

# Birchington Church of England Primary School

Park Lane, Birchington, Kent, CT7 0AS

**Inspection dates** 18–19 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
	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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 is not yet firmly established or high enough.
- While the majority of pupils make strong progress from their starting points, standards in writing by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are not yet high enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The strong leadership and high expectations of the headteacher, other leaders and governors have rapidly improved the quality of teaching across the school. As a result, most teaching in the school since the time of the last inspection has been of a higher standard than that found previously, especially in Key Stage 1.
- There have been marked improvements in pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 since the time of the previous inspection.
- Pupils demonstrate a substantial love of learning and have very high expectations of themselves. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils are cared for very well and feel safe and happy in the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching across the school. They observed two assemblies, 15 lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground. Seven lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair and a member of the Governing Body, the headteacher, staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including supervision and support for pupils who need extra help. They examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays, and heard groups of pupils read.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents including lesson plans, plans for the school's future development, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is monitored and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including those expressed in 41 responses to the online Parent View survey and four letters.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at 29 returned questionnaires and discussions with several members of staff.

## Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Saltmarsh

Additional Inspector

Barbara Breed

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Some of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs, while others have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, with several being diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with two Reception classes.
- The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is slightly lower than in most other schools.
- The school does not operate any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school's inclusion leader took up her post in September 2013. One Year 2 teacher has left the school since the previous inspection.

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

- Secure the recent improvements in teaching by raising attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 so that it is in line with national expectations.
- Ensure the majority of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium and those supported through school action, achieve Level 4 in writing at the end of Key Stage 2.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because too few pupils reach average standards by end of Year 2.
- Most children start school with skills lower than expected for their age. Most children, as they move through the Reception Year, make good progress in all areas of their learning. Results of national screening in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) are slightly higher than in most other schools. This is because of clear and effective teaching.
- Pupils' attainment in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 is significantly lower when compared to most other schools. This is partly explained by the majority of pupils who have entered Key Stage 1 with low starting points, and partly by previous weaknesses in teaching.
- Pupils' attainment of expected standards in national tests in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 is slightly lower than in most other schools, and considerably lower for pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those supported through school action. This is another reason why the achievement of pupils is not good. However, more able pupils' results at the higher levels in national tests in writing are above those in most other schools.
- Pupils' attainment in national tests in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved since the previous year, with results in mathematics being considerably higher, especially for the most able pupils.
- The gap in progress between pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils is being narrowed successfully by the school. The gap in performance is now between half and one term compared to a gap of up to three terms in the previous school year.
- Recent improvements to the quality of teaching are improving pupils' progress. Pupils made good or very good progress during the vast majority of lessons seen during the inspection.
- Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have attained higher results in national tests in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 than similar pupils in most other schools.
- Pupils demonstrate a love of reading and talked enthusiastically about the books they read and how they share reading with their parents and others. Pupils are regularly heard reading aloud and the books they read are well matched to their needs and abilities.
- Pupils present most of their work to a good standard because of their teachers' high expectations during lessons and the good modelling of high standards of presentation found in displays around the school.
- A very large majority of parents expressed positive views about the achievement and progress of their children. Pupils are proud of their achievements and the quality of their learning.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has not been consistently good enough over time to ensure all pupils make good progress in all classes and subjects.
- Despite recent improvements in teaching pupils have not yet attained high enough results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 or in writing at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Most lessons observed featured high quality questioning and opportunities for pupils to discuss and collaborate with each other. As a result, pupils made rapid progress during their lessons and were actively engaged in their learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and motivate them to do their best. Teachers challenge pupils to perform to a high standard. This was seen across the school in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, music and physical education.

- The best lessons seen were imaginative, enjoyable and led to substantial learning and progress. For example, in one outstanding Year 5 English lesson a combination of evocative sound effects and a picture of a gloomy mansion were used to stimulate very high quality story composition.
- Teaching assistants are used well. They support individual pupils and groups effectively.
- Well-presented displays of pupils' work and other aspects of the school, such as its work as an ecology-friendly school, encourage positive attitudes to learning and a sense of responsibility.
- All teachers offer pupils feedback about their work. They are given opportunities to think about this feedback and respond to it. Pupils receive advice about how they can improve their work. However, this has not been effective in ensuring that pupils' results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 or in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 are high enough.
- Pupils are given effective opportunities to assess their own work and that of others. For example, in one good Year 1 physical education lesson groups of pupils watched each other perform movements and offered each other advice about what went well and how to improve further.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of individuals and groups of pupils in their classes and plan to meet their needs.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is of high quality. A rich range of resources are used effectively to promote children's learning. Children display confidence and their independence is nurtured well.
- Homework is used effectively for pupils to practise their skills and apply their knowledge.
- Pupils interviewed by the inspectors spoke very highly of the teaching they received. Pupils stated that they enjoyed their lessons and said that their teachers offered them a well-pitched level of challenge.
- A very large majority of parents who left an opinion for the inspectors thought that their children were taught well and made good progress as a result.

