

Hartest Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Row, Hartest, Bury St Edmunds, IP29 4DL

Inspection dates

31 January – 1st February 2013

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.

- All pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching in almost all lessons is good or better.
- The school largely succeeds in its aim to develop the 'wholeness' of each child.
- Pupils thrive and become confident, motivated learners because staff know and care for them very well.
- Each pupil's progress is carefully checked so that none fall behind.
- Excellent use is made of teachers' specialist subject knowledge.
- The well-trained learning support assistants make a good contribution to the progress of the pupils they support.
- Pupils say they enjoy lessons because staff make them interesting. They generally behave well, feel safe in school and have positive relationships with staff and each other.
- The headteacher knows the school very well. She has built on its strengths and tackled its weaknesses. As a result, the school has improved since the last inspection.
- Staff form an effective team and share high expectations and aspirations. Leaders' strong focus on training and developing staff's skills is particularly beneficial to pupils' learning.
- The change of status from First to Primary school has been managed effectively because of clear foresight and careful planning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not regularly encourage pupils to follow up the clear advice given to them about how they can improve their work.
- The role of subject leaders in checking teaching and improving pupil progress is not yet fully developed.
- Although making good progress, the most able pupils do not have enough chance to work together.
- Too little is done to prepare pupils for life in multicultural Britain.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons and all teachers. In addition, a number of short visits to lessons were made and learning support assistants were observed working with small groups. All were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- In addition, the inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to a few pupils read.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, the on-site pre-school manager, senior and middle leaders, other staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Account was taken of 17 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Account was also taken of 12 staff questionnaires.
- A number of documents were viewed including the school's own information on pupil progress, the school's own self evaluation, planning and monitoring documentation, the records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money for pupil premium is spent, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Since the last inspection, the school has expanded to include Year 6 pupils.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children from service families, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is about average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of any off-site alternative provision.
- Half the teaching staff has changed since the last inspection.
- Most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The on-site, independent pre-school is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching and learning outstanding by:
 - checking pupils fully understand the marking of their work
 - making sure pupils improve their work in response to teachers' comments
 - giving pupils with high attainment levels in specific subjects regular opportunities to work with others similar to themselves.
- Increase the impact of subject leaders on achievement by:
 - giving them time to gather firsthand information about the progress of pupils and the effectiveness of teaching in their subjects
 - making sure they use the information gathered to bring about improvement.
- Prepare pupils more fully for life in multicultural Britain by:
 - increasing pupils' understanding and appreciation of diversity
 - developing pupils' skills for participating in our society
 - offering greater opportunities for pupils to interact with others from different backgrounds.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Skill levels vary greatly when children start school but most are similar to those typically expected for their age. Almost all make good progress from their various starting points as they move through the school and reach standards above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, year groups are small and levels can vary greatly year-on-year.
- Children settle very quickly into the Reception class because their move from pre-school is smooth and the care and support they receive is very good. The wide range of interesting and stimulating activities they experience, much improved since the last inspection, means they now make good progress. Another recent benefit is that they are taught solely as one class.
- All pupils learn well because school leaders constantly check that their rate of progress is maintained, and take action when it is not. For example, concerns that pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make was not developing quickly enough led to a check, further staff training and the introduction of changes. As a result, a comprehensive and systematic approach to the teaching of linking letters and sounds is now effective in developing early reading skills.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress and nearly all reach levels in English and mathematics similar to other pupils in the school. Additional funds are used well to provide extra staff and resources tailored to each pupil's needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Each pupil's needs are accurately assessed. Extra work is carefully planned and then effectively taught, generally by skilled and well-trained learning support assistants. Key to pupils' success is that this extra work is checked as they go along and changed if it is not making the expected impact.
- Within the school, pupils sometimes move classes for English or mathematics lessons so that they can work with pupils at a similar level to themselves, and this is helpful to their progress. However, this is not possible for the eldest pupils with high attainment levels. While these pupils continue to receive work at the right level and good guidance from their teacher, they do not have the opportunity to work with pupils similar to themselves.

