

# Tewin Cowper Church of England VA Primary School

Cannons Meadow, Tewin, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL6 0JU

**Inspection dates** 15–16 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Leaders and governors have not maintained the quality of education reported at the last inspection because not enough pupils make good progress in mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.
- Teaching is not consistently good and varies across the school. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 is stronger than in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers do not always let pupils know exactly what to do to improve their work, particularly in mathematics. Pupils say they do not always know or have their own targets to work towards.
- The teaching of mathematics does not include enough opportunities for pupils to investigate and use mathematics in real-life situations.
- Some of the teachers' assessments in the past have not been accurate and have resulted in work not always being set at the right level for pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers with responsibilities do not check thoroughly enough how well pupils are learning and being taught in different subjects.
- Governors do not always use data on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching to hold the school to account. At times they rely too much on the headteacher to give them information about how well the school is doing.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear understanding of how good teaching is, and have good plans to make it better.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children are well prepared for Year 1. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is also good, and many pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe in school. Teachers and other adults take good care of pupils. Pupils generally have good attitudes to learning and their attendance has improved.
- The school has good links with the local church, and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or part-lessons, all of them jointly with the headteacher. In addition, he made a visit to observe a specialist intervention group, scrutinised pupils' work in all year groups and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, teachers with responsibilities, a teaching assistant, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority improvement adviser and informally with parents and carers.
- The inspector examined a variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plans, behaviour and incident records, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring reports from the local authority, documents relating to pupils' attainment and progress and the management of teachers' performance. He also took into account the previous inspection report.
- The inspector also considered the views expressed in 15 questionnaires returned by school staff, along with the 56 responses submitted by parents and carers to the online Parent View survey.

## Inspection team

David Thomas Hatchett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Tewin Cowper Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a smaller-than-average primary school, but has a growing roll. There are 20 more pupils on roll than at the time of the previous inspection, and the roll is planned to grow further.
- The school serves the village of Tewin, surrounding villages, and parts of nearby Welwyn Garden City.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked-after children and those from service families) is well below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British ethnic origin. A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average, although the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Pupils are taught in six classes, two of which are of mixed age.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a daily before-school club.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, so that it is at least good by:
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to investigate and use mathematics in real-life contexts
  - setting work at the right level to enable pupils to make good progress
  - improving teachers' marking so that pupils are aware of how to improve their work
  - making greater use of individual pupil targets, particularly in mathematics, so that pupils know what they need to do to reach the next level of attainment.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress, particularly in mathematics, so that by the end of Key Stage 2 the proportion of pupils making good progress at least matches national figures.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by making sure that:
  - teachers with responsibilities check the quality of teaching and how well pupils are achieving in all subjects, particularly in mathematics and English
  - the governing body receives sufficient information about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, in order to hold the school fully to account
  - an external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' achievement is not good because too few pupils make consistently good progress by the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics. This is because there is variation in the quality of teaching and work in mathematics is not challenging enough.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not good overall because tasks are not always demanding enough and there are too few opportunities for pupils to investigate and apply mathematics to real-life situations.
- Pupils' achievement also requires improvement because marking does not always help pupils know what they need to improve to reach the next level of attainment, particularly in mathematics. The use of targets to raise achievement in lessons and over time is inconsistent between classes and subjects.
- Children generally start at the school with knowledge and skills that are in line with those typically expected for their age and they leave Year 6 with broadly average standards in English and mathematics. However, in Years 1 and 2 pupils' progress dips as a result of unevenness in the quality of teaching, which is weaker in mathematics.
- Pupils begin Year 1 with knowledge and skills that are in line with those expected for their age. When pupils leave in Year 6, standards in English and mathematics have been broadly average over the last three years.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is expected to be broadly in line with the national average this year. Inspection evidence and scrutiny of pupils' work confirms this. For instance, school data show that pupils' attainment in reading at Key Stage 1 is broadly average this year.
- Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology. Work completed in Year 6 included presentations on rivers and lakes, which showed a good balance between summary text with bullet points, and photographs or illustrations on each slide.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational make progress similar to their peers, and in some classes, many make good progress. These pupils benefit from work that is matched closely to their needs. Trained teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' use of phonics (the linking of letters and sounds).
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium in 2012 to comment on their attainment. Nevertheless, school data show that pupils entitled to free school meals often make faster progress than their peers.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has not resulted in good achievement for pupils since the previous inspection. It is stronger in Key Stage 2 and the Early Years Foundation Stage, where pupils are now making good progress. The school's own records show that teaching has required improvement or been inadequate in some classes this year.

