

Waterman Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 114940 |
| Local Authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 326096 |
| Inspection date | 5 June 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Martin Beale |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 65 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Tosca Boothman |
| Headteacher | Mrs Gillian Jones |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 June 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | The Boulevard Rochford Essex SS4 1QF |
| Telephone number | 01702 546237 |
| Fax number | 01702 530693 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection date | 5 June 2009 |
| Inspection number | 326096 |

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupil numbers have fallen in this small primary school. The school experiences high pupil mobility and free school meal eligibility is above average. Virtually all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Just under a half of the pupils need additional support with their learning, mostly because of moderate learning difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are of Reception age and taught alongside Key Stage 1 pupils. Key Stage 2 pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. The school is led by an acting headteacher supported by an executive headteacher because of the long-term absence of the substantive headteacher.

The school shares its site with a recently opened Children's Centre and the Wishing Well Nursery. The Nursery was also inspected, but as it is not managed by the school's governing body, the findings are reported separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of 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.

There is significant underachievement throughout the school, largely because teaching is inadequate. It does not move pupils' learning forward fast enough and rarely inspires. Pupils make inadequate progress. Standards are low and falling. Relatively few pupils reach the level expected for their age at the end of both key stages and hardly any exceed this. The new temporary leadership team has recently put in place programmes to improve the key skills of literacy and numeracy. These are now more closely matched to the pupils' current needs but their impact is not yet evident.

Teachers expect too little of the pupils, who have few opportunities to show initiative or take responsibility for their learning. Although very recent changes have led to some improvement in teaching, the legacies of the past mean that classes are disrupted because teachers have to continually emphasise their expectations. Individual targets for pupils and those for the performance of teachers are not sufficiently challenging to raise achievement or improve provision. Marking is inconsistent. It is improving under the guidance of the interim leadership team, but pupils are not clear about how well they are doing or the steps they can take to improve.

The climate for learning has deteriorated since the previous inspection as reflected in the pupils' inadequate personal development and well-being. Pupils do not take pride in their work and achievements. They are often inattentive and are unable to work effectively with others or by themselves. Despite the range of strategies to improve attendance it remains low. Pupils do not always show respect and consideration for others, and some are worried about bullying. Tackling these matters has been the major focus of the temporary team in the short time since their appointment. Their action, including the 'zero tolerance' approach to poor behaviour, is starting to show some benefit and the school is becoming a calmer place. Even so, too many pupils do not behave well and this affects the learning of others.

Parental views are mixed, with several expressing concerns about the turnover of teaching staff. It is acknowledged that the very recent improvements in the school are due to the actions of the temporary leadership team and the support from the local authority. The school has not dealt effectively with major challenges and has presided over a period of declining performance since the previous inspection. This means the school is not in a position from which to secure sustained and lasting improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

Children make inadequate progress in Reception and few reach expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. This is because teachers' expectations of what children can achieve are too low. Tasks are not planned sufficiently well to meet their individual needs. Some work is too difficult and formal for them because they share the same activities as Year 2 pupils. The school is working hard to improve teachers' planning and assessment. Recently introduced procedures mean the school has a clear picture of each child's attainment. The classroom is bright and

stimulating, although the adults do not always make the best use of the environment and resources available. Opportunities for children to initiate learning activities themselves are very limited and the outside classroom is not used effectively to add interest and challenge.

The children's welfare is given a high priority and the adults provide a caring, safe and welcoming environment. As a result, the children feel secure and become confident learners. They behave sensibly and have positive relationships with adults and other children. The school works closely with parents and the on-site Nursery to ensure that the children have a smooth introduction to school life. The current, but temporary teacher has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. She has instigated plans for its improvement, although it is too early to see significant impact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by raising the level of challenge, giving pupils more responsibility for their learning and improving the climate in which they work.
- Focus leadership and management at every level on contributing effectively to school self-evaluation in order to raise pupils' achievement.
- Raise expectations of what pupils can achieve through setting challenging targets and checking that everyone is working to their potential.
- Improve the rates of attendance and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The progress of pupils across the school is inadequate and has declined in recent years. This includes those pupils who need additional support with their learning as well as the more able pupils. Year 2 results have fallen sharply since the previous inspection and were exceptionally low in all areas in 2008. Few pupils reached the level expected for their age. Girls were assessed at higher levels than boys in reading and writing. Year 6 test results rose in 2007 but fell in 2008 to exceptionally low levels in all subjects. Pupils were about two years behind expectations in English. Less than half of the pupils reached the nationally expected Level 4 in each subject and few exceeded this level. Boys gained lower results than girls, particularly in mathematics. The work seen during the inspection reflects these low results with the majority of pupils working below the level expected for their age across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 4