The quality of teaching is good

- Nearly all teaching is at least good and some is outstanding. Teaching has improved a lot since the last inspection because there has been an emphasis on giving staff the right training to become more effective. For example, lessons are now more carefully planned to cater for pupils at all levels of understanding.
- Pupils particularly benefit from teachers' subject specialism. In physical education, for example, the teacher's excellent knowledge allows clear instruction so pupils understand better and do well. Volunteers, too, bring particular expertise to support pupils, such as in practical science.
- In the younger classes, the teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) is organised so that pupils enjoy these sessions, and they capture their interest. They like the structure, working in pairs alternating the role of 'teacher', praising and commenting on each other's attempts.

- In the most effective lessons, teachers' questioning skills encourage, challenge and probe pupils' thinking so that they learn at a particularly brisk rate. When pupils struggle, the teacher has a knack of asking the right question to prompt the pupil in the right direction.
- An improvement since the last inspection is that lessons are very purposeful with a 'business-like' approach so that learning is at the right pace from start to finish.
- Pupils say they enjoy the way lessons link one subject to another. In a topic about the Tudors, they worked cooperatively to plan how they could seat all of the king's guests at the banquet. Discussion was thoughtful, pupils offering and evaluating various solutions.
- Support for pupils who need extra help is of a high quality because learning support assistants are fully trained, have the resources they need and follow a clear plan to meet each pupil's needs.
- Teachers' marking is clear and often gives pupils guidance and suggestions for improvement. However, pupils rarely follow this guidance, partly because not enough time is given to it. As a result, important gains in learning are missed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is almost always good and they show positive attitudes to their learning, which they say is fun and enjoyable. Most parents responding to Parent View agree behaviour is good.
 - Behaviour is generally managed well across the school because most staff use the recently introduced policy effectively. This is very clear and pupils know how to achieve the various rewards, including 'fantastic Friday'.
 - Hartest is a harmonious community because staff model the respectful behaviour expected of everyone. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection, and no racist incidents.
 - Pupils help create a warm, 'family-feel' to the school community. All pupils enjoy working together, for example exercising for 'wake and shake' which helps get the day off to a good start.
 - Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after at school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and talk confidently about how to do so when using the internet.
 - Older pupils particularly enjoy the various roles and responsibilities they hold, for example running lunchtime clubs for younger pupils.
 - Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They say incidents of bullying are rare and, should they occur, staff deal with them quickly and effectively.
 - Pupils' attendance is good, reflecting their enjoyment of school. Close monitoring quickly picks up when attendance drops and staff work closely with the home to rectify this.
 - Pupils understand that people have different cultures, backgrounds and faiths. Good links allow
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pupils to work with people of other faiths and to study everyday life in rural Africa. However, pupils have little understanding of life in multicultural Britain.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team provides a clear direction for the school. Plans for the future are based on an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas which need development. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
 - The school has continued to improve while managing the change from First to Primary school. All aspects have been carefully planned and effectively carried out.
 - The headteacher strikes an excellent balance between supporting staff and holding them to account. Staff know their views are valued, and that they will be listened to. Their positive questionnaire responses show that morale is high
 - The arrangements to check and improve the performance of all staff are thorough and linked closely to improvement plans. Teachers know that good quality support and guidance is available to help them improve.
 - Staff and the headteacher regularly check the progress of pupils in their classes, and agree any changes necessary. While the school aspires for all pupils to make good progress, particular emphasis is given to enabling those below the level they should be to catch up.
 - Staff increasingly support and advise one another. However, the role of subject leader in checking the quality of teaching and how it impacts on learning is not yet fully developed.
 - Pupils' spiritual development is promoted effectively through close links with the local and wider church community. Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong, and social development is a strong focus of the school generally and the house system particularly. Pupils have an understanding of different cultures around the world, but less so of life in multicultural Britain.
 - The school is strongly focused on making sure every pupil has similar chances to enjoy all the school has to offer and no one is discriminated against. Partnership with parents is good; information sessions are well supported and many fund-raising events support school activities such as swimming.
 - The local authority has supported the school well since the last inspection, particularly to improve provision in the Reception class.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governance is strong, an improvement since the last inspection. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing compared with all schools nationally. They strike a good balance between supporting and challenging about vital aspects of the school such as pupils' learning and staff effectiveness. They know what is done to reward good teachers and tackle any underperformance. Training helps them to understand their role fully. Individual expertise is used effectively, for example the bursar holds a business studies qualification. The school's finances are efficiently managed and the pupil premium spent wisely. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding.

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	124701
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	406265

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	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Burr
Headteacher	Hilary Hall
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2011
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