

Canvey Island Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114980
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311777
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Pangbourne

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Clarke
Headteacher	Mrs Annette Keeney
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Long Road Canvey Island Essex SS8 0JG
Telephone number	01268 683257
Fax number	01268 512010

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small Infant School. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. Of the very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion known to be eligible for a free school meal is average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. When children enter the school, their attainment is below what is expected for their age, although this is not the case for all children. The school has recently been awarded the National Healthy School status and the Active Sports mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents are very positive about it. Typical of many, a parent wrote, 'I am very impressed with all aspects of the school. The teachers and other members of staff are very approachable.' The pupils enjoy the interesting things to do. They are very proud of the chicks that have hatched recently, saying 'We are the only school round here that has chicks!'

Fundamental to the school's success is the tangible sense of team spirit that permeates it. The headteacher, her senior management team and staff work very effectively together and continually strive for improvement. The school identified that standards in writing were not as high as they could be so it introduced many initiatives to address this. Standards are now rising. This is a school where every pupil is important. Each pupil's progress is monitored very thoroughly and extra support is provided for those who are falling behind or forging ahead. The school has identified that it needs to focus more on the pupils who are in the middle ability group, to raise standards further in writing.

In 2007, standards in Year 2 were broadly average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. This year, standards are similar in all three, despite an unusually high proportion of pupils in the year group who find it hard to learn. All pupils, including those who find it harder to develop literacy and numeracy skills make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.

There are several reasons why pupils do well. The quality of teaching is good and the good curriculum, enhanced by an excellent range of enrichment activities interests the pupils and encourages them to learn. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They receive good care, guidance and support so they grow in confidence. Although some teachers mark work well, this is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to know what they need to do to improve. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, reflecting the very caring, family ways of working in the school. As a result, behaviour is excellent and pupils are very caring and thoughtful. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school. The way in which pupils contribute to the community both in and out of school is excellent. The school enjoys an outstanding partnership with local schools who work together very effectively to enhance learning.

Leadership and management are good. Subject leaders fulfil their roles effectively and some are currently developing their monitoring skills. The governors watch over the school well. They are committed and challenge the school to do its best. Self-evaluation is accurate. The good progress since the previous inspection indicates that the school has a good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents recognise the good provision made for the children. One wrote, 'My boy has come on in leaps and bounds since starting school.' Children make good progress but few are on course to meet the early learning goals, set for them nationally, by the beginning of Year 1 because they have so much ground to make up. All children now have three terms in the Reception classes following the school's recent decision to admit all children at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. This extra time for many is beginning to impact positively on standards. Children achieve well because the quality of teaching is good and staff make

learning fun. For example, children enjoyed a short aerobics session after sitting in assembly. They then eagerly approached the exciting tasks offered, such as designing underpants for a dinosaur or using a paintbrush like an archaeologist to gently excavate buried dinosaurs in the sandpit. All adults take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills. The children love coming to school, happily leaving their parents and carers to see what is on offer. Behaviour is good because staff make their expectations clear. Good leadership of this stage of education ensures that the curriculum is well planned and that activities meet the children's needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils in the middle ability range to do better in writing.
- Mark work consistently across all subjects so that pupils understand their personal targets more fully.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Standards this year are similar to last year in reading and mathematics. There have been improvements in standards of writing. This is because the school has introduced more opportunities for writing across the curriculum, improved staff knowledge and provided many whole school activities to promote writing. However, these activities have yet to have a fully impact on standards for middle ability pupils. Pupils who need extra help to learn and those who speak English as an additional language do well because they receive very effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are very friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors. The behaviour of the vast majority is excellent. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and school councillors take the role very seriously. Pupils demonstrate outstanding care for others by fundraising and supporting a wide range of charities. They develop an excellent understanding about keeping healthy and safe, both by eating a balanced diet and through the many opportunities to keep fit. They take part very enthusiastically in regular 'Get Fit' sessions during the day and many attend extra-curricular sports clubs. Pupils say they feel safe and bullying and racism are very rare. Pupils are building a good foundation for later life and the next stage of their education. Their good attendance is effective in allowing pupils to make good progress. However, a very small number of families persist in taking their children on holiday in term time or keeping their children at home unnecessarily.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations and use interesting methods to motivate pupils. Adults place strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills and in encouraging pupils to think deeply about their learning. The pace in lessons is brisk and teachers use questions well to include all pupils. Good relationships mean that pupils are willing to ask questions and behaviour is managed very well. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively when pupils are working in groups and this contributes positively to their progress, particularly for those who have additional

needs. However, when the teacher is talking to the whole class, teaching assistants sometimes sit and listen rather than take an active part in the lesson or support pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are good and teachers have a clear view of the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy a wide range of focused days and weeks, such as 'Health Week', that contribute well to their personal development. Highly attractive displays effectively support learning. A thorough curriculum review has led to sensible changes, linking learning in different subjects to make it more relevant. There are good opportunities to study the locality, for example, the Canvey Island Floods in 1953. Planning is well matched to the different abilities of pupils in each class. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and an increasing range of activities is organised for them, such as the chance to work with a local author. Pupils use information and communication technology confidently to support and extend learning. There are good opportunities for them to understand health, safety and environmental issues such as the need for recycling. Very effective links with the junior school ensure a smooth transition.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents and pupils value the school's very caring and supportive ways of working. Several parents mentioned the friendliness and helpfulness of the headteacher and staff. Rigorous procedures ensure the safety, security and health of the pupils. Good tracking systems allow teachers quickly to identify pupils who are not making the expected progress. Support for vulnerable pupils or those who find learning difficult is excellent. Very good links with external support agencies ensure pupils have access to specialist advice and support. Consequently, they make good progress. Pupils have their own targets and the marking of books helps pupils improve, but the quality is variable and does not always link well to the targets, so it is not always effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her deputy work very effectively in partnership and, together with the senior management team, set high standards for what the school can achieve. Very thorough monitoring and evaluation of everything that the school does means that the school identifies and prioritises the right areas for development. Subject leaders fulfil their responsibilities well but some of them are still developing their monitoring skills. The governors have a good understanding of the school through the visits they make. There is scope for them to be more fully involved in its self-evaluation.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Canvey Island Infant School, Canvey Island, SS8 0JG

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We would like to tell you what we found out.

You told us that you enjoy coming to school and that you have lots of interesting things to do. We agree with you. We enjoyed looking at the chicks too! All the grown-ups look after you very well and you make good progress as you move through the school. We thought that your behaviour was excellent and that you are polite and friendly. You have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy - we liked your 'Get Fit' sessions. We were also impressed by all the charities that you support. We also thought that you are lucky to have so many visits and visitors and clubs to join. The teachers and governors who lead your school work hard to make it better and to give you things that you like to learn. Your families know that you go to a good school.

We have asked Mrs Keeney and the teachers to help some of you to do even better in writing. You can help by continuing to try as hard as you can. We have also asked the teachers to see if you have reached your targets when they mark your work.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at Canvey Island Infant School and do well in your next school.

Best wishes

Alison Pangbourne

Lead inspector