

Hockering Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Street, Hockering, Dereham, NR20 3HN

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points and many reach above-average levels by the time they leave the school.
- Good teaching has resulted in rising standards in reading and writing.
- Children in Reception make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They feel safe in school and have very positive attitudes to learning and excellent relationships with adults.
- The well-planned topics are very effective in supporting pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The marking of pupils' work and feedback provided to pupils has improved recently and is now of good quality.
- The headteacher's leadership, together with other senior leaders and the governing body, has had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards since the creation of the federation.
- The school's engagement with parents and carers has improved since the last inspection and is now a very positive aspect of its work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as rapid as that in reading and writing.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve problems.
- Not all lessons challenge the most able pupils enough.
- Teachers do not always check on pupils' learning or ask questions that extend their understanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons and parts of lessons. A number of these were observed jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the executive headteacher, senior leaders across the federation, governors, pupils, staff, parents and carers, and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined. Some pupils read books with the inspector.
- There were too few responses from parents and carers to the online survey, Parent View, for these to be made available to the inspector, but the inspector talked to a number of parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspector looked at key documents, including performance data produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and the plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hockering CE VC Primary School is much smaller than average.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes: Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, and Years 3 to 6.
- The school is part of the Trinity Federation of Church Schools with two other nearby schools. They share the same executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none who speak English as an additional language.
- 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 above average and very high in some year groups.
- An above-average proportion of pupils is supported by the pupil premium, which, in this school, provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- There are insufficient pupils in Year 6 to allow a meaningful comparison with government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress in mathematics so that it matches that in reading and writing by:
 - ensuring that recently introduced changes to boost the performance of the most able pupils are followed through and show their impact in pupils attaining higher levels in the national tests
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their number skills in practical situations, solving problems and in different subjects
 - providing more mathematical activities in the outdoor areas.
- Make more of the teaching outstanding by:
 - planning activities that consistently provide enough challenge for the most able pupils
 - checking learning during lessons more regularly and asking more challenging questions so that all pupils make rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because the progress made by pupils from their often low starting points helps the vast majority of them achieve above-average standards. Where standards remain below average, this is due to differences, and pupils' specific needs, in the make-up of the very small year groups.
- Most children start school with skills that are well below those expected for their age. Those in the Reception group make progress that is at least in line with that expected, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. They are developing good attitudes towards school and learning, which prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Even so, they start Year 1 with skills that are still below those expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards in writing have risen recently having been a focus for improvements in provision and teaching. This is the result of focused teaching of writing skills and of using good opportunities in other subjects for pupils to write imaginatively, factually and at length. Current writing in the style of traditional tales reflects the good skills of pupils in Key Stage 2, and their ability to write a lengthy, well-planned and imaginative story.
- In reading, recent improvements in the teaching of phonics have resulted in good progress in pupils' skills from very low levels found when they start school. Many of the pupils do not read regularly at home. The latest national phonics screening for Year 1 pupils showed that standards remain below the expected level. Older pupils read for pleasure and talk about books they enjoy.
- The proportion of pupils making the expected or better progress in Key Stage 2 is good. For example, of the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2013, almost all made better than expected progress over Key Stage 2. Progress in reading and writing was especially strong but, although still in line with that found nationally, it was slower in mathematics.
- Current progress throughout the school is good, although still weaker in mathematics. The school is aware that too few pupils reach the higher levels in all subjects. Recent improvements to the provision for the most able in mathematics, such as the use of computer activities and smaller group work for the most able, are yet to be reflected in pupils' results. Teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to use and extend their basic number skills in other subjects, practical situations or to solve problems.
- The school's assessments show that there are no significant patterns or differences in the achievement of particular groups. The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is too small to comment on their attainment without identifying individuals. However, their progress is often better than that of their classmates. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. Their often very significant needs are met well and the support put in place by the school helps them to make good progress in their learning.
- Parents and carers spoken to are very positive about the progress their children are making. One parent who had moved her child to the school recently spoke highly of how the school was supporting his social and emotional needs. The inspection evidence supports these positive views.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Although a small team, teachers and other adults work very well together for the benefit of the pupils and to ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. A particularly positive feature is the willingness of staff to take opportunities to work together, and with staff from other schools in the federation, in order to learn from each other and spread good practice.
- Teachers have created a very positive and purposeful climate for learning in classrooms. Pupils talk about how they enjoy lessons and how the teachers help them learn new things. Relationships between adults, including teaching assistants, and pupils are very strong and this supports learning as well as having a very positive impact on behaviour. The best lessons have tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs, are paced and keep pupils interested and involved.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to teachers and pupils. The Reception groups are very well supported by their assistant and this helps the children to make good progress. Other groups make good progress in learning because of the enthusiasm and knowledge of the adults they work with. Teaching assistants spoke very positively about their role and about the training they have received within the federation.
- In the Reception class, children's good progress in learning basic skills is supported through well-chosen resources and opportunities for children to choose learning activities for themselves. There is good use of the outdoor area including in mathematical development. For example, children timed themselves running with stopwatches.
- Teachers often plan activities that are supported by a stimulating range of resources to ensure that pupils are interested and enjoy their work. At times, however, the activities do not sufficiently challenge the most able pupils. In mathematics, for example, teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to use their basic number skills in practical situations and to solve problems. The outdoor areas are not used as well as they could be to help promote pupils' learning. The school is aware of this and has plans to extend the use of the outdoors over the current year. Good use of homework, including the use of computers to complete mathematical challenges, is providing more effective learning opportunities.
- Recent changes to marking and the way teachers provide feedback to pupils on their work have had a good impact. The way pupils respond to this advice is evident in their books and has spread to other schools in the federation. The feedback helps pupils to know what they have done well and how they can improve. Pupils' next steps are clearly set out in the books and this helps them know what is expected of them. However, during lessons teachers miss opportunities to question pupils to check the impact of their teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Whether at play outdoors or in more formal activities such as assemblies, they show a deep awareness of how to respond to different situations. They talk happily about how much they enjoy school and what lessons they particularly like. They are polite and friendly, and the high-quality presentation in books, especially in Key Stage 2, demonstrates that they take great pride in their work. The school's efforts in promoting pupils' personal and social development are having a very positive impact on helping them grow into responsible and caring members of society.
- Pupils' attitudes have a very positive impact on their learning. This ensures that there are no

