

# St Osyth Church of England Primary School

Norman Close, St Osyth, Clacton-on-Sea, CO16 8PN

## Inspection dates

5–6 March 2013

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		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

- Despite some examples of good teaching in all year groups, the quality varies too much to ensure that pupils make the progress they are capable of by the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 4 make slower progress in English, and particularly in mathematics, than children in Reception and pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers do not apply the agreed school approach to marking consistently well across different year groups, so pupils do not always know how to improve their work.
- Teachers do not take advantage of opportunities in different subjects to improve the skills pupils learn in English lessons.
- The actions agreed by leaders in their plans to improve the school do not focus enough on raising standards.
- Leaders do not rigorously measure how well pupils are doing, particularly those known to be eligible for free school meals, so they can act quickly if any fall behind in their work.
- The governing body does not play a strong enough role in checking the school's performance and setting challenging targets for improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and progress have improved a lot over the last six months, and are now good in Reception and Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils behave well, are polite, courteous and respectful, and feel safe at school. They are eager to learn, and work very well together.
- Attendance has improved since last year.
- Leaders have improved teaching and learning by laying out clear expectations for good teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons or part lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, governors, a representative of the diocese and school staff, including middle and senior leaders. The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and one letter from parents.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents including: records of governing body meetings; information about the management of staff performance; records relating to attendance, behaviour and checks on the quality of teaching; and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 30 questionnaires received from staff.

## Inspection team

Miranda Perry, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Bartlett	Additional Inspector
Ken Parry	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (extra funding given to schools by the government) is above average. In this school the pupil premium applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds, and the proportion identified as speaking English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The number of pupils who join or leave partway through the year is higher than in primary schools nationally.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The governors manage a breakfast club for the school's pupils.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to good by:
  - sharing the existing best practice, particularly in mathematics, to close gaps in pupils' skills and understanding and make sure they build well on their learning in all year groups
  - applying whole-school approaches, such as in marking, consistently well to improve pupils' achievement
  - making the most of opportunities to sharpen pupils' literacy skills in all subjects.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' progress by:
  - ensuring that every action in the school improvement plans details the member of staff responsible and is focused on improving standards over a specific time period
  - measuring pupils' progress more sharply, particularly for those supported by the pupil premium, so that support can be quickly provided for any pupils at risk of falling behind.
- Improve governance so that governors are better able to:
  - take more of a lead in checking school performance
  - work with other leaders to set appropriate goals in the school's action plans.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is improving in response to much better teaching, but these improvements are recent. Progress in different year groups still varies too much for their overall achievement to be good.
- Children join Reception with knowledge, skills and abilities which are below the levels typically found. They make good progress in Reception.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now making better progress than they were previously, because of improved teaching, but gaps remain in their knowledge, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils progress at about the same rate as other pupils nationally in Years 3 and 4. They make good progress in Years 5 and 6, but do not make up enough lost ground to reach national averages in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Standards are also adversely affected by the high level of pupils coming and going partway through the year.
- Progress is improving at a faster rate in English than in mathematics. Pupils are not always supported to overcome the problems they have with understanding key words in mathematics.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in local authority care do not progress as well in English and mathematics as other pupils in the school. The gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are closing, but the school does not track their progress as a group so it does not have a clear idea of how well they are doing. In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were the equivalent of more than two terms behind their classmates in English. In mathematics, they were more than a year behind. The school runs sessions for pupils who are identified as being at risk of underachieving, and these are beginning to improve pupils' basic skills.
- Some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, because additional adults work closely with families to overcome obstacles to learning. However, the majority of pupils who arrive during the course of the school year have special educational needs, and their progress is hampered by disruptions to their education despite the school's best efforts. They often join and leave the school a number of times before moving on to secondary school.
- There is no difference in the progress of pupils from different ethnic groups, or between those who speak English as an additional language and others.
- Progress has improved in English because pupils benefit from opportunities to write at length, and can focus on improving the accuracy of their writing. It has improved in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 because pupils revisit gaps in their understanding, and practise their skills to close the gaps. The sounds that letters make are taught well in Reception. Pupils who fall behind in reading in Key Stage 1 are given one-to-one support to speed up their learning.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching has improved considerably, but too recently to have brought about good progress for the pupils currently in the school.