Several factors account for inadequacies in the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show little enthusiasm for learning, although most say they enjoy school, particularly the trips and educational visits arranged for them. Pupils know how they should behave but too many find it difficult to carry this out. This is masking the ability of some pupils and preventing the learning of others. Most pupils are happy to show consideration for others when raising money for charity but this does not always extend to developing positive relationships with others in school. Some pupils lack sensitivity and tolerance of other's differences and so bullying remains a concern and causes some pupils to feel unsafe. Pupils know about the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. Older pupils are keen to take on real responsibilities but have few opportunities to do so, although their council is starting to give pupils some ownership of developments in the school. These weaknesses in social skills

as well as their slow academic development mean the pupils are not suitably prepared for success in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching has not helped the pupils to develop key learning skills sufficiently so that they can work independently and take greater responsibility for their progress. Many pupils are not consistently attentive in spite of their teachers' efforts to engage them and make lessons interesting. Consequently, learning slows when teachers have to keep reinforcing their expectations for work and behaviour. Teachers are trying to involve pupils in their learning and develop their speaking skills such as through discussions with a partner. However, they have to model how this should be done because pupils are not skilled at sharing ideas with others or working collaboratively. Work set is not always sufficiently challenging and pupils do not show much pride in the quality of their written work. Teaching assistants make a useful contribution and are helping to focus the pupils' minds on their work but there are times when the pupils are too dependent on them and are unwilling to take the initiative.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The temporary team is focused on improving the pupils' literacy and numeracy by devoting prime teaching time to both areas. While evidence is emerging to show early reading skills are improving, it is too early to see any lasting impact. The curriculum does not challenge sufficiently the small number of more able pupils. Writing is not promoted effectively across subjects and pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop their information and communication technology skills. A sharp focus has been placed on improving the pupils' social skills through activities such as 'Friendship Week' with pupils working in mixed-age groups. Opportunities to link subjects are starting to be exploited in order to make learning more interesting for the pupils, but this is another initiative that is at an early stage. Enrichment activities including those for sport benefit from links with other schools. The residential trip for the older pupils was much enjoyed and helped them learn to work together better.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Procedures to safeguard the welfare of the pupils meet statutory requirements. The school is assiduous in following up any concerns about the pupils' well-being and safety. Pupils say there is always someone for them to turn to if they have a problem even though there have been considerable staff changes this term. The recent drive to improve behaviour and eliminate bullying is starting to have an impact; nevertheless these remain areas of concern for some pupils. The school works hard to identify and meet the needs of all pupils, but programmes have not consistently supported the achievement of pupils with particular learning needs. Recently introduced assessment procedures are more accurate so the school can track progress and target individual support where needed. Pupils have individual targets in English and mathematics but these are not always in a form they can easily understand and marking does not always indicate how their individual targets can be achieved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The temporary headteachers have started to stabilise the school by focusing on creating a climate conducive to learning and bringing greater consistency to the teaching of basic skills. They have identified where action is required and put in place a sensible programme to deal with the most urgent areas in need of attention. However, their impact is limited so far with a team of temporary teachers, few of whom will be in the school next term. The school consequently lacks the capacity to deal effectively with the serious problems that it faces. The school's self-evaluation, completed by an external consultant, rightly identified major concerns that the school was not tackling robustly under its permanent leadership. The partnership with the local authority has brought valuable support and additional expertise to the school at a time of great challenge. Governors are very committed to the school and have been closely involved in checking how well it is doing. They had recognised its problems but not realised their seriousness. They have subsequently rallied around to help the school through this difficult period. Staff and governors understand the needs of the local community served by the school. They are active in supporting families as well as pointing them in the direction of additional services provided in conjunction with the Children's Centre and other organisations. Even so, efforts to promote community cohesion have not had sufficient impact in establishing harmonious relationships among all pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|--|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 4 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 4 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 4 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 4 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 4 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 3 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 4 |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 4 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 4 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 4 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 4 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 4 |
| The behaviour of learners | 4 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 4 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 4 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 4 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 4 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 4 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 4 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 4 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 4 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 4 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 4 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | Yes |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Waterman Primary School, Rochford, SS4 1QF

Inspectors visited your school recently. I am writing to let you know what we found out. Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being ready to share your thoughts about your school. We spoke to quite a lot of you and we have told your teachers how you were very helpful and polite. It was good to hear that you feel the school is improving.

We recognise that Waterman Primary School does some things well but that there are weaknesses in some important areas. For this reason, we have decided that your school requires help to improve. The youngest children do not have the start they need in Reception and we have made some suggestions to improve matters. Across the school, some of the teaching has not been good enough and this has led to you not making the progress of which you are capable.

Teachers are already trying to help you to become more considerate towards others. We have suggested that they give you more opportunities to show how well you can take responsibility for your learning. Some of you also need to attend more regularly.

We know that the adults in the school work hard to care for you. We are sure that the staff will do their best during the coming months to improve the school. Inspectors will visit regularly to check the progress the school is making.

We wish you every success in your future.

Yours faithfully

Martin Beale

Lead Inspector