

Hertford St Andrew CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117397
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	395554
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2012
Lead inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rosemary Caruana
Headteacher	Ronald Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2009
School address	Calton Avenue Hertford Hertfordshire SG14 2EP
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Julie Price Grimshaw

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed six lessons, taught by six teachers and a number of support staff. She also carried out shorter visits to lessons in order to scrutinise pupils' books, and listened to pupils read. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Partner. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including nationally-published data on pupils' achievement, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding children, and curriculum plans. The responses to questionnaires submitted by 66 parents and carers, 40 pupils and 14 staff were also considered.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are recent arrivals to the country and speak a home language other than English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is below average. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are taught in mixed-age classes with the exception of Year 6, who are taught as a discrete year group. The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
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 significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the procedures for safeguarding children, in ensuring that these meet statutory requirements, and in establishing systems for tracking the achievement of individuals and groups of pupils.
- The school provides an acceptable standard of education; it is a harmonious environment where pupils get on well with each other and enjoy their learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school to reach levels of attainment that are broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- Weakness in leadership and management mean that the school’s overall effectiveness is inadequate. The school is not satisfactory because procedures for safeguarding children do not meet statutory requirements and are inadequate, and there are inadequate systems for tracking pupils’ progress. The leadership of teaching is satisfactory and staff performance is managed adequately.
- The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Relationships in the classroom are very positive and most support staff make a good contribution to pupils’ progress. However, the use of assessment to support learning is underdeveloped and teachers’ marking does not always help pupils to improve their work. The teaching of reading skills is inconsistent across the school.
- Pupils behave well and say that they feel safe in school. A key strength of the school is the way in which pupils help and support each other. Behaviour and safety are not better than satisfactory because pupils’ attendance remains below the national average, in spite of recent improvements to attendance rates.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the summer term 2012, make certain that systems and procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet statutory requirements by ensuring that:
 - all staff, including those with particular responsibilities for child protection, receive up-to-date training
 - school leaders and the governing body closely monitor the implementation and effectiveness of safeguarding policies.
- By the start of the autumn term 2012, establish effective systems for tracking and monitoring the achievement of individuals and groups of pupils in order to provide staff and the governing body with a detailed and accurate view of attainment and progress across the school.
- Improve achievement for all groups of pupils by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use assessment information to tailor work closely to pupils' needs and ability levels
 - teachers' written feedback and marking make clear to pupils precisely what they need to do to improve
 - pupils are given time to read and respond to teachers' guidance in marking and feedback
 - staff build on their work to reduce avoidable absence, especially among those pupils whose attendance is erratic.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in reading by ensuring, through focused training, that teachers pay sufficient attention to developing pupils' skills in reinforcing the links between letters and the sounds they make.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children's skills on entry to the Nursery vary greatly, both year on year and within year groups, but are generally just below or in line with those expected for their age. They settle quickly and make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they learn to share and be respectful towards each other and the adults who work with them. Development of the outdoor learning area was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection; this has been tackled well, so that children in the Nursery and Reception Years benefit from a wide range of stimulating resources. Children usually start Year 1 with skills that are broadly average.

The school has insufficient data on pupils' attainment and progress. This, together with the wide variation in pupils' ability levels and the small numbers of pupils within the school means that it is difficult to determine meaningful trends in achievement. However, national published data and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils make satisfactory progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 and their attainment is broadly average. Currently, pupils do better in writing than in reading; attainment in reading

by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average.

The school has no current data on the achievement of different groups of pupils, but inspection evidence indicates that all groups make similar progress. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in developing their speaking skills. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Progress is notably slower for those pupils with erratic rates of attendance.

Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners. Many work well independently. All enjoy working together in groups, where they take much pleasure in providing mutual support. This was evident in a mathematics lesson where pupils used their own initiative to seek help from each other so that they wasted no time in completing the task. However, pupils do not always respond to teachers' written feedback; for example, several pupils did not pay enough attention to improving their punctuation, in spite of the teacher's marking having pointed out errors to them over a period of time.

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that their children made good progress. However, the available data and inspection evidence suggests that progress over time is satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Staff take tremendous care to ensure that classrooms are stimulating and attractive learning environments, featuring high-quality displays and many examples of pupils' work. The pupils clearly appreciate this and enjoy making impressive models at home, related to their topic work, to add to classroom displays. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good throughout the school. Staff regularly take opportunities to contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as shown in one lesson where the teacher led a good discussion on the feelings experienced by a character in the story being read.

Most teachers structure lessons well, but the school's lack of data means that they are unable to use assessment information effectively to plan tasks that are precisely matched to the ability levels of individuals. For example, in a literacy lesson, almost all pupils were given the same writing task, which was too difficult for some, and, as a result, these pupils made very little progress. However, provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, and these pupils benefit from the support of teaching assistants across the school.

In the most effective lessons observed, teachers gave clear guidance when setting tasks and made regular checks on pupils' understanding. This was evident in a science lesson in Years 4 and 5, where pupils responded very well to the teacher's questioning. This ensured that they were developing a good level of understanding. Another strong feature of this lesson was the attention paid to literacy and numeracy development, with pupils writing about the method they had used in their experiments and how they had made calculations to determine average scores.