interruptions or disruption to learning. Because of this, teachers are able to provide more interesting and active lessons. This was evident in the way the Reception children behaved when outdoors, creating channels and routes for water to run down. Photographs clearly showed how much older pupils enjoyed their recent camp on the school site.

- Pupils say there is no bullying, and this is supported by the school's records. Pupils feel safe at school and most parents and carers spoken to agree with this view. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe when using computers and the internet.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility. The school 'Green Team' members show pride in their involvement. Older pupils use technology very efficiently in assemblies to display song lyrics and play recorded music. The school supports many local and national charities.
- Attendance fell in 2013 and was below average. However, this was due to reasons beyond the school's control, such as cases of long-term illness. Staff have clear reward systems to encourage full attendance. The school works closely with parents and carers to encourage full attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior staff lead the school well and make very effective use of expertise across the federation. Detailed development planning provides the school with a clear set of targets and aims for the future. The school monitors and evaluates the success of its work in some depth and has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Responsibilities are divided appropriately, both within the school and across the federation, and given the size of the school. The work of subject leaders and others with leadership responsibilities, such as for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, shows that the school has a strong capacity to continue improving.
- The headteacher and senior leaders monitor teaching and learning by observing lessons and checking pupils' work and teachers' planning. In addition, pupils' progress and attainment are carefully tracked so that the performance of individuals and groups can be analysed. Even so, there are times when tasks planned are insufficiently challenging. Nevertheless, the school is effective in its work to ensure equality and a lack of discrimination.
- Teachers' performance is checked carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses. The challenging targets set for teachers are based appropriately on improving pupils' progress, the priorities in the school improvement plan, and individual professional development.
- The school are very positive about the support they have received from their local authority improvement partner. Staff make good use of joint activities, training or consultancy, when this is provided across the federation.
- The funding available through the pupil premium is used effectively to help eligible pupils to take a full part in school life, and receive, where appropriate, specific resources and adult time. The progress made by these pupils is monitored by the headteacher and governors, and reported in detail on the school's website. Because of this good work, the school has eliminated any gap that existed between their attainment and that of their peers. The school has commissioned a detailed audit of its current provision for physical education. Following this, there are firm plans for the use of the money it will receive to fund more sporting activities and to assess its impact.

■ The curriculum is good. There are imaginative links between subjects that bring learning to life. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils were happily learning to create cave paintings while high-quality artwork has resulted from a Key Stage 2 topic on 'amazing places'. Such activities, together with the very close links to the church and local community, contribute well to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, an enterprise project based on fair trade provided excellent opportunities to design, make and sell products while ensuring pupils learned about the moral aspects of how the materials used were produced. This was extremely effective in developing pupils' understanding of this issue.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– The governing body has a clear oversight of all schools in the federation. They have a good knowledge and understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The governors have access to a lot of data, and they understand and use this effectively. A number of the governors visit the school regularly and report to the others on their findings. For example, a recent visit was focused on the presentation of pupils' work in writing and mathematics. This included discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, and resulted in a useful report to the full governing body on governors' findings. Governors have an appropriate understanding of the school's performance management and appraisal systems, and how these are used. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. Decisions about teachers' pay are closely linked to performance and responsibilities, so the school's systems for this meet requirements. Governors track finances well and support the school in deciding how to spend the money to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The governing body ensures that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet the current regulatory requirements.

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	121094
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	425404

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	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Blaythwaite
Headteacher	Christine Livings
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2010
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