

Winter Gardens Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135363
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	341642
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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	397
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Williams
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Harris
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 21 lessons and all 14 teachers were seen. Inspectors also met with governors, staff and groups of pupils including members of the school council. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised the school improvement plan, governing body minutes, the school's tracking data and self-evaluation documentation. Inspectors also analysed responses to 92 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

how effective leaders at all levels are in raising attainment and accelerating the progress which pupils make, in particular for those who are more able, and whether pupils in Year 6 on target to achieve national benchmarks in science

- how teachers enable pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language, to learn effectively and to make the best possible progress
- how teachers and leaders use assessment data supplied by the school's tracking systems to support the learning of targeted individuals and groups
- the quality of provision in the Early years Foundation Stage and the impact that leadership is having on children's outcomes in communication, language and literacy
- the extent to which community cohesion across all three strands is a strength of the school

Information about the school

The school was established in September 2008 through the amalgamation of an infants and junior school on the existing site. It is a slightly larger than average primary school. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is very low. The school is part of the local authority's Primary Capital Build programme which started in April 2009 and is expected to be completed in April 2011. It is also part of the Achievement for All pilot running in Essex and launched in October 2009. There is an on-site pre-school setting that is currently privately managed but will come under the direct management of the governing body on 1 April 2010. The pre-school was not inspected at the same time as the school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school led well by a dynamic leader. Rapid progress has been made on several fronts since the school was established 18 months ago. As one pupil commented, 'We have an amazing headteacher.' Pupils' achievement is good and improving. Children start school with skills and experiences which are below those expected for their age. Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress. Progress in Years 1 to 6 is also good. Attainment is average but rising across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the very small minority who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their learning because of the very well targeted care and support they receive. A notable strength is the way adults plan to meet the different needs of pupils. Additionally, the good behaviour of pupils contributes much to their successful learning.

Since last year, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has improved. Many pupils have a clear understanding about what they need to do to improve their work because of effective marking and the use of targets in lessons. However, this good practice is not consistent throughout the school. Recognising this, school leaders are modelling good practice which is beginning to have the desired impact. In science, pupils have significantly improved their skills in making and explaining their predictions using scientific language. These improvements, arising from accurate self-evaluation and concerted action, demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Rigorous monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and other leaders is helping to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. The inspection confirms the accuracy of their judgements. The quality of teaching in the majority of lessons is good, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage it is sometimes outstanding. A feature of most lessons is the very positive relationships between staff and pupils. In most lessons, a good range of different approaches and links between subjects capture the pupils' imagination and hold their interest. However, in a small minority of lessons learning objectives do not always focus on what pupils should learn and, as a consequence, teachers do not assess pupils' learning at the end of the lesson rigorously enough. Attendance is average and improving. Action taken by the school to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent is making a difference, although leaders recognise there is more work to do here to engage with a small minority of parents.

The school is a very friendly and cohesive community where the pupils value each other regardless of their backgrounds. Older pupils are very committed to the school and play a significant role in promoting good relationships. They greatly enjoy their role as 'play

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pals,' and their ideas to take the school forward are valued by leaders. Pupils' contribution to the wider community is less well developed. Parents are very supportive of the school and engage well; for example, many who have children with additional needs make a good contribution through the 'Achievement for All' pilot in which the school is participating.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - learning objectives always focus on what pupils should learn
 - gains in pupils' learning are rigorously checked at the end of lessons
 - marking is consistently effective in giving pupils the guidance they need to accomplish the next steps in their learning.
- Improve community cohesion by creating more opportunities for pupils to make contributions to the wider community and strengthening national and global links.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Inspectors saw good learning in the majority of the lessons they visited. Year 4 pupils made good progress in applying their basic mathematics skills to solve word problems. Good provision in Year 1 to improve pupils' understanding about letters and sounds encouraged them to try hard. Year 3 pupils enjoyed the opportunity to role play the traditional story of Rama and Sita, and to reflect upon associated emotions. Across the school, learning is developed well through good questioning. The school's tracking information shows that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress. In Year 6 in 2009, pupils reached average levels of attainment in English and mathematics. Science was below average, but now pupils are on track to achieve at least in line with the national average. Well-developed basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, coupled with positive attitudes to learning, equip pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Pupils say that they enjoy school and feel safe. 'Operation piranha' with the local police has heightened Year 6 pupils' awareness of the dangers associated with breaking the speed limit on roads. Pupils have a good understanding about eating healthy foods, and they participate well in a broad range of additional sporting activities. The school council has its own budget and is influential in decision making. Pupils say they enjoy going to the breakfast club and interacting with their friends. The club provides plenty of different activities from which they can choose.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are skilled at making learning interesting for pupils, who understand and accept their high expectations for work and behaviour. Teachers use resources and new technology creatively to make learning more interesting. Assessment information is used well to match methods and tasks closely to the needs of all pupils. This ensures that the more able are challenged and that additional support is provided where needed by a skilled team of teaching assistants. While individual targets are used to help pupils to improve their work, marking does not consistently focus on the steps to be taken to meet them. The good curriculum has been under review and used well as a vehicle to support the renewed school aims. Creative links identifying key skills are made between subjects in the school's long term and thematic planning. For example, literacy skills are developed through all subjects and this is beginning to have a good impact on pupils' improving progress. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is developing and is a factor in extending the more able pupils in English and mathematics. The school has a clear understanding of the circumstances of pupils and their families. This, together with the improved use of assessment data, is particularly valuable in enabling leaders to identify the precise difficulties faced by pupils with special educational needs and to carefully tailor programmes for withdrawal and other intervention groups. The support of external agencies is sought where needed. The school recognises that further strengthening the arrangements when pupils move on to secondary school is an area for development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and his senior team provide clear direction based around the school's aims. Their concerted effort is driving improvements in teaching, assessment and the curriculum which, in turn, are leading to improvements in pupils' progress. Performance reviews are successful in identifying precisely what aspects of each teacher's skills need developing. The governing body is well led, has a clear understanding of the school's qualities and is fully involved in planning for the school's future. It provides support and challenge for the school in equal measure.