The teaching of reading skills, and particularly phonics (letters and the sounds they make), varies in quality across the school. As a result, some pupils quickly develop the ability to read unfamiliar words whereas others struggle with this, often because staff have given insufficient attention to correctly reinforcing the sounds associated with letters.

Teachers devote much time to marking pupils' work and take care to provide encouragement and praise through their comments. Nevertheless, marking does not always make pupils' next steps in learning clear and, occasionally, comments are too vague and do not identify shortcomings clearly enough. The great majority of pupils, parents and carers believe that the quality of teaching is good; however, inspection evidence is that teaching is satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Almost all pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. They are polite and courteous to all adults, including visitors, and get on well together. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and know that staff have high expectations of their behaviour. They listen carefully to instructions and focus well in class, even when they find the work difficult. Evidence from pupils, parents and carers indicates that this is typical of the school over time. Pupils have a sound awareness of the different forms of bullying, including physical harassment, cyber bullying and racism. They say that bullying 'just isn't a problem here' and are confident in reporting concerns of any kind to staff. The school's systems are effective in dealing with rare incidents of poor behaviour and bullying, and this is a key factor in ensuring that pupils feel safe in school. Almost all parents and carers feel that conduct, both in classrooms and around the school, is good, and inspection evidence endorses this view.

Pupils greatly enjoy taking on responsibilities. For example, older pupils look after the younger ones every lunchtime in the school's dining area, ensuring a calm, orderly and friendly atmosphere. Pupils clearly appreciate the pastoral care provided by the school, a typical comment being: 'The adults here are amazingly helpful.' However, behaviour and safety are judged satisfactory rather than good because attendance figures remain low, with a higher than average proportion of persistent absentees. For a very small minority of pupils, frequent absence limits their progress and puts them at risk of underachieving. The school has recently introduced new strategies that are beginning to have a positive impact and there are early signs that attendance is now improving.

Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leaders and managers is inadequate because of weaknesses in safeguarding pupils and assessing their achievements. Although much attention is paid to providing high-quality pastoral care that helps pupils to feel happy and secure in school, the systems for safeguarding children do not meet statutory requirements. Aspects of staff training in child protection have not been kept up to date and insufficient attention has been given to ensuring that safeguarding policies are

consistently and rigorously applied. Although all governors are committed to the school and are regularly and actively involved in day-to-day aspects of school life, the governing body has not fulfilled its statutory responsibilities in ensuring that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

Effective systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress have not been established. As a result, managers, the governing body and staff do not have a detailed and accurate view of the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils across the school. This limits leaders' ability to ensure that teaching consistently matches the needs of individuals. Leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching and learning through regular observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Teachers are provided with constructive feedback and arrangements are made for in-house professional development where appropriate, but training has not ensured that all staff are consistently accurate when they demonstrate the sounds that letters make. Staff show high levels of commitment to the school and all say that they are proud to be part of the school community.

The curriculum is satisfactory because it is broad, balanced and takes account of pupils' interests. Teachers plan lessons based on themes and topics that motivate pupils, and most teachers ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills across a range of subjects. Although the school promotes pupils' moral and social development particularly well, their awareness of a range of faiths and cultures is not as strong.

While the school is not paying sufficient attention to tracking the achievement of different groups of pupils, there are some strengths in the school's provision for equal opportunities. Pupils are taught to respect each other regardless of their different backgrounds and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

In spite of the weaknesses in leadership and management, the school has made good progress in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. This, together with a secure awareness of the current areas for development and a commitment to extending partnerships with other schools and agencies, shows that there is capacity for further improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.

3 May 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Hertford St Andrew CofE Primary School, Hertford, SG14 2EP

As you know, I visited your school recently so that I could find out how well you are doing. I would like to thank you for making me feel so welcome and for sharing your views with me, both face-to-face and through the questionnaire.

I was pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school. You told me that you like your teachers and that the staff are very caring towards you. One of the things that impressed me the most was the way that you care for each other and get on so well together. I saw good conduct throughout the school, but I was not able to judge behaviour and safety to be better than satisfactory because some of you miss too much school. This is affecting the learning of the small number of you with high rates of absence. It is something you can help with by trying your very best not to miss school. Teaching is satisfactory and, because of this, you make satisfactory progress during your time at the school and most of you reach average standards by the end of Year 6.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education but I have judged it as inadequate overall because not all of the management systems are working as well as they could. I have given your school a notice to improve, which means that inspectors will return to check on how well the school is improving. Your school will be inspected again in about a year's time.

I have asked the school to keep a closer watch on the progress you are making. This should help the teachers to give you work that is at just the right level for each one of you. I have also asked the teachers to help you make faster progress by telling you, through their marking, exactly what steps you need to take to improve. You have an important part to play here because you must always read your teachers' comments carefully and follow their advice. I have asked the school's leaders and governors to check that all the systems for keeping you safe are always up-to-date. Finally, I have suggested that all of the staff look at ways of making sure that you develop your reading skills as well as you possibly can.

I wish you well for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Hertford St Andrew.

Yours sincerely
Julie Price Grimshaw
Lead inspector

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