- In Years 1 to 4, pupils are not always taught in a way that closes gaps in their learning and builds on the skills they already have, particularly in mathematics. In some mathematics lessons, key words are spelt wrongly and misunderstood by pupils. These mistakes are not corrected by the teachers, so pupils are held back from making the progress they are capable of.
- In Key Stage 2, thorough marking helps pupils to improve their work. In Key Stage 1, although the books are marked, the comments the teachers make do not always refer specifically to what the pupil needs to move their work to the next level.
- When disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn well in class, they are helped by the additional adults to work independently. In the past, the catch-up sessions organised for them were not focused enough to help improve their skills. Now that the sessions are focused on gaps in learning and their progress is measured every half term, their achievement is improving.
- When teaching is good, pupils are interested in their work and try hard. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils made good progress when they talked excitedly about the best word to describe the weather in a story.
- The teaching of mathematics is good and sometimes outstanding in Years 5 and 6. Pupils learn a technique and then practise applying it. When Year 6 pupils were using a graph to work out the conversion rates from pounds to other currencies, one pupil said, 'Before I did this, my understanding was three out of ten. Now it is ten out of ten.'
- In Reception, teachers make sure they are clear about how well children understand, so they can sort out any misunderstandings quickly. In a lesson on forming letters, children who were having difficulty connecting the letter 'w' to the letter 'e' were identified immediately. They then worked in a small group with another adult, and connected the letters successfully within five minutes.
- The social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of pupils is a strong theme in lessons. Pupils who arrive at the school with limited social skills are supported in class to take turns, work with their classmates, listen and respect the ideas of others.
- Classrooms are inspiring places to be. One Year 4 pupil said, 'We have a reading garden in our class, and I always want to go and read in it.'

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are keen to learn. They are open to fresh ideas, and excited by new activities and learning materials. In a Year 4 lesson on measuring, using rice, raisins, and soap powder, one girl said, 'I cannot wait to do this experiment!'
- The school places a strong emphasis on praising the success of pupils. In a celebration assembly, behaviour was impeccable and pupils showed a warm appreciation of the wide range of rewards they received for behaviour, attendance and achievement.
- Pupils understand the importance of respect, and they get on well. At the breakfast club, pupils from all year groups sit and eat together, and play happily with each other.
- The school tackles discrimination by making sure all pupils feel part of a community that values them equally. One Year 5 pupil said that the school was a place where everybody was important.
- Pupils' attendance has improved over the last year. The school works hard to make it as easy as possible for pupils to attend. School staff collect pupils from home and from the bus stop, and invite parents in for a coffee once they have dropped off their children.
- Pupils who find good behaviour difficult are encouraged to reflect on what is stopping them from behaving well. The school helps them to develop skills so they can manage their behaviour successfully on their own.
- Parents say their children feel safe at school, and pupils agree. Pupils think bullying is very rare, and feel strongly that it is wrong. They are confident that if it were to happen, teachers and other adults would sort it out.
- On occasions when teaching is less effective, pupils are not as attentive as they could be.

**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Although some aspects of pupils' education have improved, particularly teaching and progress this year, leadership and management have not been effective enough to ensure that pupils make good overall progress during their time at the school.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not focused sharply enough on accelerating pupils' progress. The planned actions do not have challenging timescales for completion, and do not say which specific staff are responsible for making sure they are completed.
- Leaders do not collect information on pupils' progress in a way that enables them to share with staff how well different groups of pupils are doing. This makes it difficult for staff to work together to tackle any underperformance quickly and effectively.
- Teaching and learning have improved because leaders have drawn up a list of requirements for a good lesson and now check regularly to make sure that teachers are responding to these requirements. However, this checking process has not had enough impact, particularly in mathematics. The best practice in the school, demonstrated particularly by the assistant headteachers, has not been shared with all teaching staff.

- Leaders do not check whether literacy skills are being taught in all subjects. As a result, opportunities are missed to develop the basic literacy skills pupils learn in English. Despite this weakness, progress in English has improved because the school has changed the way the subject is covered. Specific gaps in the pupils' understanding are now identified, and plans focus on closing them. Pupils are given the chance to revise and revisit skills in reading and writing, and then practise them in 'real' situations. This approach is now being adopted in mathematics too.
- Staff feel that the formal performance management process (which assesses how well teachers are doing and reviews their pay) is effective in improving their teaching. There is an appropriate link between the quality of teaching and pay rises.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide a variety of support for those pupils at risk of underachievement, for example catch-up reading sessions and classes to develop basic social skills.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school. For example, it carried out a review in 2012 that prompted the school to work more quickly to improve teaching. The school has used training organised by a local partnership of schools to support better teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has recently been restructured, in the light of recommendations from the local authority. Governors now have a better awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They spend more time seeking out first-hand evidence of how well it is doing, rather than relying on the headteacher to provide information. This means they know where teaching is stronger and less secure, and how the pupil premium funding is allocated. Governors receive a regular update on pupils' progress. However, they do not yet have the skills to challenge the headteacher on whether or not the school's performance is good enough. They have been involved in revising the school improvement plan, but do not have the knowledge to ensure its targets are challenging. They work with the local authority to manage the performance of the headteacher, and are aware of how teachers are rewarded for their performance.

## 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>	115257
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	405576

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	306
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dianne Pile
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Palmer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01255 820823
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