

# Little Waltham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Street, Little Waltham, Chelmsford, CM3 3NY

## Inspection dates

15–16 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' achievement is adequate rather than good. Progress is inconsistent and currently not as good in writing as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good and very little is outstanding. In some lessons, pupils are not given sufficiently demanding work, in others, their errors and misunderstandings are not picked up quickly enough.
- Although leaders visit lessons regularly to judge the quality of teaching, the observations and judgements they make do not focus enough on how well pupils are learning.
- The teaching of the sounds that letters make is not organised systematically enough. This is slowing down the reading progress of some younger and less able pupils and compromising older pupils' ability to spell accurately.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is too variable because the teaching they receive is adequate rather than good.
- The management of the support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is the aspect of the school's leadership that needs improving most.

### The school has the following strengths

- The governing body and senior leaders demonstrate the drive and ambition needed to improve the school and enable each pupil to fulfil their potential.
- Pupils achieve well in reading by the time they leave the school in Year 6.
- Most pupils behave well and are provided with a safe learning environment, and looked after well.
- There have been good improvements since the last inspection in the teaching of mathematics and provision for information and communication technology (ICT).

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in each class and visited 14 lessons. Five observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector had meetings with staff, groups of pupils, and three members of the governing body, including the Chair and Vice-Chair. He also met a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence including: the school's self-evaluation and development plans; attainment and progress data; teachers' planning; performance monitoring reports; and the school's safeguarding arrangements. He also observed pupils' behaviour and discussed this with pupils, looked at the work in pupils' books and heard pupils read from Years 1 and 2.
- The inspector took into account the 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the information on the views of parents provided by the school. He also met some parents informally at the end of the first day of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Rob McKeown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in five mixed-age classes.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- Very few pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is above average and has increased since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Strengthen teaching so that it is good or better in all classes by:
  - making sure that the work pupils do is challenging and matched to their abilities
  - insisting on pupils' full engagement in lessons and encouraging positive attitudes to all the work they do
  - keeping a check on all pupils' progress through a lesson, to pick up on and resolve any errors and misunderstandings
  - leaders observing lessons regularly with a focus on how well pupils are learning.
- Establish a systematic approach to teaching early reading skills by:
  - ensuring that pupils receive a well-taught daily phonics session
  - equipping all staff teaching phonics with the skills to teach lessons successfully
  - organising pupils into manageable groups that enable them to progress at the speed that is right for them
  - providing regular individual reading practice for younger pupils and those who are making slow progress
  - leaders keeping a close check on how well pupils are taught and make progress.
- Secure good progress for all disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs by:
  - establishing a systematic and consistent approach to managing and recording provision
  - ensuring that all pupils are supported effectively by well-trained staff
  - checking frequently how well pupils are taught, are learning and making progress
  - leaders regularly evaluating the impact of the support provided for all pupils and determining how it can be improved further.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Despite better progress last year in mathematics, the achievement of pupils who leave the school in Year 6 requires improvement. Pupils leave with broadly average standards. Attainment in writing and mathematics has not been as high as that in reading. Since the last inspection, there has been a gradual fall in pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 because some pupils have not reached their full potential.
- The school's tracking data shows that pupils in Key Stage 2 are currently making better progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. Writing has been correctly identified by senior leaders as a priority and action is being taken to improve it. The writing seen in pupils' books in Year 6 indicates that most are reaching an appropriate standard. Lower down the school, pupils' writing is not as good as it should be, revealing weaknesses, for example, in spelling.
- Most pupils in Year 6 read well and are able to discuss their reading preferences and favourite authors. The reading skills of some of the younger, less able pupils are not developing quickly enough. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and some pupils do not get enough practice reading to an adult at school or at home. The results in last year's phonic screening check for Year 1 pupils were well below average.
- Children come into the school with the skills and aptitudes that are broadly typical for their age. There is a wide range of individual ability and an increasing number of children are starting school with weaker language and communication skills. The school's assessment records show that most children reach a good level of development before they join Year 1. Reception children made better progress last year than previously because they all started school in September.
- Most parents believe their children are making good progress. A few of those who completed the online questionnaire disagree and this reflects the variability of progress across the school. The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not good because of weaknesses in the management of provision and an inconsistency in the quality of support. The school made effective use of the pupil premium funding to boost the achievement of eligible Year 6 pupils last year. Their performance compared well with all pupils in reading and mathematics.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although improvements have been made in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, it is still not ensuring consistently good learning and progress for all pupils. This is because, in some lessons, the work pupils are asked to do is not exactly right for them. For example, sometimes the work is not hard enough to stretch able pupils. There are also occasions when a few pupils do not concentrate fully or show consistently positive attitudes towards their work.
- The teaching of phonics is not organised systematically across the younger age groups. Learning is too slow for some pupils and teaching is not effective enough to ensure good progress for others. Some younger pupils are not practising their reading with an adult often enough. The support provided by other adults in the classroom varies in quality. Where it is good, the guidance and support is helping pupils, including those disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to make suitable progress.

