

Sir Henry Fermor Church of England Primary School

Crowborough Hill, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 2SD

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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.

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because they arrive in the Reception class with knowledge and skills in line with expectations for their age and leave at the end of Year 6 with broadly average standards.
- Too few pupils reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is not sufficiently demanding to help pupils make good progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Marking does not always tell pupils what they have done well or the next steps to take to improve their work. Teachers do not always check that their advice is acted upon.
- Some teachers do not keep a close eye on the progress made in lessons and some pupils can be confused or unchallenged by a task and achieve little in the time available, especially the more able pupils.
- The governing body has not challenged the senior staff sufficiently across key areas of the school's work.
- Teachers in charge of subjects are not sufficiently involved in using information about pupils' progress in their subject areas to check that pupils make sufficient progress.

The school has the following strengths

- While the quality of teaching varies too much to be good overall, there are some classes where teaching is good.
- Pupils behave well and they have good attitudes to learning.
- Members of the governing body are improving their skills by regularly seeking and acting on external advice.
- The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have made important changes to whole-school procedures, such as assessment, and these are impacting strongly on raising attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the acting headteacher. The inspection team also listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read and examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- The inspection team studied safeguarding documentation, teachers' planning for different subjects, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff and the quality of teaching, as well as the school's assessment information.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders, members of the school staff, three members of the governing body and there was a discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team had informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day. They also took into account the views of 66 parents who made their views known through the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Nine members of staff also made their views known to the inspection team through Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Juliet Ward	Additional Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average in size.
- A below average proportion of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is also below average.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is below average. This is extra money given to schools for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is a little above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had an acting headteacher since September 2012.
- There are a number of long-term staff absences that are currently being covered by teachers on temporary contracts.
- There is a before- and after-school club that is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better and to raise standards by:
 - increasing teachers' expectations of how much work and the quality of work pupils can produce in lessons, especially for the more able pupils
 - ensuring more pupils reach the higher levels in English and particularly mathematics
 - ensuring teachers consistently use information gained from pupils' previous achievement and work to plan future learning
 - making sure all teachers show in their marking exactly how pupils should improve their work and giving them ample time to do this.
- Improve the leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of all subject leaders and teachers in using data to regularly check on the achievement of individuals, and groups of pupils
 - ensuring that governors have a good grasp of the school's overall effectiveness, especially in relation to pupils' achievement, and that they understand how well the school's performance compares with other schools nationally.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Reception classes with broadly typical levels of knowledge and skills, but weaker in communication and language. They make expected progress towards their learning goals and have a range of activities to choose from. Some of these activities, however, do not match the children's learning needs accurately enough to enable them to make consistently good progress.
- Attainment is average by the end of Year 6, but lower in mathematics than in English because there is not enough emphasis on pupils applying their mathematical skills and knowledge in different contexts and real-life situations. While progress is improving, it is uneven across classes. This is because some teachers are more effective and have better subject knowledge than others.
- As in Key Stage 1, the most-able pupils in Key Stage 2 do not always make enough progress because they are often given the same tasks as their classmates. Consequently, they do not reach their potential because work set in lessons is not always well matched to their ability. It does not always stretch them or move them on to more demanding tasks.
- School information about pupils currently in the school indicates that the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and also those who speak English as an additional language, is similar to that of other pupils, but some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the support they receive in small groups is closely focused on their specific needs.
- The most recent information indicates that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals have made more progress and attained more highly than this group nationally. Free school meal pupils reach standards that are similar to other pupils at the school in English and are a term ahead in mathematics. The school's assessment system was implemented with the arrival of the acting headteacher and is helping provision to be more precisely tailored to this group as well as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is helping to reduce inequalities between different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' performance in the phonics screening check was above the national average in 2012. Teachers have developed good subject knowledge in phonics and are confident in helping pupils to use this knowledge to sound out new and 'tricky' words.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies considerably. Much of the teaching that requires improvement has good elements because the school has been working on improving teaching over time and this is beginning to have an impact.
- The best lessons move along at a good pace. Teachers are succinct when checking pupils' learning, are clear about lesson objectives and what pupils will achieve. Such lessons involve all pupils because they are pitched at just the right level to challenge them and maintain their interest.
- While teachers plan activities for different ability groups, expectations are too low and as a result work is not always set at the right level. More-able pupils sometimes sit through whole-class introductions which they already understand. Teachers sometimes do not make enough use of teaching assistants who sit passively through the lesson starter when they could be more usefully deployed, for example in stretching more-able pupils.
- Teaching assistants, across the school, support learning well in small-group work. They have developed good questioning skills that engage and motivate the pupils.
- The majority of teachers mark books diligently offering pupils positive comments and encouragement. However, they do not always give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work or the opportunity to have another go at a piece of work using the teachers'

comments. As a result, improvement is slower than it should be and poor presentation often goes unchallenged. In a growing number of lessons, pupils are starting to check and assess their own work and, sometimes, that of others and this good practice quickens their progress.

- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional language support. The adults working with these pupils provide good interactive sessions that promote good progress.
- Where teaching is good, questioning is used well and pupils are given time to talk to classmates about the questions posed by teachers. As a result, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated a good understanding of effective writing features and applied it in their own well-scripted poems. Where teaching is not as strong, teachers do not check out sufficiently enough that pupils understand the work they are being asked to do and this lack of monitoring during lessons means that pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some good questioning was observed but not all teachers probe pupils' thinking enough, or target those who do not answer to check their understanding and develop speaking skills. Pupils are not always clear how they can be really successful in their activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is typically good, and a scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection demonstrate that behaviour over time is also good. Pupils respond well to praise and rise to meet high expectations of good behaviour.
- Parents are generally positive about how the school manages behaviour although some express concerns. There are well-developed systems to manage any low-level behavioural problems and a quiet word is often all it takes. The school provides a calm and well-ordered environment.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually positive although where teaching requires improvement pupils sometimes lose interest in their work and do not tackle tasks with enthusiasm. However, one pupil typical of many said, 'I like the lessons and our teachers.' They try hard in their lessons and get along well together.
- Good relationships are evident throughout the school. Pupils cooperate well in groups. They are courteous and polite to visitors, show respect for each other and respond quickly to instructions from their teachers.
- Exclusions, bullying and racist incidents are rare. Pupils are very knowledgeable about all forms of bullying and know that any form of discrimination is not tolerated. One reason pupils enjoy coming to school often is because they feel safe. Most parents agree that the school keeps them safe and that their children like school. In lessons, assemblies and daily routines, pupils find out about a range of dangers and how to avoid them.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average and punctuality is good. They say they know the importance of attending regularly.

The leadership and management require improvement

- There have been significant changes, both in terms of staff and processes. Decisions around these have been taken with the long-term future of the school in mind. The school is on the right tracks to continue improving because self-evaluation is accurate.
- The effective acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have both provided incisive leadership and have quickly identified the most acute areas of the school's performance that need improving. Some initiatives are still at early stages and not yet securing improvement. Improvement planning has improved and is increasingly focused on targets for improving pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders are developing their roles but have not yet made a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching and ensuring that pupils consistently make good progress in English and mathematics and making sure policies are implemented systematically in all years.

- The acting headteacher, with the support of the staff, has been successful in bringing about improvement in some important areas recently. While attainment is not as strong in mathematics, there have been some recent improvements in reading attainment.
 - Governors and senior staff have allocated the pupil premium funding in a wide variety of ways, for example in paying for support for small groups and individual pupils. The effect of these is varied and some pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are making better progress than other pupils.
 - Performance management is well used. Staff's performance targets are matched well to the needs of pupils and weaker aspects in the quality of their teaching. Despite not yet resulting in consistently good teaching, good systems and methods are being embedded and teachers are supported by regular training. Pay rises are not awarded until the school has secure evidence over time that targets have been met and pupils' performance has improved. During the inspection, the inspectors' judgements about the quality of teaching matched those of the acting headteacher, who monitors teaching regularly.
 - The local authority has worked regularly with the school to provide support to strengthen teaching and leadership skills.
 - The curriculum successfully supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility and they show genuine concern for the needs of others.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school and have a broad understanding of some of the challenges that it faces, and the quality of teaching and how it is being improved. They are aware of how pupil premium money is spent and why it is spent in this way. They have previously examined less detailed information on the impact it makes on the achievement of pupils who are eligible for it but this is rapidly changing as they make more use of the assessment system. They take advantage of training in order to keep abreast of developments, and are getting better at holding the headteacher to account. Despite meeting and visiting the school regularly governors have not in the past had a precise enough grasp of how well the school's performance compares with other schools or what the school needs to do to raise pupils' achievement. Safeguarding procedures and policies within school are undertaken to a good standard. The governors ensure that they are well informed about staff performance targets and do not agree to staff being given pay rises unless they are convinced by evidence of pupils' improved progress, but the focus on progress has not always been sharp enough.
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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	114548
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	424594

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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Jones
Headteacher	Mike Jee
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 October 2009
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