

Charing Church of England (Aided) Primary School

School Road, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0JN

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well because their progress is checked and recorded carefully and they have a clear understanding of what they need to do next to learn quickly.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers share their good subject knowledge successfully.
- Teachers' genuine respect for pupils supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development especially well.
- Good behaviour is expected and pupils respond well and become thoughtful and considerate individuals.
- The acting headteacher and governors provide a good lead in setting the right priorities to help pupils to learn quickly and become successful.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that teaching and achievement are improving rapidly and any remaining gaps in attainment are being identified and tackled robustly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, especially in Years 2 and 3, pupils are not motivated to learn quickly, especially when tasks are either too hard or too easy for some of them.
- Pupils are not always helped enough to gain confidence and speed in carrying out mathematical calculations. Sometimes they are not encouraged to make use of their knowledge of sounds and letters (phonics) to assist them with reading, spelling and checking their work for mistakes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took into account 20 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and held informal discussions with a sample of parents and carers.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in nine staff questionnaires.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own pupil-progress data, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action, those at school action plus or those with a statement of special educational needs, are broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium (those eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority, or who have a parent or carer in the armed services) is above average.
- While most pupils are White British, the proportion coming from Romany or Gypsy heritage is much higher than that found in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils joining the school after Reception or leaving before Year 6 is above average.
- There have been several changes of staff since the last inspection, including the appointment, at short notice, of the acting headteacher in March 2012.
- The pre-school in the school is privately run and was not part of this inspection.
- No pupils are educated off the school site for part of the week.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes in Years 2 to 5.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching, especially in Years 2 and 3, by:
 - ensuring that pupils are fully motivated and learn quickly throughout lessons
 - adapting work as the lesson progresses so that work is not too hard or too easy for some pupils.
- Help pupils to use all the skills they have learnt in literacy and numeracy, by:
 - increasing their confidence and speed when using mathematical calculations
 - strengthening the use of phonics to assist reading and spelling
 - involving pupils more in checking their work for mistakes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children start school in the Reception class working within the levels typical for their ages. They make good progress and most are working at or beyond the expected levels on entry to Year 1. Children do especially well in personal development and become independent and confident.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress is good due to the increased rigour in tracking how well they are doing. Due to many pupils joining or leaving some year groups during term times, good progress is not always clear in end-of-key-stage test results, but pupils achieve well, overall, during their time at the school.
- Attainment is rising and, in literacy, pupils enjoy reading and include vivid description in their writing. However, some pupils make careless errors and are not making good use of what they have learnt about sounds and letters (phonics) to help with reading and spelling.
- In mathematics, pupils understand what they need to do to complete their work but, sometimes, especially in Years 2 and 3, they lack confidence and speed when carrying out the necessary mathematical calculations.
- Pupils of Romany or Gypsy heritage achieve well because the school forms productive relationships with their parents and carers. The school ensures that all pupils are not subject to discrimination and have equal opportunity to succeed. For example, a recent initiative to encourage parents and carers to read with their children in school has been well received and ensures helpful continuity and reinforcement of learning for these pupils.
- The school works well to close the gap between attainment for those eligible for the pupil premium and attainment for all pupils nationally. The progress of these pupils is monitored with extra vigilance and funding is used wisely to remove barriers to their learning so that they can make good progress. A family liaison officer provides valuable support for families, and other members of staff support pupils effectively in lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Individual targets help them understand what they are to learn next and they are proud of their achievements. For example, pupils who even find it hard to sit still are pleased when they concentrate so well that they beat the sand timer which measures their performance.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good relationships and the positive examples of good conduct set by the staff encourage pupils to become keen to learn and to try hard.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and motivate the pupils well with their enthusiasm and interesting choice of activities. For example, in Years 4 and 5, the teacher's passion for books and certain authors was infectious.
- Lessons have a clear structure and teachers and assistants support pupils well. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of what they are to learn in each lesson and how it fits in with their own targets. Pupils said, 'Teachers help us when we are stuck.' They added, 'Teaching assistants give extra lessons but do not make it obvious.'
- Occasionally, especially in Years 2 and 3, teachers do not adapt work well enough during a lesson to match the abilities of all the learners. The pace of learning slows and pupils do not learn as quickly as they should or maintain interest in their learning. For example, some mental mathematics sessions do not extend the most able or support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs well enough, resulting in some loss of attention to the work in hand and a drop in the pace of learning. Nevertheless, the school is building pupils' confidence in mathematics by running daily calculation lessons called 'mathematics blasters'.
- Teachers' marking is thorough and, along with good questioning, is used to identify each pupil's next steps in their learning. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to reach

