

Whitton Green Community Primary School

Westwood Avenue, Lowestoft, NR33 9RR

Inspection dates

4–5 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils make inadequate progress across Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2). From average starting points in Year 3, they leave the school at the end of Year 6 with attainment over a year behind that of pupils nationally.
- Teaching is inadequate for older pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants have not had enough training and often lack clear guidance from teachers to help them have a good impact on pupils' learning.
- The school does not have the capacity to improve. The leadership and management skills of the deputy headteacher, senior teachers and the governing body are weak. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils and staff give serious cause for concern.
- Throughout the school, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs underachieve. These pupils do not have the right teaching or work to help them succeed.
- Behaviour is inadequate most especially in Years 5 and 6 where pupils' general lack of interest in learning and disruptive behaviour in lessons leads to drastically reduced learning for all.
- Younger pupils say they do not always feel safe in school and lack confidence that their concerns will be dealt with by staff.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has identified the main areas for improvement. Poor behaviour is being dealt with robustly, but there is more to do.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons as well as individuals and groups of pupils working with teaching assistants. Short sessions of the teaching of letter sounds were also observed. Inspectors also joined the school’s celebration assembly.
- Dinner and mid-morning break times were visited on both inspection days.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ past and current work and heard some pupils in Years 1, 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with staff and the chair of governing body. The inspectors spoke by telephone with representatives of the local authority and held a meeting with them. Meetings were held with groups of Years 2 and 6 pupils and inspectors spoke informally to many pupils during lessons, when appropriate, and at break times.
- Safeguarding documentation, information about pupils’ attainment and progress, the school’s evaluation of its performance and plans for development were scrutinised. Inspectors toured the school site with the headteacher.
- The views of 11 parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) were noted.
- Informal discussions with a few parents were held at the start of the school day and after assembly.

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Meg Hackney

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with 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 in the school.

Information about this school

- This primary school serves the local community and is smaller than average. It has a morning-only Nursery class and seven other classes.
- Since the last inspection, the school has changed from a first school to an all-through primary school for pupils aged 3–11. In the summer of 2012, the school's first group of Year 6 pupils took the national tests for their age group. There has been a substantial turnover of teaching staff. In September 2012, a new headteacher started at the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through School Action Plus and with a statement is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at School Action is average.
- The majority of pupils are White British and a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is a well above average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium.
- The school does not meet the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency and by the end of Autumn term 2012, the headteacher and governing body should ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff by:
 - working with the local authority to make certain that pupils exhibiting extreme behaviour have no opportunity to harm others and/or significantly disturb lessons or break times
 - installing locks on the main gates to the school
 - making sure that younger pupils feel safe by listening to and acting upon their concerns, especially about racist remarks and bullying
 - providing training for teachers and teaching assistants in how to manage pupils' behaviour effectively
 - making sure that all staff follow the school's agreed policy and procedures for managing behaviour.
- Develop the roles of the deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and Key Stage 1 and 2 leaders so that they can contribute to rapid school improvement by:
 - providing them with training in how to check the quality of teaching and pupils' learning
 - delegating roles and responsibilities for areas of school improvement to these senior leaders
 - ensuring that the headteacher and governing body hold all staff to account for rapid improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- Increase pupils' rate of progress through Years 3 to 6 and most especially in Years 5 and 6 by:
 - improving teaching to a consistently good level by providing teachers with explicit training and guidance on how to assess pupils' attainment accurately and plan lessons to meet the needs

of pupils of all abilities

- making sure teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and insist that pupils work to the best of their ability
 - providing teaching assistants with training on how to teach letters and sounds
 - making use of support from the local authority to help the headteacher evaluate the quality of teaching and check pupils' progress rigorously and regularly
 - using the findings to decide on the next steps to promote improvement at a good rate
 - taking action to ensure that pupils who routinely exhibit very poor behaviour do not disrupt the learning of others
 - making sure the headteacher holds teachers to account for the progress their pupils make.
- Increase the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs by:
- ensuring that the special educational needs coordinator makes thorough assessments of individuals' needs and puts appropriately detailed plans of support in place for individuals
 - making sure that pupils receive the teaching and support detailed in the plans
 - providing training for teaching assistants who support groups and individuals
 - ensuring that the special educational needs coordinator checks the provision for pupils regularly and rigorously, and holds class teachers to account for these pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils do not make sufficient progress in Key Stage 2. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2012 was well below average and these pupils were 12 months behind in reading, writing and mathematics. When this group of pupils' learning was assessed at the end of Year 2, their attainment was similar to that of pupils nationally. Only half the pupils made the nationally expected two National Curriculum levels progress in English and just over half in mathematics.
- Significant underachievement continues. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' work shows that the great majority take no pride in their efforts and have made little or no progress since the start of term. Attainment in reading is below average overall. When pupils talk about their work they show little enthusiasm, except for physical education. In contrast, in Year 4 where teaching is good, pupils are enthusiastic about learning and their books show they try hard. For example, pupils talked eagerly about their cooking activities in mathematics, explaining that they were practising how to measure accurately.
- In all year groups, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs underachieve. Currently, no-one is checking to make sure that teachers provide the additional help stated in the support plans for individual pupils. For example, one pupil, supposed to work on a daily programme of spelling, had only been given three sessions in four weeks.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. The great majority start Nursery with aspects of communication, literacy and numeracy less developed than is typical for the age group. By the time they leave the Reception class their level of skills are broadly average and in some years a little above.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading and writing skills are taught appropriately. Pupils enjoy reading and talking about books they like. They make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them read and write unfamiliar words. For pupils who struggle with reading, the mixing of books from different reading schemes hinders their progress.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The majority of teaching is inadequate. However, there is a mixed picture of teaching across the school. Teaching is generally better for the younger pupils and good in Year 4.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and founded on excellent relationships. Strong links between home and school help children settle happily and quickly into class. In the Nursery, children make a good start in learning to listen to and recognise letter sounds. Teachers develop this knowledge very well in Reception where children begin to use letter sounds to help them read and write. Teachers plan a wide range of purposeful activities that help children make a rapid start to developing their basic number skills.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 varies. When groups of pupils work with teaching assistants the quality of teaching requires improvement. Teaching assistants are not guided well enough to help pupils succeed and many have had no training on how to teach basic skills in reading and writing. Teachers do not make sure that pupils who struggle with reading are given books that help them to build up their vocabulary systematically.

