

Holy Trinity CofE VA Primary School

Trinity Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 1LU

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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:

- The progress of pupils is inconsistent in writing across the school, and in mathematics at Key Stage 1. Progress in these subjects has been too slow in some classes over time.
- Pupils reach standards which are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 2 but this is because of rapid progress during Year 6. Pupils in other classes are too often working below the standards they are capable of. Their achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils get too few opportunities to write longer pieces of work or investigate mathematics for themselves. They do not respond often enough to teachers' marking.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are not often enough encouraged to use their writing skills in their play. Staff do not use data as effectively as in the rest of the school.
- Too much teaching still requires improvement and not enough is outstanding. Teachers do not always expect enough of the pupils, particularly the more able, and teachers' questioning is inconsistent in its effectiveness.
- Leadership beyond the senior leaders is not fully effective in improving teaching to increase the progress of pupils.
- Until recently, governors have not challenged the school to explain the progress of pupils.

The school has the following strengths:

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the support they receive.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. They like being at school and enjoy their work. Attendance is high.
- The curriculum provides very well for the personal and spiritual development of pupils.
- The daily acts of worship are well planned and often outstanding.
- Since their appointment, senior leaders have established an accurate view of the school, eliminated inadequate teaching and improved the way data are used in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide exemplary teaching and model high standards. Teaching in Year 6 is good and occasionally outstanding.
- Governors now know the school well and ensure statutory requirements are met.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was undertaken by a team of three inspectors over two days.
- Inspectors observed 36 lessons taken by 16 teachers, as well as sessions led by teaching assistants. About a third of these observations were done together with senior leaders. Inspectors and senior leaders also reviewed pupils' work together. Inspectors listened to pupils reading and met with teachers who lead aspects of the school, groups of pupils, governors of the school and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke to parents and carers informally before and after school and considered the 36 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- At the time of this inspection, part of the site was fenced off for building work to provide additional classrooms. This meant that Year 1 pupils were temporarily taught in the school's dance studio. Year 3 pupils are also currently being taught in temporary classroom accommodation.
- During the inspection, a group of 48 pupils from Years 3 to 5 were away on a residential trip. Two class teachers accompanied them, alongside other adults.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Joanne Jones	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average size primary school and includes two classes in each year group, and a nursery with children attending morning or afternoon sessions.
- There is a higher than usual proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being those from White British, Indian and African heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. This is funding provided by the government to promote achievement for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children from service families. The school does not currently have any pupils in the latter group.
- The headteacher was appointed to the post in December 2012. The deputy headteacher has been in her role for 18 months. Several of the teachers who lead aspects of the school, the middle leaders, are new to their roles this academic year.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set by the government for the attainment and progress of pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and outstanding teaching more frequent, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by making sure that:
 - the tasks given to pupils match their needs more accurately in each lesson and that these tasks are adapted during the lesson when necessary
 - marking provides pupils with clear guidance about what they need to do to improve and that pupils respond to this marking promptly
 - teachers ask probing questions to check how well pupils have understood what they are learning.
- Improve achievement, particularly in writing across the school, and in mathematics at Key Stage 1, to match that in reading, by:
 - making sure that more-able pupils work at the full extent of their capability in each lesson, accelerating their progress
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write longer pieces of work or to investigate mathematics challenges for themselves
 - making sure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get more opportunities to write, and are encouraged to do so, both in their play and in more formal learning.
- Develop the roles of teachers who lead aspects of the school, including subjects, to participate more actively in monitoring the quality of teaching and to bring about improvements within their areas, by:
 - taking more opportunities to model the very best practice
 - improving the use of data in the Early Years Foundation Stage to focus more closely the efforts of all the adults.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress of pupils is inconsistent, so that they have to make up ground in Year 6. Slow progress in some classes in the past means that pupils are not always working at the levels at which they should be, particularly in writing across the school and in mathematics in Key Stage 1. Recent improvements in teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, mean that progress is improving.
- Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 have been broadly average. From their starting points, this means that the progress of pupils requires improvement. While the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach standards which are slightly above average, some other year groups have ground to make up, because some teaching has previously been inadequate.
- The most able pupils do not often enough get work which fully challenges them, particularly in their writing, or at Key Stage 1. Pupils themselves say that work can be too easy at times.
- There has been a decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Progress in mathematics is not as good in Key Stage 1 as it is in Key Stage 2 because teachers do not always expect enough of the pupils who have not developed the basic numeracy skills they need quickly enough. Fewer pupils than average reached the required standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1.
- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not always as rapid as it could be, particularly in writing. Children usually join the school with the skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. While some of these pupils are learning English as an additional language, they have a good level of development in other areas, and rapidly develop their communication skills.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported in lessons so that they do not miss out on the work being done in class. Consequently they make good progress. Some of these pupils who make particularly strong progress no longer require support.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding make good progress and reach standards which are typically higher than those of other pupils by about three months in English and very slightly above in mathematics.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to other pupils. For many, this means that their progress requires improvement. The school makes sure that pupils who speak English as an additional language develop their confidence in speaking. There is a good emphasis on promoting equality of opportunity.
- A few parents and carers expressed concerns about the amount of progress their children are making, because it is inconsistent.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much teaching remains which requires improvement. There is not yet enough teaching that is outstanding. However, inadequate teaching has been eliminated and the proportion of good teaching is increasing, particularly in Key Stage 2. In the best lessons, pupils help to decide how they will know if they have been successful, and evaluate their work against these criteria, helping each other identify ways to improve.
- Lessons are not always as well planned as the best lessons and too frequently the tasks given to pupils do not offer them enough challenge, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and in writing across the school. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of doing are not always high enough and they do not react quickly enough when work is too easy for some pupils, which slows their progress. Occasionally the more able pupils are given work which is substantially more difficult, for example in a Year 5 lesson where the more able pupils thrived on the challenge of an open-ended problem to solve, using challenging mental mathematics. However, too often these pupils are expected to sit through explanations that are not relevant to their needs. This limits the amount of time they have to do more complex work.
- There are many examples of helpful comments when teachers provide pupils with written

feedback in their books. However, pupils seldom have the opportunity or encouragement to respond to these comments and this means that they miss the chance to reinforce their learning and some basic errors persist for too long.

