

Brenzett Church of England Primary School

Brenzett, Romney Marsh, Kent.TN29 9UA

Inspection dates 19–20 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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. It is not good because

- Achievement is not consistently good over time in all year groups, particularly in mathematics where the rates of progress in Key Stage 2 have not improved as strongly as those in English
- Pupils, particularly those in the younger year groups, are not yet fully involved in assessing their own work and this limits their progress.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good in all year groups because the setting of work that stretches more able pupils is not consistently strong in all classes.
- Not all adults in the classrooms are skilled at asking questions that help pupils to make extended answers or in reshaping tasks to help all pupils understand new work when necessary.
- Subject leadership has concentrated on accurate assessment but has not yet focused extensively on developing teachers' skills across the school, particularly in mathematics, or setting challenges for more able pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress in Key Stage 2 has risen in recent years because of improvements to the quality of teaching.
- In reading both teaching and pupils' attainment scores have improved across the school.
- School leaders and governors now plan effectively for improved teaching and pupil attainment. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching is systematic, astute and linked to precise support for improvement.
- Behaviour is good and attendance has got better in recent years. Pupils are known and valued as individuals, enjoy school and their families are confident that they are happy and feel safe.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong.

Information about this inspection

- Observations were made of 11 lessons or parts of lessons taught by five teachers.
- The inspector and the headteacher jointly made short visits to a series of parts of lessons to observe how well more able pupils were being challenged in a range of subjects.
- Additional activities included observations at break time, lunch time and a school assembly. Visits were also made to the breakfast club, a workshop for parents and carers on the subject of phonics and to a 'Little and Loud' session run by the school for parents and toddlers.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and subject leaders. A telephone conference was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as views communicated during informal discussions with parents and carers and the schools own surveys of the views of parents and pupils. The views of staff were taken into account through meetings and nine staff questionnaires.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and examined the work in pupils' books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current as well as previous academic years were checked in addition to published information on pupil achievement. Planning and monitoring documents, the school's single central record of checks on staff, the behaviour logs and attendance records were also examined.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan

Lead inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brenzett Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided for pupils including those eligible for free school meals, for looked after children and those from service families) is below the national average.
- A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Pupils with minority ethnic heritage come from Any Other white and Romany/Gypsy groups but very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through a statement of special needs or at school action plus is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.
- The school has, since the last inspection, experienced some staff turnover with English and mathematics leaders both newly appointed to their posts this September. The school draws on the support of and contributes to the Shepway Collaboration of primary and secondary schools in the Romney Marsh area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that all is at least good and some outstanding by:
 - enlisting the most skilled teachers in the school and across the local collaboration to coach colleagues so that all adults in the classroom are able to ask more probing questions and reshape tasks for pupils who need more time to understand new ideas
 - checking that teachers' plans help pupils to make faster progress by setting more open ended questions and longer term investigations that challenge pupils in all year groups, especially those who are capable of attaining higher levels, to expand and explain their answers in more detail.
- Support higher attainment by:
 - including pupils more consistently in reviewing their own progress and deciding the next steps that will help them to achieve ambitious targets
 - ensuring that time is made for the pupils, especially in Years 1 to 4, to act upon the advice given in the adults' careful marking of their work that will help them to achieve ambitious targets.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - training subject leaders to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupil progress in English and mathematics across the school by monitoring lessons and coaching their colleagues to plan activities that challenge pupils with higher ability levels.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not yet good because, although attainment is rising, progress it is still too inconsistent across different year groups.
- The trend for attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly in line with national averages for reading and writing but the proportions of more able pupils that achieved the higher levels in mathematics in 2012 were below the national average for this group. In addition in 2013 progress in writing during Key Stage 1 was less rapid than for reading.
- The trend for attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved in the past two years and is now in line with national averages in both English and mathematics. However lower attaining pupils have been making faster progress than higher attainers because the support for the pupils who experience difficulties is more effectively organised than is the challenge for those who are capable of achieving higher levels. Also, fewer pupils in Years 3 to 5 made good progress in mathematics than in reading and writing.
- Progress in reading and writing is improving because teachers check progress carefully using systematic, consistent and frequently moderated assessments and quickly give extra support for any pupils who are falling behind. These systems are currently less well developed in mathematics.
- Year 5 and 6 pupils frequently check their own progress and work out how to meet their improvement targets. In other year groups this is less well developed because the system of pupils checking and discussing their own performance has only been recently introduced and younger pupils have had less practice in reflecting upon their own performance and their teachers' marking.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children join the school with skills that are in line with age related expectations and leave the Reception class with levels of communication, language and literacy that meet or exceed expectations. A sound introduction to recognising sounds and letters (phonics) ensures that the number of children who meet the expected standard in phonics screening check is well above the national average.
- The extra money provided by the pupil premium is used for support sessions for the very few pupils in the target group. As a result, pupils in receipt of the premium, particularly those in Years 4 and 2 have narrowed the gap between their English and mathematics scores and those of their classmates. In addition, Year 1 pupils in receipt of the premium scored better than their peers in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates across all the year groups because additional support is carefully planned and regularly evaluated. There is little difference in the performance of pupils from minority ethnic or language groups and their peers because leaders promote equal opportunities and are assiduous in tackling any discrimination that may arise.
- The deployment of professional sports coaches into an extended curriculum along with the encouragement of vegetable growing in classes' outdoor areas is helping all pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not promote consistently good progress, especially in mathematics or among pupils with the ability to attain higher levels.
- The school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching shows that some in the past had a negative impact on pupil performance but that teaching has rapidly improved in the past two years, particularly in English. However, pupils are not yet making good progress over time in all years. One reason is that in some classes teachers do not providing systematic opportunities to develop and assess mathematical problem solving in all years and subjects.