- Teaching for the older pupils in Key Stage 2 is inadequate. Teachers' expectations for how pupils will behave and apply themselves to their work are too low. Behaviour is not managed well, so there is far too much low level disruption in lessons. This disruption limits all pupils' ability to listen to their teachers and get on with their work. Teachers' lesson plans are not based on a good understanding of what pupils already know and need to learn next. Consequently, there are many pupils who find the work either too easy or too hard. Pupils are not interested in doing their best and it is clear from their work that they are making inadequate progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils has a negative impact on the whole school. Younger pupils say that they do not feel safe in school. Older pupils are resigned to the fact that their lessons or efforts are spoiled by a few poorly behaved pupils. For example, at lunchtime two pupils had made a model with building bricks. Another pupil rushed in from the playground, threw a chair and destroyed it. The two pupils were upset but also resigned to the fact that 'he often does things like that'.
- The headteacher has taken a firm line on behaviour and as a consequence the number of exclusions is high. Pupils say they think this is 'much fairer than it used to be' and respect their headteacher as a result. Staff, too, indicate that they are pleased with improvements.
- Behaviour in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Children respond to their teachers' high expectations and are pleased to abide by the 'rules' of being kind and considerate to others. They apply themselves enthusiastically to a range of interesting tasks, especially jumping in water trays to see how much water they can displace. In Years 1 and 2, behaviour is generally good but on occasions when working in groups with teaching assistants, pupils' attention wanders and the pace of learning slows.
- At Key Stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6, behaviour is inadequate. Too many pupils show a lack of respect and intolerance for each other and staff. Too many also lack self-discipline which means they are drawn in to behaving inappropriately. As a consequence, lessons are frequently disrupted.
- When spoken to individually, the vast majority of older pupils are polite and thoughtful young people; many are eager to take on responsibilities such as being a member of the school council. Older pupils say that they understand different types of bullying, such as what is meant by cyber or racist bullying. While these pupils say there is no persistent bullying in the school, they feel that a number of pupils set out to 'spoil things for others' and that this has not been dealt with until recently. A small number of younger pupils say that they experience bullying, and feel that they are picked on because of their ethnic background.
- Attendance is average.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- In a short time, the headteacher has developed a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. She has a clear vision and strong ambition for the school to provide pupils with a high quality education. A disproportionate amount of her time has been taken up dealing with significant behaviour issues. However, she has made a good start on a new round of performance management, having monitored the performance of each teacher, and for most, provided points for improvement. She recognises that teaching assistants need more training.

- There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school. The deputy headteacher and teachers with leadership responsibilities do not have the necessary skills to assist the headteacher in bringing about improvement at a rapid rate. Consequently, without support from outside the school, improvement is likely to be very slow.
- Additional funding provided through the Pupil Premium has been used to set up a 'nurture' group, staffed by two part-time teachers and a full-time teaching assistant, in order to deal with the extreme and often violent behaviour of a small number of pupils. The nurture group has not had a substantial impact on helping pupils to improve their behaviour. In addition, the Pupil Premium funding is not being spent on improving the achievement of those pupils for whom it is intended. Currently, a significant amount of the special educational needs coordinator's time is spent working with this group. As a consequence, she is not able to fulfil her responsibilities to other pupils who have special educational needs.
- The curriculum for Key Stage 1 meets the needs of pupils. The strong focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills has a good impact. Pupils use these skills well in their topic work. At Key Stage 2, the curriculum is appropriate, with interesting topic themes which link subjects together. For example, during the inspection pupils were working on the theme of the Egyptians, and learnt about the culture of ancient Egypt. They also developed their knowledge of art and design when they plan to make a sarcophagus.
- Parents and carers are generally supportive of the school and appreciate the information they receive about their children's progress, especially in Reception and Nursery. Parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with inspectors raised concerns about pupils' behaviour.
- Safeguarding procedures such as child protection policies and training, as well as criminal record checks for all staff are in place. The small number of pupils who are violent is a cause for concern as are the security of the site and the protection of pupils from harm.
- The local authority undertook a review of the school in March 2012 and as a result offered support for improvement although not all was taken up. Currently, the local authority is in the process of putting together a package of support for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is weak
 - has relied too much on information provided by the school and accepted it at face value
 - has not asked enough challenging questions about pupils' progress and attainment
 - is not making sure that the Pupil Premium funding is used appropriately
 - is not meeting statutory requirements to make sure that all pupils are safe.

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	124640
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	402281

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Walsh
Headteacher	Rae Aldous
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2012
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