

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Great Yeldham

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115069
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	378994
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2012
Lead inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Poynter
Headteacher	Maria Trappitt
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Selwyn Ward

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Including learning walks, the inspector visited 11 lessons taught by five teachers, with a particular focus on the quality of teaching and assessment, and on the match of work to pupils' different capabilities. The inspector listened to pupils read and spoke with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a local authority adviser. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. He observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, school development planning, school self-evaluation, leaders' monitoring of teaching and the notes of local authority advisers. He reviewed the questionnaire responses of 102 pupils, 16 staff and 92 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. Pupils are taught in five mixed-age classes. Most pupils are White British, with very small numbers coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. None are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low, at around a quarter of the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average overall, but the number of pupils with special educational needs in each class varies considerably. Government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, have not been met. The school has Activemark, Inclusion Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark and silver Eco Schools awards, as well as Healthy Schools status.

Acorns Pre-School shares the school site. This provision is independently managed and inspected separately.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	4

Key findings

- 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. Although school leaders can point to some improvements this year, the school is not satisfactory because attainment has declined considerably since the last inspection and weaknesses in teaching have resulted in too many pupils underachieving.
- Not all pupils have reached their full potential. In each of the past two years, the pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has been the equivalent of more than two terms behind the national average in English and in mathematics. Too few pupils have made the progress expected over the course of Key Stage 2. In two of the last three years, pupils in Key Stage 1 have also underachieved. While it is improving, teaching is still not good enough to enable pupils to catch up on ground lost earlier in their time at the school. Although most of the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory or good, its impact on pupils' achievement over time has been inadequate. Remaining weaknesses include inaccuracies in the use of assessment and too much variation in the quality of marking.
- Behaviour is good and it is an important strength of this school that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy school and they find the curriculum stimulating and fun. Pupils are helped to grow in confidence thanks to the school's good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The fact that pupils are eager to learn shows, all the more, that they ought to be achieving better.
- Leaders and managers have not been effective in tackling weaknesses and reducing the decline in attainment and rates of progress. While there is extensive monitoring of teaching, pupils' work and other aspects of the school's performance, the impact of this has been limited because there is insufficient rigour in following up points identified for improvement. Leaders have an overly

positive view of the school's effectiveness.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics so that pupils make consistently good progress throughout their time at school by:
 - making full use of assessment information to plan and deliver work that is appropriately matched to pupils' different capabilities and which challenges and extends them
 - ensuring that learning objectives set out what pupils are expected to learn and not just the activities to be carried out
 - maintaining a brisk pace in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils do not sit passively listening for lengthy periods by making sure they have more opportunities to get on with writing and practical activities
 - providing effective additional curriculum support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, particularly in mathematics
 - giving all pupils clear guidance, through marking, in every subject that shows them what they need to do to improve their work.

- Develop more robust and effective management systems through:
 - ensuring that the school development plan incorporates measurable targets against which the governing body can gauge the school's progress
 - using the school development plan, as a management tool at each governing body meeting, to measure how much the school has improved, to question the school's leaders about the school's performance and to initiate changes where milestones are not being achieved
 - focusing lesson observations on pupils' learning and rates of progress
 - rigorously following up the points for development identified by school leaders from lesson observations, the scrutiny of assessment information, the analysis of pupils' work, and by keeping an appropriate written record so that improvement can be tracked
 - reviewing the organisation of phonics sessions for younger pupils so that learning is much more closely matched to pupils' prior attainment and that all staff are trained to model correctly the way that letters should be sounded out
 - working together within the school and with staff in neighbouring schools, to assure the accuracy of teachers' assessments, including those of children's skills and knowledge when they start in Reception.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 is inadequate because their attainment is low and their progress is too slow. Attainment is much lower than at the time of the last inspection report. Progress is better in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with children attaining broadly as expected by the start of Year 1. Although parents and carers are mostly pleased with their children's progress, several wrote to comment

on results they describe as 'poor'. However, there is a general view expressed in questionnaire returns that pupils are making better progress now than they have in the past. As one parent wrote, 'My child is behind as their previous teachers did not help them to their full potential.'