- There have been recent improvements to give pupils greater responsibility for evaluating how well they are learning. Marking follows a consistent approach but does not always make it clear to pupils how they might improve, or expect pupils to respond to corrections that are suggested.
- During the inspection, there were features of effective teaching seen in all classes. Teachers make it clear to pupils at the start of lessons what they will be learning and what they need to do to make their responses successful. In the better lessons, teachers keep a close check on how well pupils are progressing and step in to explain how responses might be improved.
- Relationships are good and pupils are encouraged to work cooperatively and talk about their learning. This was seen to good effect in the Year 4 and 5 class, where pupils were discussing and planning their responses to a writing task. Developing speaking and listening skills are also given high priority in the Reception and Year 1 class, where children are encouraged to share their views and talk about what they have learnt.
- There is a strong focus on pupils developing effective calculation skills in mathematics, which are clearly set out in a calculation policy introduced by the deputy headteacher. Pupils also use computers to improve their personal mathematics skills in school and can extend their learning by logging into a mathematics computer program at home. Able pupils in Year 6 are also benefiting from working on more advanced aspects of mathematics, such as algebra, with a visiting teacher.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Most parents believe that behaviour is good but pupils in Year 6 interviewed during the inspection think that some behaviour could be better. Behaviour in lessons, particularly for younger pupils is usually good. There are, however, occasions when a few older pupils do not engage fully with the teaching, lose concentration or do not give their full attention to doing their best.
- Most pupils are polite and friendly, enjoy school and cooperate well together. The school can point to examples of how the behaviour of individual pupils has improved because of the support they have received, including from the school's learning mentor. No exclusions have been recorded in the last two years.
- Pupils and their parents believe that the school is a safe place in which to learn. Incidents of bullying are rare and tackled successfully by staff when they occur. The school keeps a record of any incidents of unacceptable behaviour, including any bullying, but these are not logged systematically so that the frequency and types of incident can be checked or the success of any actions taken can be evaluated.
- Older pupils know about some, but not all, of the different forms of bullying they may encounter. All pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe and develop positive relationships in their personal, social and health education lessons. Adults working with younger pupils provide positive role models, giving praise and encouragement which helps to develop good personal and social skills.
- Assemblies, particularly the weekly awards assembly, are used effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements and to promote high expectations and the personal qualities the school expects. They also make a successful contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities as prefects, house captains and school

council representatives.

- Pupils' attendance is above average and very few pupils are persistently absent. Any incidents of unexpected or prolonged absence are followed up, and pupils with high levels of attendance are rewarded.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Senior leaders have worked effectively together to make several improvements in provision since the last inspection. The school's priorities for improvement are recorded in a three-year strategic development plan and stem from a secure understanding of what is going well in the school and what needs doing. However, insufficient detail is included in the plan to record what will be done to secure improvements in the most urgent priorities over the next year, for example in teaching phonics.
- The headteacher and English and mathematics subject leaders observe lessons together regularly to judge the quality of teaching. These observations have helped to strengthen teaching techniques, including the checks on pupils' progress, but have not looked closely enough at how well all pupils are learning. Leaders and the governing body ensure that there is a clear link made between teachers' pay, appraisal and pupils' achievement.
- Teachers work together successfully in subject teams to help bring about improvements in provision. The subject team led by the deputy headteacher has been instrumental in introducing improvements in the teaching of mathematics, particularly in calculation and problem solving.
- Pupils' progress is tracked methodically and meetings are held with staff to identify individual pupils who are not progressing as they should. The progress of different groups of pupils such as boys and girls are compared, but less attention has been given to evaluating the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The leadership and management of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are less effective because they lack a systematic and consistent approach. Until recently, pupils in need of support have not been identified early enough and some of the support pupils received did not help them to make good progress.
- The way pupils are cared for and the guidance that they receive from staff are good. The school's mission statement and aims state its commitment to equal opportunity and for fostering good relations. The arrangements and procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. An accessible school website enables parents to gain information about the school and keep in touch with events and achievements.
- There are strong partnerships with local primary schools to share teacher training, effective teaching approaches, and new ideas. No support is provided currently by the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has improved since the last inspection. The governing body gives the school its full support. Better links with staff and parents have improved communication and given governors a clearer view of how well the school is doing. Governors keep a check on pupils' achievements, comparing these with other schools locally and nationally, but have not looked closely enough at how the school uses its relatively small amount pupil premium funding. They set appraisal targets for the headteacher and look at those set for other members of the

teaching staff. Governors attend training to improve their knowledge and skills. They oversee the management of the school's finances, including appropriate salary progression for staff.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115175
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	401501

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

<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>	139
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Pope
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Maycock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 360246
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