- There has been some training about asking questions which promote pupils' thinking but teachers do not always probe pupils' deeper understanding, too quickly providing the answer they are looking for without giving pupils enough thinking time. Consequently pupils rely on this and do not develop their determination to explain their ideas or how they have arrived at a particular view.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are well informed about the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and make sure that they get good support during lessons. Where appropriate, these pupils get additional support outside of lessons and this is checked carefully to ensure it makes a difference.
- Teaching assistants know a lot about the needs of the pupils they are supporting and make good use of the plans which are shared with them. They help teachers keep a check on how well pupils understand their work. They also help to run a good range of activities and clubs and provide a listening ear when it is needed. They make a positive contribution to the work of the school and there is a good sense of teamwork.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils like being at school and enjoy the topics they study. They say that teachers make their learning fun, choosing interesting topics around which to plan the lessons. The attendance of pupils has remained consistently high.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because there are times when adults manage pupils too closely and do not give them enough independence to manage their own behaviour. Occasionally pupils rely on adults to tell them what they need to do next and do not always show enough determination to improve their work for themselves.
- Pupils are very polite and courteous to adults and each other around the school. They have coped very well with the severe constraints during the building work, reminding each other of what is expected by the school. Pupils spoken to said that behaviour is almost always good.
- The personal development of pupils is exceptionally well provided for because of the very strong emphasis on the values of the school, embedded across all aspects of the curriculum. The daily act of worship is partly led by pupils and means they have a deep sense of spirituality, and the sense of being part of a positive community is clear. The acts of worship seen were outstanding.
- If any pupils fall out with each other, it is sorted out quickly. Bullying, discrimination and racism are not tolerated. Pupils say bullying is very rare, and that it would be dealt with quickly if it happened. Pupils from widely varying backgrounds get along with one another very amicably.
- The topics pupils study include a good emphasis on staying safe, including when using the internet. As a result pupils are confident about how they can help ensure they are safe, and that they can always talk to an adult if they are worried about anything.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership across the school is not yet as strong as that provided by the headteacher and senior leaders. Some of the teachers who have responsibility for aspects of the school, including subjects, are new to their roles and have not had time to have a significant impact.
- Since taking on the role, the headteacher and senior leaders have tackled inadequate teaching, so that none remains. They provide exemplary teaching themselves, for example through the daily act of worship, but other examples of outstanding teaching are not frequent enough.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view about the quality of teaching and the performance of pupils because they regularly check these through lesson observations, evaluating data and looking at the work pupils are doing. However, strategies to improve all teaching to at least good

are not fully embedded.

- Leaders have made sure that the procedures and systems to identify disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have been improved and that the support they receive is making a difference so that they make up ground compared to other pupils.
- Together with the governors, senior leaders make sure that all requirements for keeping pupils safe are met, and that the school works closely with appropriate partners to help pupils cope with the issues they face.
- The curriculum provides a good range of memorable experiences for pupils and these are usually used well to help develop pupils' ideas for their writing. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote enthusiastically about how to care for their pet goldfish, the result of a visit to a local pet store. However, some of the tasks that arise from such experiences do not give pupils the opportunities they need to work at the higher levels, and they do not always get wider opportunities to write longer pieces of work.
- Music, art and physical education provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their cultural and social understanding. The spiritual development of pupils is exceptional, because of the high quality of the act of worship each day, and the emphasis on understanding one's own faith and those of others.
- Together with the governors, senior leaders have plans to use the new government funding to develop teachers' skills in physical education and to provide high-quality resources to benefit pupils in the long term. Links with secondary schools and other partners mean that sports and activity clubs are very popular and pupils take part in competitive sport very successfully, for example in tennis.
- The local authority has helped the school to develop a more accurate picture of the progress and standards reached by pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1. The school has made good use of the support that has been available. With the improvements in the use of data and the effectiveness of the headteacher in tackling inadequate teaching, this support is reducing and the school has the capacity to continue to make improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have undertaken training to make sure they understand the performance of the school in comparison to other schools, working with the local authority to review the governance of the school. They have a good grasp of the issues facing the school and now provide good levels of challenge alongside their support. This means the governing body is becoming more effective in helping the school to improve. They keep a close track of how the finances of the school are spent, and have planned carefully the building work to improve the classrooms. They have also made sure that the pupil premium is used effectively. Governors make sure that the school trains staff to understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe, and that all appropriate checks are carried out to ensure adults working with pupils are appropriate to do so. Together with senior leaders, governors make sure that they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and that decisions about the levels of teachers' pay reflect the quality of teaching and leadership over time.

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	118848
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	427316

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	488
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Blakemore
Headteacher	Karen O'Brien
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 February 2011
Telephone number	01474 534746
Fax number	01474 534345
Email address	admin@holytrinity-gravesend.kent.sch.uk

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