

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Burnham-on-Crouch

Marsh Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, CM0 8LZ

Inspection dates 19–20 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- the progress of some groups of pupils is not fast enough, particularly in writing in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics in the current Year 6
- the increase in the proportion of good teaching is recent and there remain a few lessons where teaching does not focus sufficiently on ensuring pupils make rapid progress
- pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently
- strategies introduced by leaders and managers, including governors, have not yet led to enough consistently good and outstanding teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- pupils feel safe, behave well, like being at school and enthusiastically undertake the work they are given to do
- the Early Years Foundation Stage is well organised and ensures that pupils make a good start to their learning
- reading is well taught across the school and pupils develop a love of reading
- leaders and managers have ensured that teaching of the oldest pupils has improved so that their progress in English has improved
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons delivered by eight teaching staff. Observations also included reviews of pupils' work, listening to pupils read, and sessions delivered by teaching assistants to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Observations totalled approximately seven and a half hours.
- Inspectors had meetings with senior leaders, teachers, governors and pupils, as well as a representative from the local authority.
- Parents and carers spoke to inspectors informally at the start and end of the day. The 14 responses to ParentView, Ofsted's online survey of parental views, were also taken into account.
- At the time of the inspection, some of the pupils in Reception were attending school for half of the day as part of a staggered start.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Margaret Lewis

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is smaller than average. There have been several changes to the leadership recently, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- Almost all pupils are White British; a very few pupils represent a range of other ethnic heritages. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action, at school action plus or who are disabled or with statements of special educational needs are broadly in line with the national averages.
- The school meets the current government floor targets.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is at least good and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - providing training and other guidance that will raise teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of doing, particularly in the case of the more able
 - making sure adults respond to pupils' developing understanding during each lesson, by adapting both their explanations and the tasks pupils are doing so that these are appropriately demanding and match the needs of pupils of different abilities
- Increase the rate of progress, particularly in writing, so that attainment rises to above average at Key Stage 1, and attainment in mathematics matches that in English at Key Stage 2 by:
 - making sure that the work set stretches pupils to the full extent of their ability, particularly in mathematics
 - allowing pupils to get on with their work as soon as they know what they need to do, giving them more time to work on their tasks.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers in evaluating the quality of teaching and quickly bringing about sustained improvements where they are needed.
- Improve governors' ability to evaluate the impact of the school's improvement plans and hold the school to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When children join the school in Reception they have skills and knowledge which are often slightly below those expected for their age. They settle quickly into the routines and enjoy the activities provided, so that they typically make good progress in their learning.
- Progress is slower in Key Stage 1 than in Key stage 2 and attainment in Key Stage 1 has fallen below average, particularly so in writing. Recent evidence and lesson observations show that the pace of progress is increasing, but continues to require improvement. While these recent improvements in progress are encouraging, they need to be more widespread and consistent over time. Progress in writing has not been as strong for younger pupils, while progress in mathematics has not been consistently as strong for older pupils over time. The most recent group to finish Year 6, however, made good progress and their attainment was above average.
- Over the past year, a new approach to teaching writing has been introduced, which gives pupils opportunities to do longer pieces of writing and work more independently. This has had a considerable and beneficial impact on the standards of the oldest pupils but is less evident in the case of younger ones. The progress of pupils in the current Year 6 requires improvement in mathematics.
- The progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium meets expectations but is not sufficiently rapid to help them catch up with their peers, particularly in their writing. There is a wide range of strategies to support them and the school is beginning to analyse more closely how effective these are.
- The emphasis on reading across the school and the use of well-established strategies to promote the linking of sounds and letters (phonics) means that reading is a strength of the school and this is where pupils are most confident.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inspectors' observations confirm the school's view that the majority of teaching is good, but that some teaching requires improvement and that there is insufficient outstanding teaching.
- Clear expectations, good relationships and good subject knowledge mean that teaching is usually good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, when children choose their own learning, there is too little emphasis on reinforcing and developing their new skills, particularly in writing. At times children are expected to sit and listen to the adults for too long rather than getting on with their learning.
- Across the school, lessons are generally well planned and most teachers use the well-established systems to record how well pupils are doing and to provide them with work that matches their levels of learning. Here, data is being used increasingly effectively to inform discussions about pupils' progress and to refine teaching accordingly.
- During the best lessons, teachers ensure that work is challenging and that pupils check their progress at the end of the lesson. For example Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed connecting sentences to improve their stories, commenting how well they felt they had done. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take charge of their own learning and

develop the determination to challenge themselves to the full extent of their ability.

