used very well to encourage children to develop their skills through more adventurous activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some aspects of leaders' monitoring lack the rigour necessary to ensure that the current standards and quality of teaching would be sustained if there were changes to staffing.
- Governors have not monitored the impact of the use of the funding received to support disadvantaged pupils carefully enough.
- Attendance remains below the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - closely monitoring the progress of the most-able pupils carefully in lessons and using the information available to provide well-targeted challenge.

- Improve the rigour and impact of leaders' monitoring by:
 - taking sharp action to address absence when the causes are not evidenced and valid
 - formalising the processes for monitoring teaching so that all sources of information, including pupils' achievement, book scrutiny and lesson observation, contribute to the judgements made
 - ensuring that governors know how the pupil premium funding is used and what impact it has on disadvantaged pupils' achievement and well-being
 - quickly involving wider agencies when concerns are identified to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher use their detailed knowledge of the school community and of pupils' needs to ensure that both the quality of teaching and the level of care given to pupils enable them to make good progress.
- Leaders' improvement plans identify appropriate priorities based on their evaluation of the school's work and on new initiatives they are implementing. Expected outcomes of actions are identified well and arrangements for governors' monitoring of these are clear. This means that leaders, staff and governors know what is expected and what their roles are in ensuring that the improvements happen.
- Teaching improves because staff work well together and develop provision collaboratively. Some elements of the formal monitoring of teaching rely too much on the good relationships that exist between staff rather than well-evidenced analysis.
- Leadership of English is strong. Expectations of how early literacy skills are taught, and the need to develop pupils' communication skills, have been made clear. All staff have been carefully trained to meet these expectations. As a result, pupils quickly learn early skills, such as knowing letter sounds and how they are used individually and together to spell and read words.
- Mathematics is led similarly well. The focus given to increasing the opportunities pupils have to use their early number knowledge to solve problems and deepen their understanding has resulted in pupils using these skills confidently. Pupils are making improved progress.
- Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress provide staff with a good understanding of how well pupils are doing. The achievement of different groups of pupils is analysed and systems enable pupils falling behind to be quickly identified. Where necessary, extra support or additional focused teaching is put in place. This helps pupils to catch up well.
- Leaders carefully use the extra funding the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils. The headteacher has identified that the focus given to ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress has not also paid enough attention to their attainment. This has been remedied and the performance of disadvantaged pupils in year groups across the school now is more in line with that of their peers.
- Leaders have worked to ensure that the curriculum inspires pupils to learn and find out. It is well planned, interesting and relevant. There are good examples of pupils using their emerging literacy skills to explore and learn in other subjects such as history and geography. There is less evidence of this in their science work. Pupils achieve good standards in their art work; displays of work around the school richly reflect the range of media they use and skills they develop.
- Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures through thoughtfully planned lessons and input from visitors. They also learn the meaning of the school's core values, which include respect and resilience, through lessons and assemblies. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is woven throughout their learning experiences and enhanced in assemblies. As a result of this, and the progress they make in developing language and communication skills, they are well-prepared to move on to their next school.
- Leaders successfully identify pupils who would benefit from extra support. Much of the way the teaching of core skills is organised ensures that pupils, including those who experience barriers to their learning, are supported by both teachers and teaching assistants throughout the school day. Individual targets in pupils' personal plans are precise and are revisited regularly. Leaders draw readily on external expertise to enable pupils with specific needs to make good progress. The new special educational needs leader has quickly established a strong understanding of the school's work and is using her expertise to ensure that the school carries out its own analyses of pupils' starting points so that leaders know whether intervention is helping pupils to do well enough.
- The additional funding to improve the teaching of physical education and primary sports is used in partnership with other local schools. This effective collaboration provides coaching expertise which is also developing teachers' knowledge, increasing pupils' participation in wider events and extending after school opportunities. Pupils say they 'really love' their PE lessons. In a Reception class gymnastics lesson, children made rapid progress in developing jumping and balancing skills because of the good teaching there were receiving.
- Leaders work closely in partnership with other local schools to best meet the needs of the Canvey Island community. Staff work together to moderate assessments and to improve teaching. The local authority monitors the work of the school. Good support has been provided to address the lower attainment of

disadvantaged pupils. The school has been part of a specific project to deepen understanding of the barriers to pupils' learning and to find new and different ways to address them. Although it is early days, information gathered is already used by staff to help pupils learn the new skills they need more quickly.