the next level in their work, but do not always check their work for avoidable mistakes.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, activities for pupils to learn independently are exciting and promoted well, especially indoors. For example, children enjoyed learning about size when wrapping presents in the 'toy shop'. Not all activities for literacy in the outdoor area are inviting and, consequently, are not always chosen by the children, so they do not always practise their reading and spelling enough in this situation.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Positive relationships with members of staff enable pupils to feel safe at school and to behave well. Pupils know what to do if they have any concerns and are happy that any instances of unkind behaviour will be dealt with to their satisfaction. As one pupil said, 'If anything worries you, tell the teacher because a weight is lifted off your shoulders.'
- Pupils agree that behaviour is mostly good but make knowing and thoughtful comments such as, 'Some children have something bothering them and so misbehave.' Another said, 'We all behave well – but not every day.'
- Pupils are kind and considerate and keen to help each other. For example, when reading a fact sheet about 'The Victorians', pupils in Year 6 helped each other with tricky vocabulary and shared ideas about what they wanted to find out in subsequent lessons. Pupils take responsibility for tasks around the school well. For example, play leaders and 'buddies' monitor activities in the outdoor quiet area and check that all pupils are happy at break time.
- The school is vigilant in tackling discrimination of any kind and pupils show respect for each other. Consequently, there have been no recently reported racial incidents or need to use the sanction of exclusion to manage behaviour.
- Most parents and carers who responded to the Parent View questionnaire are positive that their children are happy at school, behave well and feel safe and free from bullying of any kind.
- The well-attended breakfast and physical activity club has helped to improve pupils' punctuality and levels of fitness. A greater staff presence as pupils arrive has also been successful in improving punctuality and attendance. Consequently, most pupils come to school regularly.
- While pupils behave well most of the time, they do not always take the initiative in checking their work for mistakes and, occasionally, lose concentration when work is not sufficiently engaging or suitably challenging.

The leadership and management are good

- School self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Therefore, the acting headteacher and other leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the next steps needed to make it outstanding.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Targets to improve teachers' practice are set and help teachers and other members of staff to develop professionally. Teachers' performance is measured in enabling pupils to make progress and this informs leaders' decisions about promotion and pay.
- Training of staff is matched well to areas for development for the individual and for the school as a whole. As a result, teaching has improved and is mostly good or better. Teachers are keen to agree 'three points to develop for next time' because they are passionate about doing their best for the pupils.
- The range of subjects and learning opportunities provided motivate pupils because they, themselves, are involved in planning what they will learn. They are especially positive about 'theme', where they learn about broad topics, such as 'The Victorians'. Literacy and numeracy are generally promoted well.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength across the

subjects that pupils learn, and key to the school's success in supporting pupils' personal development. For example, in collective worship, pupils demonstrated that they knew that 'value' is not always linked to cost and were impressed at the lengths Mary Jones went to so that she could have her own precious Bible.

- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and members of staff are fully trained to support pupils' safety needs.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school and most say that they would recommend it to others. They make positive comments such as, 'a generally all-round good school' and 'Children are achieving really well now.'
- The school received extra help from the local authority from September 2011, because it was a satisfactory school at the last inspection. It is now, rightly, considered to be a 'light touch' school in recognition of the improvements made and the clearly demonstrated capacity of leaders to improve the school further. All teachers have taken on responsibility for improving the school and work together well, providing mutual challenge and support.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the school. They know what the priorities are for the school's further development and intend to bring these about. They are clear about how teachers' performance is being managed to increase the skills of staff and to tackle any remaining pockets of weakness. They make sure that promotion and pay are justified by teachers' performance in enabling pupils to make good progress. Governors have a good understanding of data showing pupils' progress and attainment and know that this school is now doing well compared with similar schools. They are accustomed to discussing and analysing pupils' progress at meetings. Governors know how funding to help those pupils eligible for the pupil premium is being used. They make sure it is targeted to support the individuals and families for whom it is intended and have a tight grip on how well money is being spent to improve provision and increase these pupils' progress. Governors attend training according to their designated responsibilities and are keen to refine their visits to school so that their reports become even more evaluative.
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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	118739
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	401782

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Di Dawson
Headteacher	Niki Paterson
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 November 2009
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