

St Anne Line Catholic Infant School

Wickhay, Basildon, SS15 5AF

Inspection dates 11–12 December 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.

- Children settle in quickly in the Reception Year and make good progress, which is sustained in Years 1 and 2.
- From often low starting points, pupils reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are broadly in line with the national average by the time they leave at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils who join the school speaking English as an additional language make outstanding progress.
- Teaching captures pupils' enthusiasm for learning and ensures they acquire the basic skills they need in literacy and numeracy.
- Teaching assistants make a highly effective contribution to the learning and progress of any pupil who shows the slightest sign of falling behind.
- Pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school is excellent. They show exceptional attitudes to their learning.
- The way pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is promoted is exemplary. The racial harmony of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds is outstanding.
- The headteacher and senior colleagues work effectively to ensure that pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are good and continue to improve.
- The governing body provides excellent support and is very knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes the work the most-able pupils are asked to complete is not always hard enough.
- Occasionally, teachers do not make full use of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in discussions, or challenge them with questions that extend their knowledge and understanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 17 lessons and were accompanied by the headteacher or the deputy headteacher during five of the observations.
- Meetings were held with governors, parents, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, teachers with additional responsibilities, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspectors took into account the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and the resulting plans for improvement. The inspectors also looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping pupils safe.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) for results to be shown. Instead inspectors considered the 82 responses to the school's own survey of parents' views and the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graham Gossage

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is a little higher than found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is almost twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The St Anne Line Nursery is accommodated on the school site. The nursery is managed by the governing body but is subject to separate Ofsted inspection arrangements.
- The governing body also manages a breakfast club and an after-school club that operate on the school site.
- The headteacher and school leaders contribute to outreach support for other Catholic schools in the area, under the auspices of the Basildon Catholic Collegiate Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all work set for the most-able pupils builds consistently on their knowledge and understanding, and enables them to attain the highest levels of which they are capable.
- Make full use of all opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, by asking carefully targeted questions and using partner and group discussion to extend their knowledge and understanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are lower than expected for their age. Each year, some children's skills and knowledge are much lower than the expected levels, and some children start speaking no English.
- In 2013, the proportion of children joining Year 1 with a good level of development for their age was below the level typically found. Even so, they had made good progress. The proportion of children currently in the Reception classes who are on course to join Year 1 with a good level of development is broadly average. These children are currently making outstanding progress.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 2, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average. This is a pattern that has been sustained over recent years.
- The school's assessment data and the work seen during lessons and in pupils' books indicate that standards in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics are on track to be a little lower than in 2013. Even so, standards will still be broadly in line with the national average and pupils in all ability groups are making good progress from their various starting points. Initiatives introduced to promote improvements in pupils' speaking and listening and writing are paying dividends.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress. The majority of the school's most-able pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The attainment of these pupils shows them to be on average over a term ahead of others. Even so, the work set for the most-able pupils is not always hard enough.
- Pupils from all groups, with few exceptions, gain a firm grasp of the basic skills of speaking and listening, numeracy and information and communication technology.
- Pupils enjoy reading and talk with enthusiasm about the books they read. They make good use of their knowledge of the basic sounds of letters and words (phonics) as a platform for their good progress in reading. Even so, in 2013, the results of the national Year 1 phonics screening check were lower than found in the majority of schools. This is because the school's chosen scheme for teaching phonics presents sounds and words in a different order from the test. Leaders are currently adapting the scheme so that pupils are better prepared for the test.
- Disabled pupils, those who have other special educational needs and those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are all given the support and guidance they need to do well.
- In 2013, pupils supported by the pupil premium were on average about a year behind their fellow pupils in English and mathematics. They did less well than similar pupils elsewhere in writing, but did better in mathematics. Within this group, a high proportion also had special educational needs. Those who did not have such needs were among the school's highest attaining pupils. Current data and pupils' work show that the good progress made by this group has closed the attainment gap this year to one term on average, and some of these pupils are on course to exceed the expected National Curriculum Level 3.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching consistently promotes good progress. During the inspection, some

outstanding teaching was observed in each year group. This was particularly evident in the Reception classes.

- Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent relationships with pupils. This inspires pupils to do their best.
- Assessments of pupils' progress identify the next steps in their learning, and are accurate and frequent. Teachers ensure that, even from a very young age, pupils are well informed about what they need to do to make their work even better.
- Any pupils who show the slightest sign of falling behind in their progress are quickly identified and supported to catch up. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those who are eligible for the pupil premium. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the progress of pupils who have fallen behind and those whose starting point means they have ground to make up. Support often takes the form of individual tuition and working in small groups. These pupils are also supported well by teaching assistants during whole-class teaching.
- Teachers make an exceptional contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This helps to lay the foundation for pupils to gain confidence, to care for and respect each other and to thrive academically.
- The most-able pupils receive some effective support, including those who are recognised as being gifted and talented, in the form of additional lessons each day before the start of school.
- Lessons capture pupils' enthusiasm and appeal to their interests. Teachers invariably cater well for the full range of abilities in the classes and groups they teach. They match work precisely to the various developmental stages that pupils have reached. This usually includes meeting the needs of the most-able pupils. Even so, there are times when the work set for the most-able pupils is not hard enough to fully challenge them.
- Leaders have introduced a range of initiatives to help teachers to improve pupils' progress in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. These initiatives are undoubtedly having a positive effect. Many pupils show good levels of speaking and listening for their age. However, in some lessons, teachers do not capitalise fully on opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. At such times, they are not involved sufficiently in partner or group discussions, and questions are not demanding enough to extend and challenge pupils to think for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Teachers and teaching assistants manage pupils' behaviour consistently well. Behaviour during lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils' attitudes to learning, including those of the children in the Reception classes, are exemplary. Pupils are polite and show great care and respect for each other. It is now over two years since any pupil has been excluded for inappropriate behaviour.
- Even the youngest children consistently work hard. They are eager to answer questions and talk about their work. As they progress through the school, pupils acquire skills that enable them to sustain their efforts. They become increasingly able to work on their own, to contribute to group work and to support each other.

