

# St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Pebmarsh

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115137
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	379016
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Richard Blackmore

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	69
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Belynda Fellows
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Mitchelson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	The Street Halstead CO9 2NH
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed six lessons taught by three teachers. Meetings were held with the leadership team, curriculum leaders, members of the governing body and the school council.

Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plan, documents and policies detailing how pupils are kept safe, the school's pupil progress data to see how well pupils are doing and analyses of the standards pupils reach. Inspectors studied 51 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, together with 13 from staff and 38 from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How quickly do pupils progress at Key Stage 2, especially in English?
- How effective is the teaching and leadership of mathematics at Key Stage 1?
- What improvements have been made in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

## **Information about the school**

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Almost all pupils are White British. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or statements is below average but there is a relatively high proportion with a statement of educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school holds the Activemark award.

**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. Pupils are very happy, enjoy their learning and want to succeed. As one parent wrote of the school, 'It has given us all a love of learning.' The school has improved in a number of ways since its last inspection. From below average starting points, the vast majority of pupils reach levels of attainment expected of them by the time they leave, although attainment is lower in mathematics because pupils have too few opportunities to use their skills in other subjects and in problem-solving tasks. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their education because there have been improvements, most notably in the quality of teaching. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those who face particular difficulties, are making good progress in their academic and personal development. This, coupled with the fact that boys and girls are doing equally well, represents an improvement on previous results, especially in English. Pupils behave exceptionally well and respond positively to the opportunities that the school provides. They are willing participants, and this adds to the good quality of their learning.

Teachers throughout the school promote a positive climate for learning and provide good quality tasks in English and mathematics that are quickly raising skill levels. Relationships are strong and so pupils feel highly secure and safe. The teachers in the three classes cope well with their mixed-age groups. They make good use of the numerous adults who assist with the lessons to deliver a range of carefully planned activities matched to pupils' different ages but occasionally not enough is asked of some more-capable pupils. The speed of learning sometimes slows because teachers do not maintain a quick enough pace to the lesson. The school provides a good curriculum that has some innovative features that help develop pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. The curriculum gives pupils a tremendous range of rich and memorable experiences which promote high levels of motivation and enjoyment such as the residential trips to centres on the Isle of Wight and the Lake District.

The school takes good care of all its pupils and plans support well. Consequently, pupils frequently and confidently approach adults if they are unsure of what a task involves or if they have any worries. The many improvements made to assessment procedures mean that pupils are fully aware of targets for improvement, marking is regular and, consequently, pupils know how to improve their work.

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Leadership places a strong emphasis on delegated responsibility and teamwork to drive further improvement. Leaders and managers make good use of monitoring and accurate self-evaluation to identify areas in need of improvement, and their actions have been effective in bringing about change. Teaching, for example, has improved because expectations are clear and teachers are quick to respond to feedback. This shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise the quality of teaching to be consistently that of the best practice in the school by:
  - ensuring that the tasks given to pupils provide consistently demanding levels of challenge for all, including the more able
  - making the pace of learning in every lesson is brisk.
- Improve pupils' attainment, particularly in mathematics by:
  - ensuring there are more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects
  - planning more activities that ensure pupils use their mathematical skills to solve problems.

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

**2**

The school has rightly placed a high focus on developing basic skills, particularly reading and writing, and has used a range of programmes to tailor individual and small group support which has ensured that pupils make more rapid progress than at the time of the last inspection. This progress is maintained because the quality of teaching is consistently good or better so that, throughout the school, standards are rising. For example, older pupils in a mathematics lesson reached above average standards because the teacher ensured that, from the start of the lesson, with the support of a teaching assistant, pupils were engaged in tasks that very accurately matched their level of ability. This meant pupils thought at a high level from the moment the lesson began. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because all staff have a good knowledge of their academic strengths and use effective strategies to help them improve skills which they find more difficult to master. Leaders and managers are ambitious for further improvements in standards, and are realistic in their acknowledgement that attainment is not as high as it could be in mathematics.

Pupils are confident that bullying is very rare and are extremely positive about the strategies, such as aiming for the 'Pebmarsh Polish' and its five values. This promotes high standards of behaviour in the school. Pupils feel exceptionally safe in this caring and warm environment. This is because they have total confidence that any issue will be quickly dealt with and teachers listen and respond to their concerns.

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Pupils are very aware of what it means to be healthy. The majority take the healthy school meals option and many participate successfully in physical education lessons and in sports competitions. For example, the school cross country team retained for a third year the 'Small Schools Cross Country Trophy'. Pupils make a good contribution to a strong sense of community in school, for example by serving as school councillors and their high level of participation in chosen charities such as 'Operation Christmas Child' and Barnados. Pupils make effective contributions to the local community, for example celebrating harvest time together at the nearby church. Although pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good, their knowledge of other cultures is not as strong. Pupils are competent in using a range of computer software, have secure basic skills and have highly positive attitudes to learning. This, and a combination of above average attendance and an ability to work as part of a cohesive team, prepares them well for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The most successful lessons are characterised by teachers' high expectations of what pupils should achieve, challenging but highly enjoyable tasks and effective use of assessment to inform planning and the targets set for pupils. Secure subject knowledge and the effective use of aids, such as the interactive whiteboard, makes teaching clear, authoritative and engaging. Lessons usually move along at a brisk pace but, occasionally, questions lack challenge for more-able pupils and, consequently, this does not bring the best out in them.