In Key Stage 1, pupils significantly underachieved in 2009 and 2010, with attainment the equivalent of almost a year behind the national average. There was improvement in 2011, which the school attributes to staffing changes. In that year, pupils' progress was satisfactory and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was average. The school's assessment data suggests slightly lower attainment for pupils currently in Year 2. Although the number expected to attain Level 2 in the 2012 national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics is close to the average, only a small number are expected to attain the higher Level 3 in the end of year assessments.

In Key Stage 2, attainment was low in 2010 and 2011. The percentage attaining the higher Level 5 in reading was only half the national average. No pupils attained Level 5 in writing. Progress measures put the school in the lowest performing 5% of schools nationally in 2011. The picture appears better for pupils currently in Year 6, with more of these pupils on track to attain the nationally expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics, although the number on track to attain Level 5 remains low. This is a consequence of teaching throughout the school that too rarely challenges more able pupils. Although the work seen in Year 6 confirms an improvement on previous years, pupils currently in Year 5 still have much ground to make up. Nevertheless, these pupils are just as attentive and enthusiastic in lessons as others throughout the school.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make variable progress. There are examples of some making exceptional progress, but around half of those identified by the school as potentially vulnerable make insufficient progress, especially in mathematics.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is inadequate because the improvements this year have been insufficient to make up for previous years when pupils' progress was far too slow. This has been noted by those parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires. Although the great majority of parents and carers are happy with the quality of teaching, a small minority wrote to voice worries that 'teachers do not push the children enough and so don't get the best out of them'. This worry was most prevalent among parents and carers of more able children. One wrote to observe that 'My son has been above average but has remained at the same level for some time. We are worried that he is plateauing.'

The majority of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory, although there were phonics sessions that were inadequate because of insufficient challenge or because staff did not model the sounds that letters make appropriately. In some phonics sessions, as in many other lessons, pupils of different ages and abilities are given the same or very similar work to do. This results in a lack of challenge for the more able in particular. In some lessons, the pace of learning slows because teachers

keep the pupils for too long listening on the carpet when they are eager to get on with practical tasks, including recording and writing. Learning objectives are set out at the start of each lesson, but these are sometimes just headings or the tasks to be carried out rather than what the pupils are expected to learn. In science, for example, pupils are frequently given 'to plan an investigation' as an objective, but with no mention of what should be learned from this activity. Marking varies in quality and does not always make clear what pupils should do to improve their work. It is more detailed and is most helpful in moving pupils' learning on in English.

A positive aspect of teaching throughout the school is the way teachers encourage pupils to have a go, including during whole-class question and answer sessions. In most classes, teachers draw lots to choose the person to answer, rather than taking responses only from those who put up their hands to volunteer. Activities that encourage the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, including the use of 'talk partners' to share ideas, contribute to their growing confidence and social development.

Pupils particularly appreciate the opportunities the curriculum gives them for outdoor learning. In a good Year 3/4 mathematics lesson, the teacher made very effective use of the playground area for pupils to group themselves into appropriately labelled grids to become a human Carroll diagram. The physical movement between the squares of the playground grid and the opportunities for pupils to give each other constructive feedback on where each should be placed to satisfy the grid criteria, made this a memorable learning experience for the pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils get on well together. They collaborate sensibly and mostly settle to work without fuss. They show they are eager to learn, so that many hands go up when teachers pose them questions. As parents, carers and the pupils themselves confirm, conduct is good throughout the school. Incidents of bullying of any kind are exceptionally rare, and pupils know what they should do if they ever encounter any act of unkindness. Though none said they had experienced it, pupils showed they were aware of the hazards of cyber-bullying when using mobile phones and social network internet sites. Parents and carers particularly like it that St Andrew's is 'a school which promotes good manners, responsibility and self-awareness'. Pupils are less attentive when lesson introductions go on for too long. During the inspection, some restlessness was noticeable in afternoon sessions when pupils were particularly keen to get on with practical activities. The underachievement at the school shows that not enough has been done to capitalise on pupils' good conduct and enthusiasm so that all make the good progress of which they are capable.