■ The governance of the school

- A number of governors have a long association with the school. They have a robust understanding of pupils' achievements and of the barriers to learning faced by some pupils. They visit regularly and some provide extra support to help pupils learn, for example with their reading.
 - Recent appointments to the governing body have increased the extent to which they analyse and understand the school's effectiveness. For example, a record of a recent governor visit related to attendance clearly shows that her analysis is robust. Challenging questions were asked of leaders to determine whether procedures to tackle pupils' absence are working.
 - Although governors know about the raising achievement of disadvantaged pupils project the school is involved in, and know that in 2015, eligible pupils' attainment was below that of their peers, they have not challenged leaders sufficiently about the causes of this, neither do they fully understand the impact of the different uses of the extra funding the school receives. Processes that the headteacher is implementing to ensure that these pupils' attainment is carefully monitored as well as their progress will enable them to challenge leaders more accurately.
 - Governors meet their statutory responsibilities to ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place. The safeguarding governor audits the quality of the management of health and safety and ensures that policies and procedures are up to date and that the required checks on staff suitability to work with children are in place.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils spoken to in groups and at play expressed certainty that they feel safe in school. Policies are kept up to date and procedures for ensuring that children are protected from harm are followed. Prevent training to ensure that staff understand the risks and indicators of extremism has been provided for staff and governors. In a very small number of instances, the headteacher has arranged local solutions to manage issues affecting vulnerable pupils when wider agency involvement would have more formally recognised her concerns at an early stage.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is successful because relationships at all levels are positive and trusting. Teachers take every opportunity to celebrate pupils' successes and to build their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and make these clear. As a result, pupils work hard in partnership with each other and with staff to meet them.
- Subject leaders make sure that teachers have the training and information they need. Careful thought is given to ensuring that the way key skills are taught is matched to pupils' needs. A significant focus has been given to supporting pupils to develop better communication skills and a richer vocabulary. This is evident in lessons and in pupils' work. Teachers work well together so that pupils in different classes receive equal opportunities to succeed in their learning.
- Because teachers plan learning carefully, question children skilfully and energetically demonstrate learning, pupils understand very well what they are expected to do. Many lessons are fun and teachers' enthusiasm for their pupils' success encourages them to make extra effort. Pupils want to succeed and are proud when they do.
- Teachers give pupils feedback during lessons as they work. This helps them understand when they are doing well and what parts of their work they need to improve. Pupils are encouraged to check their work when they think they have finished. The combination of teacher and pupil review enables pupils to understand how to improve well. For example, in a Year 2 writing lesson, a pupil added an exclamation mark to his work saying, 'I put in an exclamation mark because they slammed the door'.
- In addition to this feedback, teachers review and mark pupils' work in line with school policy. They use the information they gather to shape the next lessons and to make sure pupils who need help receive it. In some instances, not enough attention is given to making sure pupils correct wrongly formed numbers and letters, which means they do not move on as quickly in these core skills as they could.

