

St George's Church of England Primary School, Great Bromley

Brook Street, Great Bromley, Colchester, CO7 7HX

Inspection dates 5–6 November 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.

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and senior staff have successfully improved teaching, learning and pupils' achievement, so that progress for all groups is good.
- The clear and purposeful leadership of the headteacher provides a sense of direction for all staff and has motivated them to focus on the correct priorities to drive the school forward.
- The school attaches importance to developing pupils' academic skills, but also to their well-being, by providing excellent opportunities for pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development.
- Teaching is good and leads to pupils' good achievement. Teachers are making effective use of the new tracking system to pinpoint the stage that pupils are at in their learning and what they need to do next to improve.
- Despite being small in number, leaders at different levels know the school well and are ambitious for it to improve. Self-evaluation is accurate and this has contributed to improvements in teaching and an increase in standards.
- The governors are well informed and knowledgeable about all aspects of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers and other adults do not always use questioning or set work that is at the right level to help pupils make more rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- Achievement in mathematics is behind that in English because teachers do not give pupils enough problem-solving and investigative opportunities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out nine lesson observations across all year groups, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils from Years 1 and 2 read.
- Meetings were held with pupils and school staff, including senior leaders and subject leaders, and a representative from the local authority. A meeting was also held with two members of the governing body, including the Chair.
- School documents were looked at, including those relating to safeguarding, information on pupils' achievement and school improvement plans.
- The inspector took account of the views of the 49 responses from parents to the Parent View online survey and letters from parents. He also spoke with parents as they arrived to bring their children to school. The views of staff were considered through the responses to an inspection questionnaire from 18 staff.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There are four classes, all of which are organised in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The headteacher joined the school two months before the last inspection and has been at the school for a little over two years. There is a new teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage who also teaches Year 1 pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that:
 - tasks are always set at the right level of difficulty for pupils
 - teachers use challenging questions to extend pupils' thinking.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by providing more problem-solving and investigative activities for pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The progress pupils make and the standards they reach across the school have improved since the last inspection. This is due to continually improving and effective teaching and a successful focus on particular subjects where there had been lower results previously; for example, early reading skills.
- The headteacher has swiftly identified the need to train staff in the teaching of reading and this has raised expectations in small-group and whole-class teaching, with the result that pupils have a much improved and good grasp of the sounds that individual and combinations of letters make (phonics).
- Previous test results have shown attainment was broadly average and progress was not fast enough. Attainment rose in 2013 and is rising further, especially in reading and writing. Inspection evidence, including scrutiny of the school's accurate assessment records and analysis of pupils' work, confirms this and shows that attainment is now above average. Progress is now quick in key subjects, evidenced in the rapidly improving skills demonstrated in pupils' work. Case studies on individual pupils highlight the good support and development of pupils' skills in English and mathematics.
- Children start school with varying skill levels but are generally in line with those expected for their age. Children quickly settle into the school's routines. They make good progress in the Reception class, especially in reading and writing, because staff plan an exciting range of activities that are matched carefully to their needs and children practise their literacy and mathematical skills well in different activities.
- Pupils' writing across the school has improved considerably. Current work in books reflects the appropriately high expectations of teachers. The presentation of work is of a high standard. Pupils enjoy writing and have plenty of opportunities in all subjects to practise their writing skills. Writing skills across year groups are above expected levels because the school has provided high-calibre training for staff so that writing is taught consistently and effectively, making good use of 'talk for writing'. This helps pupils to rehearse ideas for writing and develop a wide knowledge of good-quality writing features from discussion.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics is good, and the promotion of reading is a strength throughout the school. As a result, in 2013, pupils reached much higher standards than those nationally in the phonics check in Year 1. The majority of pupils in Year 2 read fluently. Although some have problems with some difficult words, they use their phonics knowledge to sound out these words. Pupils in Year 6 have their favourite authors, are good readers and are making very quick progress in their reading skills because there is a constant focus on understanding the meaning of a wide range of texts.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are successfully meeting the targets set for them and make fast progress. Staff know the pupils well as individuals and act quickly, when a need is identified, to provide the correct level of support. The school can point to some striking examples where this support has been extremely positive for particular pupils in overcoming barriers to learning and allowing them to make good progress as a result.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding make good progress given their starting points. There were too few of these pupils in recent years for their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 to be compared with that of their classmates without identifying

individuals. However, the school has used its funding effectively to provide these pupils with extra support in lessons by appointing additional members of staff to work with them individually and in groups.

