

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Great Yeldham, Halstead CO9 4PT

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- The school's maxim, 'To be the best we can be', sums up perfectly the aspirations shared by adults and children.
- The new leadership, including that provided by governors, is strong and effective. The school has been transformed from inadequate to good in just 12 months.
- Teaching is good, and support for individual pupils is very well targeted so that pupils of all ages and all abilities make accelerated progress, particularly in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils behave very well, enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. They are particularly polite and considerate towards one another.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- High-quality teaching has not yet had sufficient time to impact fully on pupils' achievement. Standards are broadly average, but, given time, they could be higher.
- All teachers teach well, but they sometimes stick too rigidly to their planned lessons rather than responding to how well the pupils are learning.
- Subject leadership is developing well, but the impact of this work is still at an early stage.

Information about this inspection

- This two-day inspection was carried out with two days' notice.
- Including learning walks, HMI observed 12 lessons, including five formal observations of each of the five teachers, which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection included a scrutiny of a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attendance. HMI also looked closely at the school's self-evaluation and development planning, and its systems for managing teachers' performance and improving teaching and learning.
- Discussions were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff, three governor representatives, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) available during the inspection, but HMI took account of the school's summary analysis of its parental surveys.

Inspection team

Paul Brooker, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British background and all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding provided by the government to support particular groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress at Key Stage 2.
- When the school was last inspected in March 2012 it was found to require special measures. Her Majesty's Inspector undertook monitoring visits in July and December 2012 to evaluate the school's progress.
- Acorns Pre-School shares the school site, but is independently managed and inspected separately.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good and increase the proportion that is outstanding, by:
 - sharing the best practice in the school, particularly the most lively and confident approaches to teaching
 - developing the role and influence of subject leaders so that teaching across all subjects is as sharply focused and ambitious as it is in English and mathematics
 - replicating the best practice in assessment and marking, where pupils respond to the guidance given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2012, results in the assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 increased sharply, successfully reversing the school's previous decline in standards and progress. Attainment in English and mathematics was average, with half of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in reading and/or mathematics. The pupils' achievement overall was adequate rather than good but, since September, there has been further acceleration in pupils' progress across all classes and all groups of pupils. This shows that pupils are now achieving well.
- The school's assessment information, supported by evidence from monitoring inspections, shows that pupils make good progress in lessons and over time. Naturally, some pupils make more rapid gains than others, but any discrepancy is quickly picked up and steps are taken to support individuals in danger of falling behind. For example, carefully targeted support for a small group of Year 3 pupils in the autumn term quickly boosted the standard of their writing and brought them back towards the levels expected.
- The school has systematically addressed each of the improvements listed from the last inspection. One priority was the learning of phonics (the sounds that letters make), which is now taught well to younger pupils.
- As a result of the much improved teaching, the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Progress is also good for those pupils supported through the pupil premium. Whereas, in 2012, the very small number of eligible pupils in Year 6 were the equivalent of around two terms behind their classmates in English and mathematics, eligible pupils are currently on track to attain similar levels to their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- All aspects of teaching have improved over the last 12 months so that teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding, particularly in those areas of English and mathematics that have been the focus of whole-school training.
- Teaching in the Reception class strikes just the right balance between adult-led tasks and children choosing activities for themselves. The sessions on reading and number work are sharply focused and skilfully managed, and the play-based activities then give children a chance to practise what they have learned.
- The most impressive aspect of the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is the way that adults use interesting resources in both the indoor and outdoor areas to stimulate the children's own curiosity and independent exploration. For example, the story of *Freddie and the Fairy* had so captured the children's imagination that they could not wait to write their own letters to the fairy, sprinkle fairy dust on their cakes and sequence the story in drawings.
- Teaching in the other classes is also imaginative, particularly in the way that teachers use the school environment and everyday objects to extend the pupils' learning. During the inspection, Year 4 and 5 pupils used the playground to measure out air-raid shelters, an activity that linked nicely with their work in history but also challenged the pupils to make difficult mathematical conversions.
- Teachers have high expectations, and make sure that work is suitably difficult for each ability group in the mixed-age classes. The roles of additional adults are also carefully planned so that

their skills are maximised in supporting pupils who need additional guidance. The classroom environment also support pupils' learning: working walls and 'magpie' boards encourage pupils to gather and share ideas, such as new vocabulary, when they are drafting their own writing.