- Pupils are proud of their school, and of their own and others' achievements. They embraced with relish the opportunity to be part of the Christmas production held during the inspection. It was of high quality and greatly appreciated by the large number of parents and members of the community who attended.
- Pupils are eager to take responsibility. Children in the Reception classes undertake daily risk assessments, which they report to the class, to decide if it is safe to play and work outside. Pupils are proud to be part of the school council or the 'eco warrior' group, and to act as a playground 'buddy'.
- Pupils attach great value to the support they receive from adults to overcome any challenges they might face. The work of the school's learning mentor makes an exceptional contribution to the well-being of pupils and their families.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe and to recognise and avoid potential risks in school and out in the community. For their age, they have an excellent understanding of bullying. One six-year-old said, 'Bullying doesn't usually happen. If it does we know what to do and always sort it out amicably.' The racial harmony within the school, and the respect and understanding that children from the wide range of different ethnic backgrounds show towards each other, are exemplary.
- Leaders have worked very effectively to improve attendance. For many years, it was below average and levels of persistent absenteeism were high. This is no longer the case and attendance is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and teachers who have additional responsibilities, such as those in charge of key subjects and Reception, work effectively to sustain pupils' good progress and the quality of teaching. All staff are committed to ensuring that every pupil is able to do their best.
- The school's track record for promoting improvement – for example, in attendance and the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language – demonstrates the school's capacity for sustained improvement in the future.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school is accurate and appropriately critical. The resulting plans for improvement are precise and challenging. School leaders and governors work together closely to keep a critical eye on the success of any initiatives introduced to improve pupils' progress.
- The arrangements for improving teachers' skills make an effective contribution to pupils' progress. Staff feel valued. They are proud to be part of the school and morale is high. This is directly attributable to the leadership and support of the headteacher.
- Daily learning opportunities and additional activities contribute exceptionally well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to their good progress. Pupils enjoy frequent educational visits, such as going up to London and to the seaside, which inspired Year 2 pupils to produce some high-quality written accounts.
- Good use is made of visitors who have specialist subject expertise, such as the sports coach from Chelsea Football Club. Additional daily lessons for gifted and talented pupils are helping to meet their learning needs and increase their progress. The breakfast and after-school clubs, managed by the governing body, make a valuable contribution to pupils' well-being and

development.

- Learning opportunities for children in the Reception classes meet their needs exceptionally well. There is an excellent focus on developing their oral and early written communication skills. Improvements to the building and additions, such as the indoor sand pits and to the outdoor environment, are supporting the rapid progress that children are making.
- Parents' views of the school, based on the analysis of a recent school survey and on meeting parents at the start of the school day, are very positive. They are very pleased with the quality of education their children receive. The school is also working effectively to involve parents more in contributing to their children's learning, through courses such as the one guiding parents on how to help their children's reading.
- The school purchases an annual package of support from the local authority. The support is proving to be beneficial in giving training for teachers and the governing body, and in checking the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation.
- School leaders and teachers with special expertise are involved increasingly in providing support for other schools. This support is provided as part of the work of Basildon Catholic Collegiate Trust.
- Additional funding is used wisely. The primary school sports funding has been used to pay for the installation of high-quality gymnastic apparatus in the school hall. This is already helping to improve pupils' coordination skills. Pupil premium funding is also used to good effect to provide individual and small-group support and guidance. As a result, an increasing proportion of these pupils are doing well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is doing an excellent job. The governors are very well informed about all aspects of the school's work and are great advocates for its profile in the community. Governors are not afraid to pose searching questions, particularly if they feel any pupils are not doing as well they should or they are uncertain about the impact new initiatives are having on improving pupils' progress. They are frequent visitors. Each visit has a special focus on an area identified in the school improvement plan. Governors know all about the quality of teaching and understand nationally available information about pupils' attainment and progress. They are involved fully in managing the performance of staff and ensuring that targets for improvement are linked to the rewards teachers receive and to increases in pupils' progress. Their management of the school's budget to ensure value for money is exemplary. Governors have a clear vision of the impact that additional funding, such as the primary school sports funding and the pupil premium, is having on pupils' development and progress. They make sure the arrangements to keep pupils safe at school meet current 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	115160
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	412634

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	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Southgate
Headteacher	Angela Russell
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2009
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