<sup>1</sup> 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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Well-established planning cycles ensure that the curriculum is well balanced and is adapted year on year to meet pupils' needs and make the most of their interests. Arrangements to teach a modern foreign language are working well. This is because teachers use Spanish during the course of lessons so pupils have to respond by using the language for themselves. Year group planning ensures consistency in pupils' experiences and that themes are not repeated when pupils remain in the same class for more than one year because of the small numbers in each year group. Teachers do not always link subjects together and miss opportunities to further strengthen basic skills. For example, pupils do not always practice skills developed in mathematics in other subjects such as science.

Arrangements for the care of all pupils are well organised and effective. As a result, there is good support for their personal development and well-being. Partnerships with support agencies ensure good support for those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable. Teaching assistants are usually well briefed but are sometimes hesitant about contributing to pupils' learning during the initial part of lessons. The school is very successful in the way in which it helps those pupils who join the school part way through the year to settle in quickly and happily. This is because transitions in and out of the school and between classes are well managed. There is a very successful activity day at 'Mersea Outdoors' for Year 6 pupils moving on to the local secondary school. Other schools in the local area provide valued support to extend the curriculum and to smooth pupils' transfer to secondary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has successfully ensured improvements in the academic and personal outcomes for pupils. This is because she has improved systems for tracking pupils' progress, strengthened subject leadership and improved feedback to pupils on their targets and how to improve their work. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning have led to appropriate training and support that has had a significant, positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. However, monitoring of teaching is not carried out by all leaders and so not all have had the opportunity to identify where teachers need to improve further.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good and this aspect is very well led with

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detailed policies and procedures that rigorously ensure pupils' safety. Risk assessments involve all staff and governors and are reviewed thoroughly and frequently updated. Governance is good. The governing body gathers its own information from surveys and regular contact with the school, which informs its decisions. Its members make frequent visits and regularly talk to pupils. The governing body has been keen to take up a range of training enabling it to offer a robust challenge to the senior staff. The school has built strong links with outside agencies to provide more vulnerable pupils with good levels of care. These links have a beneficial effect on pupils' academic progress and personal growth. The quality of provision and current outcomes for pupils show that the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination effectively. The school has effective procedures for engaging with and seeking the views of parents and careers. For example, their views are keenly sought on the helpfulness of the end-of-year reports on achievement. The school's promotion of community cohesion is underpinned by an in-depth analysis into the nature of the immediate and wider communities. This information is used well to develop good relationships between pupils and promote engagement with different community groups. Its promotion of community cohesion further afield and internationally is less strong.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children are warmly welcomed into a safe and secure environment, where they settle happily. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, most entering the school with low writing and number skills. Provision for learning has improved because teaching is consistently good, although there are not enough opportunities for personal and social skill development in the classroom. The



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intervention of teaching assistants to help children consolidate and extend their learning is good and children's care and welfare are promoted well. Children enjoy their learning because they are well supported by the high number of adults and they learn well because activities are thoughtfully planned to stimulate their interest. There are frequent tasks where children make choices. For example, children showed considerable enthusiasm when using the 'vets' area devised by staff from ideas provided by the children. They thoroughly enjoyed writing 'pet treatment forms' supporting their acquisition of writing skills. Such activities are balanced well with those where teachers direct the children more systematically. Teachers and other adults regularly observe and record children's learning, both formally through specific tasks and informally during routine activities. This assessment provides an accurate and detailed picture and record of progress which staff use to plan the next stage of the children's learning. There is a strong partnership with parents and carers that contributes well to children's learning and well-being. The Early Years Foundation Stage leadership is good, carefully evaluating provision and encouraging staff to work cohesively. In particular, they ensure the smooth transition from the several feeder nurseries into the school.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 response rate to the questionnaire was high. All parents and carers agree that teaching is good at the school. Almost all agree that the school prepares their children well for the future and that their child enjoys school. Most parents agree with all the other statements. While a very large majority of parents and carers are happy with how the school keeps them informed of their child's progress and that the school takes account of their suggestions, a few disagree. Inspectors found that the school has an appropriate range of opportunities for parents and carers to express views and suggestions. Pupils' achievement is reported in line with requirements. The very large majority of parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Pebmarsh 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 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 69 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	71	14	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	71	13	25	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	61	15	29	5	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	65	14	27	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	75	13	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	57	17	33	5	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	75	10	20	2	4	1	2
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)	35	69	15	29	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	71	10	20	3	6	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	65	15	29	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	71	10	20	2	4	3	6
The school is led and managed effectively	39	76	9	18	0	0	3	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	80	7	14	0	0	1	2

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## **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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



14 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Pebmarsh, Halstead, CO9 2NH**

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and you all helped us get to know your school very quickly. Your school is good and gives you a good education. Here are some of the best things about it.

- You make good progress, particularly in reading and writing.
- Your behavior is excellent. Well done for that.
- You told us how much you enjoy coming to school.
- Your knowledge of keeping healthy is good.
- You told us how you feel exceptionally safe.
- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- You make effective contributions to the community, carrying out important jobs in the school through your school council and helping everyone to get on very well and have the 'Pebmarsh Polish'.
- Teaching is good and you told us how much you enjoy the lessons.
- Your headteacher leads the school well.

I have asked your headteacher and the staff to make your school even better by making sure all teaching is equal to the best in the school, and that this is of a very high quality. I have also asked her to help you to improve your skills, especially in mathematics. You can help by telling your teacher if work is too easy and be sure to continue to work hard in lessons, especially mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore  
Lead inspector

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