- Pupils who find the work difficult have good, focused support in class from their teachers and capable teaching assistants and consequently make at least the same and sometimes better progress than their peers. However, the pupils who are capable of making more rapid progress are sometimes set tasks that are not hard enough or asked questions that are not linked precisely enough to the criteria for higher attainment levels.
- Marking now follows a common policy and is typically thorough with helpful advice for improvement. However, some pupils do not yet follow up their teachers' suggestions and need more time to revise their work properly and extend their answers with more detail.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is well planned to combine outdoor and classroom activities. Adults skilfully exploit the children's interests in stories such as Little Red Riding Hood, for example, by posing stimulating questions that extend the children's use of vocabulary.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes towards learning mean that they work co-operatively when discussing or testing out ideas with a partner and the atmosphere in classrooms is positive and mutually supportive.
- All pupils are set improvement targets that are assessed regularly to check their progress and pupils are clear about the success criteria for the tasks that they are set. Their responses to school surveys are overwhelmingly positive on this point.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They value the recognition and rewards that come from behaving well. Behaviour is good rather than outstanding because not all younger pupils have yet become fully involved in the system for actively checking and assessing their own progress.
- Pupils feel well looked after by the adults around them. Those who have previously displayed challenging behaviour speak of the supportive ways in which they have been helped to improve: 'because the teachers make learning fun'. Well-mannered, courteous behaviour is typical because the pupils believe that 'we should treat others as you want to be treated yourself'.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils understand what bullying means and speak highly of the effective ways in which adults can be relied upon to stop any incidents of unkind behaviour. School records support this view and pupils themselves are proud of the opportunities for leading cooperative play at break times. Pupils have a good awareness of personal safety, including cyber safety, because it is well covered in memorable visits from police officers. Some older pupils attended special workshops and were keen to relate how they in turn then led cyber safety sessions for younger pupils during anti-bullying week
- Attendance is improving steadily because effective strategies are now consistently deployed with the help of an able and committed family liaison officer to reduce absences among a small group whose families find it difficult to maintain good attendance.
- Parents and carers believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment and inspectors agree.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, while the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed, the wider management team including subject leaders and governors have not yet effected the school wide improvement in mathematics teaching and attainment. These actions are on their development plan for this academic year.
- Subject leaders are presently at a very early stage of developing their roles but have begun to draw on the support of the school's previous English subject leader and the Shepway Collaboration of local schools to help them check that assessments of pupil attainment are accurate.

- The headteacher astutely prioritised a robust system for evaluating teaching. Feedback to teachers is frequent, helpful and followed by classroom checks to ensure rapid implementation. He did not shy away from difficult conversations about performance in the past and consequently his strong leadership has secured rapid improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Staff appreciate his guidance 'With the recent changes of staff...we have pulled together ... the mood is a very positive one and [all staff] are included in the team' is a typical response from staff members who are unanimous in praising an ethos in which 'leaders do all that they can to improve teaching'.
 - Teachers' planning has improved considerably because of the headteacher's coaching. Success criteria are shared with pupils and they are beginning to become actively involved in assessment of their own progress towards improvement targets. However, inconsistencies remain in how the most able pupils are extended. Similarly skills and expertise of some staff are not yet fully utilised and shared with colleagues to help in developing the quality of teaching further. The headteacher's evaluation of teachers' and pupils' performance is accurate. His thorough summaries have helped to steer the governors to a more realistic view of the school.
 - The curriculum fosters spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils express considered moral viewpoints in social and emotional development lessons and there are two days a week when professional sport, music, art and modern language specialists lead well received extended activities in these fields.
 - Safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements. Parents' participation is embraced enthusiastically with frequent workshops to encourage families to help their children with reading or their toddlers with language development for example.
 - The local authority has supported the school effectively by joining the school leaders in lesson observations and by encouraging partnerships and shared training with other local schools.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - This is a committed and conscientious governing body that is now well aware of standards of achievement and the quality of teaching in the school because strategic training and a reorganisation of roles has been undertaken since the last inspection. Governors know how well pupils are performing compared with national standards because they use the Department for Education data dashboards and have attended training in how to follow and check pupils' progress in the school and make comparisons with national standards. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay progression and pupils' achievement and check the reasons for teachers' progression to upper pay scales. Governors confirm that pupil premium funding is spent on the intended groups and receive reports on the impact on attainment made by the additional support provided by the funds. Governors' oversight of safeguarding is systematic and they make regular monitoring visits to their assigned areas of the school. Governors meet leaders regularly to focus on, and ask challenging questions about, the impact of school development planning on learning and teaching.
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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	118703
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426481

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	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Flack
Headteachers	Matthew Easton
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 November 2011
Telephone number	01797 344335
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