- In less effective lessons, adults spend too much time explaining what pupils need to do and this limits the amount of time that pupils have to do the work that has been set for them. This means they do not make as much progress as they should.
- There are also too many occasions when adults guide pupils too directly towards a specific outcome, rather than responding to the learning that is happening. This means that adults are too focused on ensuring pupils finish the task rather than making the best progress they can. As a result, some pupils who need more challenging work are too readily satisfied.
- The marking of books is increasingly being used effectively to help pupils reinforce what they have learnt. Pupils usually have opportunities to respond to these comments, and sometimes participate in assessing their own and each other's work against the success criteria, to decide if they have achieved the intended outcomes for the lesson. However there are too many occasions when these criteria are too easy. This constrains the progress of more able pupils in particular because the work does not stretch their skills sufficiently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel safe, enjoy being at school, and their attendance is above average. They get along with one another very well and say that they particularly like it when they learn outdoors.
- During lessons, pupils behave well. They readily listen to the explanations of their teachers and get on with the work planned for them as soon as they can. Parents and carers expressed similarly positive views about their children's learning.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils are not yet determined to push themselves to do even harder work. They rely on the adults around them to remind them how much they should do, or set the targets for how good their work should be.
- Pupils said that bullying never happens at their school and name-calling is not accepted because they are taught to be kind and think of others. This shows the impact of the school's strong focus on giving pupils opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They feel that any worries they may have would be listened to, and dealt with, because the adults care about them.
- The school works hard with other partners, such as the hospital and home tutors, working well alongside parents and carers, so that the very few pupils with medical needs are well supported and helped to make good progress, both academically and socially.
- Pupils are aware of how they can keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet, on the roads or around water. They feel well prepared for life beyond the school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders are determined to continue improving the school. Changes in the senior leadership have enabled the school to review the expertise available and further develop leadership across the school. Evidence shows that this is helping to

improve the quality of teaching although this is at an early stage.

- Monitoring of the quality of teaching is increasingly systematic and ensures leaders have been able to recognise and resolve any marked weaknesses in teaching. While inadequate teaching has been tackled successfully, however, strategies to bring about further improvements and ensure consistently good teaching have been slow to have an impact.
 - Data are used increasingly effectively to track different groups of pupils and identify which strategies are proving most helpful in speeding up their progress. Discussions about the progress pupils make are becoming more rigorous. As a result this is improving the school's ability to ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
 - Training to develop new approaches to teaching writing has had most impact for teachers of older pupils. The benefits of this are now being extended to the younger pupils. The recent refinement of teaching programmes has ensured pupils are provided with interesting, realistic topics to base their work on. Links with schools overseas give pupils good opportunities for writing.
 - The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, providing clear routines and good teaching so that the youngest children settle into school quickly and make a good start in the Reception class.
 - The local authority has supported the school in its efforts to improve the use of data to keep track of how well pupils are doing, through training courses. They have also worked in partnership with the school to review the curriculum and develop strategies to improve the quality of teaching.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - requires improvement because actions to tackle the underperformance of some groups of pupils and improve teaching have taken too long to have a significant impact
 - increasingly has an accurate understanding of the data and makes visits to see how well the school is doing
 - is determined to ensure that the additional financial resources available to the school are closely targeted on the pupils they are intended to support.
 - Procedures and arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet requirements. The school makes sure pupils have good opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. Staff receive regular training on different aspects of bullying.
 - Parents were highly positive about their children's experience of school and feel that they are well informed about how well their children are doing. They say that teachers are helpful if they have any concerns.
 - Leaders make sure that wider aspects of learning are well promoted, for example through learning outdoors and through links with schools and pupils in other countries. Alongside the links with the church, this helps pupils to understand those who may have different beliefs and lifestyles to their own.
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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	115159
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	401496

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	04–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Barwick
Headteacher	Geraldine Denham-Hale
Date of previous school inspection	08 March 2010
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