- Where teaching is weaker, there is not a good match between activities and pupils' needs. On occasions, additional adults were not used well to help pupils make progress, particularly during the introductions to lessons.
- The quality of marking is too variable. In some classes and subjects it is good and helps pupils to progress, for example in Years 5 and 6 in English. However, marking in mathematics does not always help pupils to improve their work or move on to the next level. Not all pupils are aware of what their targets are, particularly in mathematics.
- Most parents and carers are satisfied with how their children are taught. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, work and book scrutinies and progress data suggest that teaching is now improving in the school.
- In the best teaching, teachers use good subject knowledge, ask probing questions and set clear learning objectives that are checked throughout the lesson. Teachers also use additional adults well to support pupils who require support or challenge so that they make fast progress. Activities chosen by teachers are well suited to pupils' different needs and their progress is checked throughout the lesson, for example in a good mathematics lesson in Year 5 and 6 where the pupils were learning about squaring numbers and using the squared root to calculate answers to problems.

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

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite to visitors and play with each other well in the playground. The majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are also good. Even where teaching is weaker, pupils generally concentrate and work hard. However, when activities are uninteresting, or not matched well to pupils' different needs, their attention sometimes wanes.
- Relationships are positive, warm and conducive to learning. Pupils get on well with each other and with adults.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. Most parents and carers agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils have a developing understanding of different types of bullying, for example name calling, and say that bullying in the school is rare and always dealt with quickly. Pupils say that they all know an adult they could go to if they needed help.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and is now broadly average. The proportion of pupils that is persistently absent is below average.
- Many pupils attend the before-school club. This helps working families and has resulted in much improved punctuality to school in the morning. Pupils enjoy a range of educational activities, including using computers.

**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- A number of parents expressed concerns that the school is not well led and managed. Inspection findings indicate that leadership and management require improvement because teaching and pupils' achievement have not remained at the good level reported at the previous inspection.
- The school has adequately addressed the areas identified at the previous inspection, but other weaknesses have meant that attainment and achievement by the end of Key Stage 2 have not improved. A new curriculum in information and communication technology is making lessons more exciting and raising pupils' achievement. However, the curriculum provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment in mathematics and science. Pupils say they would like to do more investigations.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are committed to the school and improving teaching. They have an accurate understanding of where the best and least effective teaching is to be found. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses, but in places the school's self evaluation is too generous. Teachers' targets focus on the quality of teaching and how well pupils should achieve. However, pay is not always fully related to performance.
- The school's plans for improvement highlight the right areas, although in places they are too complex.
- The work of teachers with additional responsibilities requires improvement. They have action plans in place to improve pupils' achievement. However they are not involved enough with checking how well pupils are learning and achieving in lessons and over time, and this means they do not always have a clear enough grasp of how well their subjects are being taught or the impact on pupils' achievement.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are good links with the local church, including weekly visits from the vicar, who leads assemblies and opportunities for collective worship. Assemblies encourage pupils to link Christian stories from the Bible to their own lives. The school actively supports a number of charities.
- Safeguarding arrangements in the school meet current statutory requirements. The school has appropriate policies in place, and fosters equal opportunities, good relations and tackles discrimination effectively.
- The school has been supported well by the local authority improvement adviser, who visits the school regularly to observe teaching and report on achievement. The local authority has an accurate understanding of how well the school is performing. For example, judgements made by the local authority improvement adviser in the recent review match those of the inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are committed to the school and work very hard to support leaders and managers. The Chair of the Governing Body is supported by a group of experienced governors with appropriate expertise. Governors make sure there has been good management of a tight budget, and have overseen some difficult staffing decisions. Although governing body meetings are well organised, governors do not always discuss key aspects of the school enough, and do not always ask challenging questions about pupils' achievement based on school performance data and information about the quality of teaching. Too much information is provided by the headteacher and school leaders, and not enough information is found out

by the governing body itself. Governors are aware of this and have arranged for training from the local authority to help them use performance data more effectively.

- Governors are now visiting the school regularly as part of a link programme. Sometimes they visit lessons, although the reports they write are not always appropriate for their role. Governors are beginning to make sure that the salary progression of staff is justified by the evidence of teachers' impact on pupils' achievements and progress. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance.

## 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>	117457
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	413174

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>	137
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gill Forrest
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Simpson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 July 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 717378
<b>Fax number</b>	01438 718586
<b>Email address</b>	admin@tewincowper.herts.sch.uk

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