

St Giles' Church of England (Aided) Infant School

Dene Road, Ashted, Surrey, KT21 1EA

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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		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 the current Year 2 is broadly average. Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is not consistently strong across the school.
- While the amount of good teaching is increasing, too much still requires improvement. Across the school, teaching does not always demand enough of pupils, especially the more able. Work is sometimes too hard or too easy for some pupils.
- Time is lost in some lessons because introductions are long at the start and this limits the amount of time pupils have to get on with their work.
- Pupils' writing skills improve more slowly than in reading and mathematics because they do not have enough opportunities to write at length.
- The responsibility for driving improvement is not shared with all members of staff. Many are relatively new to their roles and they are in the early stages of developing skills so that they can play a bigger part in analysing data and checking that initiatives are successful.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is emerging from a period of considerable turbulence with renewed energy. The new head of school and the governing body are building well on the good start made by interim headteachers over the last year to secure rapid school improvement.
- Leaders' planning for improvement is based on an accurate understanding of the main priorities. Weaknesses are being tackled relentlessly. Consequently, both pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are improving quickly.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are polite and courteous, playing and working together happily.
- Teachers get on well with their pupils and successfully support their personal development, ensuring that they enjoy school.
- Leaders have established a strong partnership with parents. Parents are highly positive about recent developments.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons jointly with the head of school. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the views of 53 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work, heard pupils read, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- The inspector analysed 12 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized infant school.
- Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class and in a mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at 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 proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding given to the school for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average. Only a small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium.
- There have been many staffing changes since the previous inspection and most teachers are new to the school in the last year.
- The school had three interim headteachers in the last academic year and became part of a soft federation with West Ashted Primary School in September 2013. The current head of school took up post at that time. He is supported by an executive headteacher who is headteacher at the partner school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - ensuring that teachers always expect enough of pupils and give them work that provides the right level of challenge for all, especially the more able
 - ensuring that pupils do not spend too long at the start of lessons listening to the teacher.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing by ensuring that they have enough opportunities to write at length in literacy and other lessons.
- Ensure that the roles of all staff are built further in analysing data on pupils' attainment and checking the impact of initiatives.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress throughout the school. Pupils' progress in writing is slower than in reading and mathematics. Pupils sometimes make careless mistakes when spelling words and produce only short pieces of work.
- More-able pupils make steady rather than rapid progress. Additional support outside lessons is starting to have a positive effect. However, these pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons.
- Attainment in national assessments at the end of Year 2 has, in the past, been consistently above average. However, work in the current Year 2 indicates that this is not being sustained, with most pupils working at no more than the expected level for their age. Progress has improved over the last year, but there are still pockets of underachievement, reflecting previous weaknesses in provision.
- Nonetheless, developments over the last year mean that across the school pupils' progress is already much improved. For example, phonics skills are now being taught systematically. Consequently, in the national phonics screening checks at the end of Year 1, the school exceeded the provisional national averages in 2013, having had very low scores in the previous year.
- By Year 2, pupils enjoy reading and are confident about using their good knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) to read unknown words. In mathematics, pupils solve problems but do not always carry out calculations accurately.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also improving, although it remains uneven. Support for these pupils is now much more focused and teachers have an ever-increasing awareness of how to meet their needs in lessons.
- When children start at the school, most are showing a typical level of development for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress much of the time, especially in developing early reading skills and in their personal and social development. However, the skills of more-able children improve less speedily.
- There are not enough pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding to comment on their attainment without identifying them. Funding provides good-quality individual support where needed.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving across the school but is not yet consistently good because time is wasted when teachers keep pupils on the carpet for too long at the start of lessons, and this means pupils do not have enough opportunities to get on with their own work. In addition, learning is sometimes comfortable rather than challenging, especially for the most able, resulting in a loss of momentum so that pupils do not learn quickly throughout the lesson.
- There is a clear structure to each lesson, but not all teachers adjust their planning when it becomes clear that the work is either too hard or too easy for some of the pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 2 where pupils were solving problems, the teacher did not recognise quickly enough that some were finding the work too hard.
- There are strengths to teaching across the school. Phonics are introduced systematically and the grouping of pupils by ability in Years 1 and 2 means that differing needs are met well. Teaching assistants make an especially strong contribution to learning at these times as they teach groups. At other times, they are not always deployed as effectively, particularly at the start of lessons.
- Where teaching is good, teachers provide the right level of challenge for all pupils. For example, in a literacy lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, their understanding of how to use adjectives in their writing improved quickly because the teacher planned work that provided the right level of