The school has put in place secure arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of its pupils and for making sure that those working with them are properly vetted. Responsibilities are clear, so that the school provides a safe environment for all. Staff and governors take their duties to promote equal opportunities seriously, and leaders successfully ensure that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. Making pupils' target cards accessible to parents on the school's website has strengthened the partnership that the school already enjoys with them. Partnerships with other providers are strong. For example, good links with two local secondary schools have resulted in strengthening the school's French and science curriculum and motivating more pupils to do well in these subjects. The school has a clear understanding of the local community and the context within which it works. However, staff and governors recognise that promoting community cohesion at a national and global level is an area for further development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Carefully planned induction arrangements, built on strong links with home, help children to settle quickly into the Reception class. Children are happy and secure because of the emphasis placed by all staff on their welfare and safety. By the time they leave Reception, most have reached the goals expected nationally. Writing is the weakest aspect, but is benefitting from the focus placed on it through the topics studied and the activities undertaken. In addition, the creative use of a teaching assistant to support speech and language development has resulted in children making improved progress in their communication and language skills. As a result, attainment in this area is now close to average. The good progress children make is also the result of carefully planned and stimulating activities on a daily basis. In addition, assessment information is used well to guide planning and check on every child's progress. Adults work well as a team, focusing sharply on meeting each child's needs. The indoor environment is bright and stimulating and there is good provision for all areas of learning. Although the outdoor area is satisfactory, it does not facilitate free-flow which means that children cannot choose to play indoors or outdoors at will. Despite this, resources are efficiently deployed to ensure that children have the best opportunities to learn and develop. Leaders know the setting well, set appropriate priorities for development and have effective systems for self-evaluation.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with the quality of education the school provides as clearly indicated by the outcomes of the responses. They are particularly supportive of the school's leadership. A very small minority express concerns about the effectiveness with which unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. Inspectors checked the effectiveness of the school's policies and procedures and found them to be

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sound.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Winter Gardens Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 397 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	57	37	40	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	61	34	37	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	35	56	61	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	38	52	57	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	45	47	51	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	45	45	49	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	41	51	55	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	27	58	63	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	34	56	61	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	23	60	65	6	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	24	65	71	0	0	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	38	41	53	58	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	51	43	47	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Thursday 25 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Winter Gardens Primary School, Canvey Island, SS8 9QA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. We think your school is good and has achieved a lot in the last 18 months.

Here are some of the good things in your school.

The care and support the school gives you is impressive. You and your parents know that you are very well looked after.

You behave well and have good attitudes to learning: as a result you are making good progress.

You are well taught because teachers organise their lessons well and give you interesting activities to do. Those of you who find learning difficult get very good support.

Your headteacher is leading the school well and staff and governors are good at helping him to make your school even better.

Here are the main things we have asked the school to improve.

Ensure that all your teachers make clear to you what you are going to learn and check how well you have got on at the end of the lesson.

Give consistently good feedback when marking your work so you always know what you need to do to improve.

Give you more opportunities to establish links with other organisations, both in the UK and abroad.

You can help by continuing to work hard and aiming to achieve even higher standards in relation to your learning targets.

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt

Lead inspector

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