- Teaching assistants know what the pupils they work with are expected to learn. They are well trained and held to account for how well they help pupils to make progress. They are diligent in ensuring that pupils learn well and many keep detailed records of the progress pupils they work with make. The strong partnership between teaching assistants, teachers and pupils is a key reason why classrooms are so happy and pupils make good progress.
- Work is well matched to most pupils' needs. More challenging work is sometimes planned for the most-able pupils, but in some lessons, they lose interest because this work is not demanding enough so their progress slows. In a small number of lessons, pupils receive too much support so do not have the chance to develop resilience and independence in their learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support because staff are determined to help them make progress. As a result, they develop confident attitudes to their learning and achieve well from their different starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good because all staff nurture pupils and do their best to provide good levels of care and support for them.
- Records show that staff record any concerns about pupils' welfare carefully. These concerns are followed up and wider agencies are involved where further care is needed. On occasions, referral has taken too much time. This is because the headteacher has found local solutions for issues such as parents' difficulties in getting their children to school. Extra provision, such as counselling, is made available to pupils who need it.
- Leaders emphasise the importance of the development of pupils' personal qualities. Pupils are taught about values such as resilience, respect and responsibility. In an assembly, pupils contributed thoughtfully to a discussion of responsible and irresponsible behaviour. They made links in their thinking to how being irresponsible can be a safety risk and how, at Canvey Island Infant School, pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own learning.
- In lessons, pupils are praised and encouraged to learn from their mistakes. They become confident learners as they tackle new tasks and experiment with their skills in an environment where effort and concentration are valued and making mistakes are an important part of the learning process.
- Pupils have many opportunities for reflection in assemblies and in lessons. Along with the focus given to their developing language skills, this widens their understanding of why good behaviour is expected and why it is important. In discussion and in lessons, it is evident that pupils become thoughtful, proud and caring members of the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are expected to develop the ability to manage their own behaviour and to keep to the five school rules. They behave well as they move between lessons and enjoy their friends' company at lunchtimes. Lunchtimes are well-managed, happy and calm occasions.
- Pupils' attendance is a concern for leaders and governors. Evidence shared during the inspection shows that it is tracked carefully and that a high profile is given to rewarding good attendance through displays and in assemblies. The attendance manager follows up absence quickly to ensure that pupils are safe and leaders know why pupils are not at school. Analysis shows that a very high proportion of absence is related to illness and medical needs. Some of this is recurrent childhood illnesses such as chicken pox. There is also a high degree of chest infection and tonsillitis. Leaders now ask parents for evidence related to medical illness where this contributes to high rates of absence. In the autumn term, attendance was the highest it has been in many years, almost in line with the national average. This term has seen a decline again caused by illnesses. The headteacher has started to take rigorous action and involve wider agencies in addressing instances of persistent absence when there is not a valid cause.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen well to teachers and respond enthusiastically. In many instances, their levels of concentration and effort are impressive. Occasionally, they can become over-excited and there is minor low-level disruption to learning.
- Pupils with challenging behaviour are set appropriate targets and receive focused support which helps them improve. In some lessons, teachers skilfully managed pupils who found it hard to conform, sustaining their confidence and self-esteem while bringing them back on track in their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Early years teachers analyse children's attainment on entry in detail. There is robust evidence to demonstrate that children's attainment on entry varies widely. However, a significant proportion of children have below typical levels of personal development, communication and language.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015, overall attainment was broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, there was little difference between attainment in each subject and a large proportion of pupils had made good progress. This attainment represented a fall from being significantly above the national average in 2013 and 2014.
- Some of this fall was because in 2015, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics were well below those attained by their peers and by other pupils nationally. Analysis shows that these pupils attained less well in writing. Scrutiny of the school's assessment information shows that these pupils made expected and better progress from their starting points. Current analysis shows that disadvantaged pupils are receiving well-targeted support. All pupils in Year 1 are on track to reach expected standards. In Year 2, support is having an impact less quickly and extra intervention is in place to accelerate pupils' progress in reading.
- In 2015, outcomes also fell in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening test. Observations in lessons and pupils' work show that the actions taken to improve the teaching of early literacy skills are effective. Pupils use their knowledge of the sounds letters make effectively to read and write. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils, with the exception of those who have identified barriers to their learning, have caught up with the expected standard.