support for the less able, but also stretched the more able.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers ensure that children in the two classes have access to the same activities. They plan a wide range of exciting activities indoors and outside that engage children's interest well. However, as elsewhere in the school, the more able are not always challenged well enough.
- Teachers' marking and the use of targets have improved over the last year. Pupils have a good understanding of the next steps in their learning and they say they find their targets helpful.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils are proud of their school and behave well. They feel that behaviour is typically good, and parents agree. Pupils are very positive about recent changes in school; they can see improvements and make comments such as 'everyone is happier now' and 'lessons are more exciting'.
- Although pupils' progress is not always good, their attitudes are not a factor in this. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are independent and they concentrate well when, for example, investigating how quickly different cars will go down a piece of guttering.
- The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and good relationships and ensures that there is no discrimination. Pupils from different backgrounds play together happily at break times. There is a harmonious atmosphere because there is so much to do so pupils are fully occupied.
- Pupils feel safe and say 'there is very little falling-out and virtually no bullying'. They feel the new headteacher is 'firm but fair'. They are confident that problems are sorted out quickly and they like the 'Friendship Stop', which they use if they feel lonely. They have a good understanding of how to avoid problems when using modern technology.
- There is good focus on promoting pupils' health and well-being. Pupils enjoy physical activity at playtimes and during sports lessons. The school is planning carefully for its use of the new primary sports funding (additional government funding to support the development of school sports) so that it extends teachers' skills and has a long-term effect on provision.

The leadership and management

are good

- Leaders have ensured that the school has improved rapidly in the last year after a local authority review raised serious concerns over the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. The local authority has provided good support over this period and this, along with the work of the interim headteachers and the new head of school, has been instrumental in ensuring that weaknesses have been tackled quickly.
- Developments over the last year have had a very positive effect on pupils' learning. For example, pupils' phonics knowledge is greatly improved because skills are now taught systematically. The tracking of pupils' progress is also now very thorough. This means that the school can respond more quickly to dips in attainment as soon as they arise. Across the school, staff morale has improved.
- Although there is still some unevenness in the quality of teaching, more is now good. Coaching, support and visits to other schools have helped to improve teaching. Leaders are doing the right things to iron out remaining inconsistencies. They set teachers sharp targets for improvement and follow them up rigorously.
- In this small school, all members of staff take some responsibility for managing provision. Although some are relatively new to role, they have embraced the head of school's ambitions for the school and are developing their skills quickly. They are beginning to play a part in driving improvement, although they do not take on enough responsibility for analysing data and checking that initiatives are having the desired effect.
- The curriculum (subjects and the topics taught) is much improved over the last year, with art

work a particular strength. There are now stronger links between subjects but pupils still do not get enough opportunities to write at length in lessons. The curriculum successfully supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils happily raise funds for charities and say that they enjoy going to church.

- The school's partnership with others has contributed well to recent improvements. Teachers from the federated schools share skills and expertise. The executive headteacher provides good support and guidance when it is needed to the head of school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Under the very strong leadership of a newly appointed chair of governors, the governing body has been revitalised in the last year. This is a significant factor in the rapid pace at which the school is improving. Good use of training following a period where governors reviewed what they needed to do better has greatly sharpened skills and has significantly increased their role in supporting and challenging the school. Governors visit the school regularly to check that the information they receive from other leaders is accurate and they analyse data on pupils' progress carefully. This means that they have a realistic picture of how well the school is performing in comparison with others. They oversee performance management and check that teaching is improving, ensuring that only good performance is rewarded financially. They are also aware of how underperformance has been tackled in the past. Financial planning is thorough. Governors are fully involved in deciding how funding should be used, and they evaluate its success thoroughly. For example, they ensure that the pupil premium is used to good effect. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet 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	125190
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	426653

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debra Beer
Headteacher	Tim Smith (head of school)
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2008
Telephone number	01372 272017
Fax number	01372 270639
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