Pupils feel safe at school, and almost all parents and carers confirm that the school keep the children safe. Pupils also learn a great deal about how to keep safe, with almost all older pupils earning certification from the St John's Ambulance Brigade as first aiders. Attendance has been consistently above average.

Leadership and management

Leaders have not been effective enough in raising attainment. Self-evaluation has

been wide of the mark, judging provision and outcomes as good and outstanding despite significant underachievement. This unrealistic picture, coupled with the sharp fall in attainment in the period since the last inspection, means that leaders, managers and the governing body have not demonstrated the capacity to improve. Nevertheless, there are signs of a very recent recovery and improvement in the quality of performance management. Leaders have had success in creating a climate for learning where pupils feel valued and secure, and where they are eager to learn. Parents and carers are well informed, not least through a website that is kept fully up-to-date. This year the school has drawn on local authority advice and support as part of the teachers' professional development. This has contributed to more satisfactory and better teaching now than in the past couple of years, and better attainment is expected from the current Year 6 pupils. However, the continuing low attainment and rates of progress in Year 5 show that even this recent improvement is fragile.

The governing body is supportive and has ensured safeguarding arrangements meet regulatory requirements. There is no discrimination and the school's Inclusion Mark award attests to the work done to ensure every child has full access to all school activities. The gaps between the performance of boys and girls in some year groups are due to variations in the prior attainment of individual pupils rather than the result of any inequality. The governing body approves the school development plan, which is comprehensive in scope but lacks sufficient detail for use as a tool in driving improvement. It includes no measurable targets and sets no clear milestones against which the governing body can gauge success objectively.

Leaders keep close track of each pupil's progress, although this monitoring is only as useful as the accuracy of the assessment information on which it is based. Leaders have identified that assessments have not always been as accurate as they need to be. There is some sampling of assessments by leaders, for example in writing, but plans to develop partnerships with other local schools to verify each other's assessments are at an early stage. Leaders' monitoring of lessons has focused too much on the features of teaching and not enough on gauging how well pupils are all learning and making progress.

The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and its strength is in the varied opportunities it offers pupils for memorable learning experiences. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and makes a positive contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and their good personal development. It has a number of good features, including the well-designed playground, which is used for outdoor learning with its zones for different activities and themed areas representing the five populated continents. The array of extra-curricular clubs is impressive for a school of this size. Though a range of interventions support disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and others classified by the school as vulnerable, these have not always proved effective in helping these pupils to make the progress they should, particularly in mathematics.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



12 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Great Yeldham, Halstead, CO9 4PT

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school recently. I would like to particularly thank those of you who talked to me about the school and all of you who filled in questionnaires.

Though I could see a number of recent improvements at the school, with teaching better now than in the recent past, you have not all done as well as you should. That means the school is not providing adequately for you. Year 6 test results, for example, have been too low. Though you are making satisfactory progress in lessons now, you need to make even faster progress to catch up on past underachievement. It is for that reason that I have recommended your school be made subject to 'special measures'. This means it will get extra support over the next year or so to help all of you to make the good progress of which you are capable.

To help with the improvement, I have suggested some practical ways in which teachers can help and challenge you so that you do better in your work. I have also made recommendations about how the school's leaders can check that new developments are making a difference. You can help too by continuing to work hard and doing your best, and by always taking care to read and follow the helpful advice teachers give you when they mark your work.

I was pleased to see how well behaved you are and how keen you are to learn. Of course, these are both reasons why you ought to be doing better!

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on my visit and my very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Selwyn Ward
Lead inspector

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