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

- Pupils consistently demonstrate a substantial delight and pride in their learning. They have extremely high expectations of their own learning and behaviour.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, in the playground, in the library and when travelling around the school is exemplary. They are very courteous at all times. This was witnessed during lessons, during the lunchtime break, and in a discussion held with a group of pupils.
- Relationships between pupils and adults and pupils and other pupils are excellent. Staff and pupils act with obvious respect for each other at all times.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand different types of bullying (including cyber and prejudice-based bullying) and feel there is little in the school. Pupils know how to protect themselves while using the internet. Inspectors observed learners behave superbly and in a way that supported the safety of everyone in the school when a fire alarm inadvertently went off during the beginning of one morning's lessons.
- The school promotes the importance of self-worth and equal opportunities. It actively encourages pupils to put themselves in the shoes of people other than themselves. As a result, pupils are very considerate of others and look after each other well.
- The school operates a highly effective behaviour management system that encourages pupils' excellent attitudes towards learning. The school identifies very clear 'behaviour steps' which it shares with parents, including through the school prospectus. All teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and monitor it carefully. Inspectors did not witness any low-level disruption during any of the lessons they observed.
- Punctuality and attendance have improved as a result of the school's effective engagement with parents. Attendance is now average, which demonstrates pupils' increasing enjoyment of school

life.

- All staff and the vast majority of parents who expressed an opinion thought that behaviour in the school was good and well managed. Several parents offered the inspector testimony about the good behaviour in the school and how their children had thrived while there.

## **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors have very high expectations and are strongly committed to improving the school. Leaders at all levels actively work towards improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Leadership and management are not outstanding because pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average, because over time teaching has not been good enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- Teachers with specific accomplishments and skills are used very effectively to coach and support other members of the teaching team. This is one reason why the quality of teaching has improved.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors monitor the quality of teaching systematically, thoroughly and effectively. Leaders at all levels have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching across the school and its impact on pupils' progress and achievement.
- The headteacher's decisive actions have ensured that the weakest teaching has been eradicated from the school. As a result teaching is now stronger than at the time of the previous inspection and higher outcomes are predicted for this academic year.
- The school's evaluation of its strengths, weaknesses and priorities for development is well judged. Improvement planning, the performance management of staff and decisions about pay awards are explicitly linked to precise targets relating to improvements in pupils' results and progress and the quality of teaching.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the broad range of subjects taught and in additional experiences, such as the extensive variety of after-school clubs and the school's work as an ecology-friendly school. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on people's proper behaviour towards others.
- The school has detailed ideas about how it intends to spend the new sports premium funding. These include hiring specialists to help develop pupils' gymnastic skills, providing additional training to teachers and extending the school's links with local clubs and coaches.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to support eligible pupils' academic and social and emotional learning effectively. This has contributed to the gap in progress between eligible pupils and other pupils being narrowed successfully by the school.
- The school ensures that all pupils are safe. It keeps detailed, thorough and up-to-date records of its work in this area and meets statutory requirements.
- The local authority has actively supported the school's drive for improvement and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It has supplied support and training and has checked the accuracy of the school's assessment of its pupils.
- The headteacher and school leadership team have the well-founded confidence of the school's governing body, the local authority, a very large majority of parents and all of the staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are trained, active and capable. They have a good understanding of the information on pupils' achievement and how it compares with similar schools nationally. They offer a good level of challenge to the school about the information on the standards of pupils' results and understand where results need to improve. Governors set the headteacher pertinent performance management targets focused on securing improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They ensure and monitor the efficient management of financial resources, including the effective use of pupil premium funding. Governors visit the school

regularly and conduct 'review days' to scrutinise the quality of teaching and other provision. Their impact on the school's drive for improvement is good.

## 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>	118693
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	426480

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Loraine Bant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathleen Barham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–8 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 841046
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