- Pupils participate in sports clubs and physical education keenly and with much effort. This contributes well to their health and well-being and they are developing their skills quickly, particularly in balance and coordination.
- Achievement in mathematics is good; progress has quickened and attainment improved because teachers have a clear picture of pupils' weaknesses and have addressed these systematically. Improvement is also due to mathematics being a high priority within the school's arrangements for managing teachers' performance. Teachers are set challenging targets and have, in the past year, reached these aspirations for the different groups of pupils in their class. However, achievement in mathematics is slightly behind that in English because too few tasks involve pupils in solving problems and investigating numbers. Tasks are not always challenging enough for pupils of varying ability and this slows progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection and contributes greatly to pupils' better learning, progress and achievement. Examples of outstanding teaching were seen during the inspection. For example, in an excellent lesson, questions such as 'How did you work that out?' and 'What happens if you change this amount?' were expertly timed to challenge pupils.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given a wide choice of learning activities, both indoors and outside. Children's interests are taken into account, which helps them to be enthusiastic learners and to develop good literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils respond well to other adults in class, who often help small groups to progress swiftly. Support teachers and teaching assistants are well briefed about lessons. They do not do things for pupils, but get them to complete tasks, and explain 'what' they are doing, and 'why', to make sure that they fully understand what is being taught.
- Throughout the school, staff effectively promote pupils' positive attitudes to learning because they plan tasks that are rooted in the pupils' interests and experience. As a result, pupils are well motivated and want to do well.
- The marking of work is undertaken conscientiously and is typically encouraging. Marking celebrates what the pupils have done well, points to the next steps to be taken in order to improve their work and encourages pupils to respond to these comments. This helps pupils to make increasingly rapid progress.
- The regular assessment and careful tracking of pupils' progress have made all teachers much more aware of their accountability for the progress of pupils in their class and of the levels which their pupils are expected to achieve. Despite this, there are times when teachers do not plan activities that challenge pupils sufficiently.
- Occasionally, in some lessons, teachers do not pose questions which make pupils think hard enough. As a result, a few pupils do not make as much progress because teachers do not take learning as far as they could, limiting the challenge for pupils to think, define, explain and evaluate their answers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has an effective system for managing behaviour. Pupils behave well around the school, in assembly and at break times. The school is a very friendly, orderly and harmonious learning community. Pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and to adults.
- Little time is wasted in lessons and pupils say that they rarely get disturbed during lessons by any inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are independent, display high levels of perseverance and concentration and work hard. They are very keen to learn and show positive attitudes to lessons, tackling tasks with enthusiasm. This contributes to the good progress they are making.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and supported well in school, a view which is reflected by parents. One pupil, typical of many said, 'I can't think of anytime when they (staff) haven't helped.' Pupils understand about safety on the internet and possible dangers posed by using computers.
- At playtimes, pupils play well together and say they always feel safe. This is helped by the use of older pupils to support and encourage younger ones. Pupils enjoy this responsibility and carry it out in a mature way.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour policy. They know that there are consequences for poor behaviour and can see the need to have rules and routines to keep them safe and happy. They feel this works well and that behaviour in the school is consistently good.
- Pupils are given numerous opportunities to work in groups; for example, when in charge of the 'tasty tuck' shop. Older pupils 'stock take' and are responsible for telephoning suppliers when items are getting low. As a result, pupils understand how they should behave towards one another and work as a team.
- Attendance is well above the national average and pupils enjoy coming to school. Exclusions are very rare and staff manage the behaviour of pupils well.

The leadership and management are good

- The very effective headteacher and governing body have worked well together and with staff to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress since the previous inspection so that pupils now achieve well.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher makes regular checks on the quality of teaching and uses her records to identify the strengths in teaching and where further improvements can be made. She has successfully managed changes in the school staffing recently as well as securing improvements to teachers' subject knowledge, especially in reading and writing.
- Professional development for all staff is organised well by the school. In-house training focuses on improving the quality of lessons and the use of data to ensure that teaching is appropriate to pupils' needs. Leaders of subjects ensure that all staff consistently apply agreed policies of teaching, implement well-focused improvement plans and evaluate pupils' achievement accurately.
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are well organised and rigorously applied. Performance targets for teachers are linked to the progress of pupils they teach and decisions

about pay are closely linked to how successfully teachers meet their targets.

- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development is promoted very well. Assemblies are well planned and are a time of coming together to reflect on the school's core values. Books are chosen that challenge pupils' thinking and introduce them to different points of view.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well and has ensured that there is no difference in achievement between the different groups in the school. The school encourages good relationships through its high expectations, and tackles any discrimination seriously. These high expectations are reinforced through the wide-ranging curriculum opportunities including the 'job jungle' initiative, which gives pupils the challenge of writing their own curriculum vitae and finding out what is involved in a range of careers and the expectations an employer might have.
- Funding is used carefully, such as the new funding for school sports. This is directed at training for staff, play equipment and the use of sports coaches to work directly with pupils. It is closely monitored by the headteacher and governors with the aim of ensuring that it has an immediate and lasting impact.
- The school has very good relations with the vast majority of parents. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's learning journals are shared with parents and the school's progress meetings are well attended.
- The local authority knows the school well and provides an appropriate level of support. It recognises the overall improvements since the previous inspection and the impact that leaders are having on improving teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. The governing body consists of committed and experienced members who have had the training needed for their role. Governors have a good understanding of the school's data and the quality of teaching throughout the school. They closely check the performance of different groups of pupils, such as the more able and those for whom the school receives the pupil premium. They are aware of the improvements in pupils' performance, including how well pupils eligible for the pupil premium are achieving as a result of the range of additional support. Regular visits mean that governors see for themselves how well pupils are doing. They ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Governors are especially aware of the importance of linking teachers' pay to how well pupils are doing, so that good teaching is rewarded.

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	115085
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425235

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Rowe
Headteacher	Julie O'Mara
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2011
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