- Lessons are consistently well managed and directed. Teachers have clever strategies to ensure that all the pupils are involved in each lesson and can contribute their ideas. The best teaching is flexible because teachers and other adults use their questioning to probe and extend pupils' understanding. They adapt work during the lesson rather than sticking rigidly to their plan.
- Assessment and marking are good. Teachers check carefully how well the pupils are progressing so that no one falls behind. Pupils who have particular needs or face personal difficulties are exceptionally well monitored so that they get the support they need. Marking is helpful and detailed, but pupils sometimes need more time to reflect on the comments and practise the suggested improvements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour is good. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and assemblies is consistently good and often outstanding.
- Pupils settle quickly and work together well, often supporting one another in pairs and small groups.
- Pupils respond to their teachers' flair and energy. Their positive attitudes and enjoyment of school are reflected by their good attendance.
- Pupils' enthusiasm, which is skilfully nurtured by high-quality teaching, is a key feature of most lessons. Until recently, older pupils have tended to be rather passive, but this is no longer the case. More lively teaching encourages pupils to engage more actively and also independently; for example, with homework.
- Pupils show consideration for others and develop good social skills. They understand the importance of developing personal qualities, like kindness and determination, and are encouraged to recognise these attributes in others by awarding commendations to one another.
- Pupils know what constitutes bullying, including for example cyber-bullying. Importantly, they say that bullying is very rare and say that they know who to turn to if they feel unhappy. They say that they feel safe and are confident that any issues they raise will be properly resolved.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management, including governance, have been transformed since the last inspection. The interim headteacher steered the school in the right direction and the headteacher has completed the transformation since September by quickly establishing a shared vision and skilfully promoting a team ethic based on 'expectations of excellence'. Leadership in English and mathematics is developing well, although leadership of other subjects is at an early stage of development.
- The headteacher balances well the need for challenge and support, and manages the school with remarkable calmness and assurance. Staff understand that they each have a role to play in driving the school's improvement and know that their ideas and efforts are valued. There is a strong focus on raising achievement, and every opportunity is encouraged to develop pupils' wider enrichment.

- There are good systems to check how well the school is doing. Regular checks include lesson observations, book scrutinies and pupil progress meetings. These involve governors and senior leaders. The performance of staff is carefully managed, and is closely linked to pupil progress. Half of teachers are on the upper pay scale. Teachers have not all had the opportunity to learn from each other's good practice and so ensure that all teaching is as confident and lively as the best.
- The school works hard to engage parents, including those that find this difficult, by seeking their views and responding to what they say. Surveys show that parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.
- The curriculum is good because improvements in the plans for what is taught have been made alongside those in the quality of teaching and the broader range of enrichment opportunities made available, often outside the normal school day. Pupils talk positively about their lessons and the other activities that they enjoy, such as sport and music.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Adults model the school's core values - compassion, community, confidence, creativity, determination and enthusiasm – so that the pupils understand the importance of each one.
- The additional government funding provided through the pupil premium has been sensibly allocated to ensure the engagement and to raise achievement of targeted pupils. Spending covers a range of areas, including one-to-one tuition, resources to support intervention groups and subsidies for trips, as well as personalised guidance and support. The school checks carefully that this funding is used effectively.
- The school has taken full advantage of high-quality support provided by the local authority, including training for governors, one-to-one support from an advanced skills teacher and subject guidance in literacy and mathematics. The headteacher has also drawn on the expertise of other schools, her partner headteacher and the diocese, for example, to strengthen the provision for Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and ensuring pupils' welfare meet all current regulatory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Under the leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body, governance has developed and is now strong. Improvements in governance have gone hand in hand with other aspects of the school's leadership because governors are well informed and fully included in the processes of school review, forward planning and decision-making. Governors understand their strategic role as well as their wider responsibilities, such as safeguarding and financial efficiency, and have worked hard to develop their own knowledge by making regular visits and seeking training and guidance. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve it, including the use of performance management. They have a clear overview of the way that the school uses its resources, including pupil premium funding, to raise standards and close gaps in attainment.

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	115069
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	410445

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Poynter
Headteacher	Carrie Prior
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2012
Telephone number	01787 237235
Fax number	01787 238371
Email address	admin@greatyeldhamschool.co.uk

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