

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Sible Hedingham

School Road, Sible Hedingham, Halstead, CO9 3NR

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. By 2012, every pupil in Year 6 had made good progress.
- Attainment is above average in English and mathematics. More-able pupils do particularly well in mathematics, and a higher proportion than average reach the highest level (Level 6) in Year 6 tests.
- Pupil premium funding is spent wisely to ensure pupils make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given well-planned support. They join in well with all the school has to offer and make the same progress as others.
- Good teaching in well-organised classrooms has underpinned pupils' good progress.
- Pupils behave well. They feel safe, happy and well cared for, and are proud of their school and their friendships.
- Leaders and governors have improved many aspects of the school since the previous inspection, and make good use of the funding available. They have improved the way subjects are taught, and this has helped pupils to make better progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Some does not fully capture pupils' interest.
- Handwriting and correct formation of letters are not taught well, and pupils' speaking skills are not well developed.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not focus sharply on the school's weaker aspects. This slows the drive forward and limits the effectiveness of governors' monitoring.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 18 lessons, taught by class teachers and an instructor for physical education. Five of these were observed jointly with the headteacher or other senior staff. Inspectors also observed an assembly and the work of teaching assistants during lessons.
- Meetings were held with: two governors; the headteacher; the coordinators for English, mathematics, special educational needs and the Early Years Foundations Stage; and a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were held with pupils about their experiences in the school and about their reading.
- Many documents were examined, including school records of pupils' progress and attainment, a school self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, curriculum documents and reports from two external consultants.
- The views of 35 parents who responded to the Parent View on-line survey, and those expressed in correspondence to the inspection team, were considered, as was previous parent survey information provided by the school.
- The views of 33 staff who returned a questionnaire were taken into account.

Inspection team

David Rosenthal, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action (extra help provided by the school) is slightly above average. The proportion supported by school action plus (extra help involving outside agencies) or by a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for groups such as pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care) is around average.
- A nursery operates on the school site, run by other providers, for children from the age of two and a half to four years. It is inspected separately.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently at least good and more is outstanding, by:
 - improving pupils' handwriting through ensuring correct formation of letters and the development of fluency
 - ensuring that pupils' spoken communication skills and confidence are developed at the same pace as other subject areas
 - ensuring that all lessons capture and sustain pupils' interest and engagement.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - identifying the priorities for improvement more precisely
 - enabling governors to monitor more easily exactly what is to be achieved, the timescales and staff involved in taking various actions, and the progress being made on priorities for improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils in all year groups make good progress and achieve well.
- Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They make good progress and so enter Key Stage 1 ready for the next stage of learning. Standards have improved in Key Stage 1 and are now above average. By the time pupils reach Year 6, attainment is securely above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels in mathematics is well above the national average.
- Throughout the school, pupils supported by the pupil premium make particularly good progress because of the help they receive. This includes specialist teaching of mathematics and help in small groups. There were too few such pupils in Year 6 in 2012 and 2013 to compare their attainment against other groups without identifying individuals.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported in their learning and are enabled to participate in the full range of activities the school provides. This helps them to make similar progress to other pupils. In such ways, the school provides equal opportunities for all pupils to learn well and make good progress.
- Pupils read regularly and records show they practise at home. Early progress in reading is well supported by the school's good teaching of phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make).
- Handwriting and the presentation of work are not consistently good. Pupils do not always form their letters correctly, and their writing is often not fluent or well set out.
- Pupils' communication skills are not as well developed as their other work. This is because teaching has not focused enough on developing their confidence to speak out in class discussions.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching has supported the good progress pupils make and leads to their consistently good achievement. Much teaching is lively and motivating and leads, for instance, to good descriptions and imaginative use of words in pupils' writing.
- Additional support, such as one-to-one tuition, for pupils supported by the pupil premium is particularly effective in ensuring they make good progress. The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well understood, and the support and encouragement provided are effective in helping them to be fully involved in lessons.
- Teachers usually explain the work in lessons well, set high expectations and check pupils' understanding as they set about their activities. They therefore spot errors and difficulties and deal with them as they arise. Teaching assistants are used well and offer high levels of expertise to enhance and supplement the work of the class teachers.
- Teachers' marking of work is consistently effective. Because pupils are expected to make improvements and correct mistakes, they make good progress across a range of subjects.

Homework is set regularly. This is particularly helpful in ensuring that pupils regularly practise their reading.

- There are still some elements of teaching that are not consistently good. Not all the teaching captures pupils' interest and sometimes explanations are not sufficiently clear. Handwriting is not well taught, so many pupils form and join letters incorrectly. Consequently, the setting out of work is often not very neat. Although question and answer work develops understanding well, pupils are not always encouraged to speak clearly, confidently or at length. Thus their communication skills are not fully developed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils generally behave well in lessons and show interest in their work. They are well motivated and show good self-control in different situations. When required to work in pairs or small groups, they collaborate well and support each other.
- The school is a very happy and harmonious place. Children value friendship and understand the benefits of working and playing well together. One child said, 'Everyone here has friends.'
- While pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good, in a small number of lessons, where teaching does not fully capture pupils' interest, their attention wanders. Pupils' presentation of their work in their exercise books is not always good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have good understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that any unkindness is rare in school, and that any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- The school's leaders have been successful in raising standards and improving aspects of teaching, such as marking. The improvement of reading and writing has been well focused, based on a good understanding of assessments and test results. This has resulted in raised standards at all levels.
- Staff with responsibilities for aspects of the school are well trained by the local authority, who give good support. This has enabled them to help other staff to improve, for instance by observing their teaching and then providing advice.
- Senior staff understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, although they sometimes indulge in over-detailed analyses of test results. Because of this, they fail to identify improvement priorities sharply enough, for instance improving the teaching that does not fully capture pupils' interest. This also means the school improvement plan does not focus tightly enough on the most important issues. In turn, governors are not enabled sufficiently to check the speed of improvement.
- The work taught supports well the development of basic skills and provides opportunities for pupils to practise literacy and numeracy in a range of subjects. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, opportunities for high-quality music-making, and participation in sporting competitions with local schools.
- Good use is made of the new primary school sports funding to provide specialist coaching and

extra-curricular activities. The school is already measuring the impact of this additional funding on pupils developing healthier lifestyles and better physical well-being.

- Safeguarding procedures meet national requirements. Pupils are educated in a happy, caring and supportive environment, which is successfully encouraged by the headteacher and the governing body. The school provides effective support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for instance through its teaching about a range of beliefs, and through good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and to support each other during lessons and when at play.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well organised to oversee and influence the direction of the school. They take trouble to acquaint themselves with the school's work through visits to lessons and detailed discussions with the leadership team. They therefore have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; this is underpinned by a sharp understanding of assessment information and how the school is doing compared with others. The lack of precision in the school improvement plan sometimes hinders rigorous monitoring.
 - The governing body provides a good level of challenge to the school's leaders and has, for instance, made a good analysis of the effectiveness of the spending of pupil premium funding. Governors make sure performance management systems are used properly to evaluate the quality of teaching and leadership and management, and to link performance to pay where appropriate.

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	115070
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425233

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rosie Jenkin
Headteacher	John Smith
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2011
Telephone number	01787 460362
Fax number	01787 461657
Email address	admin@st-peters.essex.sch.uk

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