- Pupils are keen to write. They confidently respond to short, focused tasks and use the skills they learn in these well when they write creatively. This includes simple punctuation and different parts of speech, for example adjectives. Almost all pupils are confident to try to spell unknown words and sometimes very complex ones. Although these spellings may not be correct, they are plausible attempts and show that pupils use their understanding of phonics very well in their wider work.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of key concepts in mathematics like early number bonds and the properties of shapes. They confidently experiment with numbers to solve problems and recall simple number facts well. Pupils' books show that they have made good progress this year working on a range of practical activities and more formal number calculations.
- There was some lack of challenge for the most-able pupils in the lessons seen. Their books also show that the level of challenge for these pupils is not always as high as their achievements suggest it should be. The proportion of pupils who reach above expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 is broadly in line with the national average.
- Pupils with statements or education, health and care plans are well supported to make good progress from their starting points. Leaders are focusing on pupils who are identified as requiring extra support but do not have a statement or plan. Analysis shows that these pupils receive effective and well-planned teaching so that they make good progress from their starting points. Their attainment does, however, remain well below that of other pupils in the school and nationally.
- The focus given to developing pupils' confidence in learning, communication and language skills is successfully enabling more pupils to make accelerated progress. It is also helping leaders and staff to better understand the barriers that prevent some pupils from making accelerated progress. The increased confidence pupils have to tackle challenging tasks and the improving literacy skills evident in their work mean that they are well prepared to move on to the junior school.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years team is very effectively led. Staff work in close partnership to ensure that, on a daily basis, children participate in a range of interesting and engaging activities. Strong teaching results in a similar proportion of pupils to the national average achieving a good level of development. From a range of starting points, children make good and very good progress to start Year 1 with the confidence and skills they need to continue to learn well.
- Children are supervised well in class and when they participate in a range of activities outside. Staff have appropriate first-aid qualifications and safeguarding procedures are implemented with the same rigour as they are elsewhere in the school.
- Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught carefully. Children are expected to recall information and to use, and experiment with, the new skills they learn, for example building words using letter sounds and completing simple number patterns. These high expectations mean that many children make rapid progress because they quickly become curious to find out more and grow confident in their own abilities.
- Staff quickly develop positive and trusting relationships with children. Detailed and regular assessment enables staff to challenge pupils and move their learning on. Focused support from the teacher and skilled teaching assistants is used to help children who face barriers to their learning engage in practical, fun and developmental activities. As a result, these children develop increasing confidence in their own abilities and start to understand the joys of learning.
- Both the classrooms and the newly equipped outdoor area are used well. Pupils paint, dress up, ride trikes, search for letter sounds in glitter or read books in a cosy corner. There are many and varied opportunities for children to write and they use these frequently, happily making books, writing to family members and designing cards.
- Parents are happy with the support their children receive to start school. They have good opportunities to contribute to teachers' understanding of their children's learning and are supported to know how to help their children make progress in their early learning.

School details

Unique reference number	114980
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10001329

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Ashdown
Headteacher	Ann Matthews
Telephone number	01268 683257
Website	www.canveyislandinfantschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@canvey-inf.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 July 2011

Information about this school

- Canvey Island Infant School is smaller in size than the average primary school. There are two classes in each year group.
- The school provides education for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The vast majority of pupils move on to Canvey Island Junior School.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- About a quarter of pupils are disadvantaged and receive support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children looked after by the local authority). This proportion is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are identified as requiring extra support is slightly above average. That of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is in line.
- Children in the early years attend full time and are taught in two parallel Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 14 lessons. They looked at pupils' work and talked to them about their learning and their school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including assessment information relating to pupils' current progress, leaders' evaluation of the school's work, planning for improvement, information from the monitoring of teaching and performance management, minutes of governor meetings and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors spoke formally to two groups of pupils. They also spoke to pupils around school, in lessons and at playtimes. They spoke to parents enjoying lunch with Year 1 pupils and as they arrived at school with their children. They heard pupils read and took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View as well as written responses from parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work. They paid particular attention to the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in lessons and over time.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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