

# Hormead Church of England (VA) Primary School

Great Hormead, Buntingford, SG9 0NR

**Inspection dates** 9–10 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- The school’s leaders have not dealt with some previously inadequate teaching quickly enough and this has slowed pupils’ progress.
- Some of the areas for improvement from the last inspection, for example, the lack of consistency in the quality of marking and feedback to pupils, have not been dealt with sufficiently well.
- Improvements that have been made are fragile or are too recent to have had an impact. They are very dependent on support from the local authority.
- Until recently, leaders have not checked pupils’ progress rigorously enough to bring about rapid improvement.
- Teaching across the school is not yet consistently good to ensure that all pupils make good progress, especially in writing.
- Pupils become distracted when teaching fails to hold their interest.
- Many parents have little confidence in the leadership and management of the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Relationships between adults and children are very positive.
- With help from the local authority, governors are becoming more active in ensuring that there are improvements in standards and teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, including two with the headteacher, and walked round the school for short visits to lessons and during break time.
- The inspector evaluated pupils' work and talked to some pupils about their learning.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, the headteacher, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, as well as a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector analysed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, documents relating to safeguarding, and the school's monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Account was taken of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View survey and also of responses to the school's own questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All three classes have mixed-age groups.
- All pupils are from White British backgrounds
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, which is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and others, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school will convert to a First School in September 2014, when it will have pupils up to Year 4 only.
- The headteacher is due to leave at the end of February. The governing body and local authority are negotiating the appointment of an interim headteacher.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2013 to make valid comparisons with government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to good and better by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length
  - ensuring that all pupils are interested and involved by making sure that the work they are doing is not too easy
  - correcting errors in pupils' work and checking that they follow the advice they are given through teachers' marking.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels within the school by:
  - making sure that all leaders have the necessary skills to hold staff to account and know what needs to be improved to bring about rapid pupil progress in their areas of responsibility
  - making sure that the recent marking policy is used consistently across all classes
  - strengthening links with parents to ensure that they are all confident in the school's ability to provide the best education for their children.

Ofsted has made recommendations on actions for governance to the authority responsible for the school. This will include an external review of governance. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Progress in the school is uneven and pupils do not always reach the levels they are capable of achieving. This is because teaching in some classes has not been strong enough and progress has been inconsistent.
- Most children join the school with skills and capabilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. This was because teaching did not focus enough on reading, writing and number work. However, in 2013, they left having made the progress they should and were broadly in line with children nationally in personal, social and emotional development and communication skills, although literacy and mathematic skills were still slightly below those expected for their age.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, progress over time has been very uneven. In 2012, it dropped below average. In 2013, attainment was broadly average in mathematics and reading but below average in writing. Pupils joined Key Stage 1 with below-average attainment and progress was not fast enough because teaching was not strong. With help from the local authority, teaching in 2013 improved and pupils' progress was more carefully monitored, with the result that attainment rose.
- In the most recent Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds letters make), pupils' scores were below those found nationally. This partly reflects their low starting point when they joined Key Stage 1.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 last year, all pupils achieved expected levels of attainment and some exceeded expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The current data for Years 3 and 4 suggest that pupils are in line to make expected progress. They are making better progress this year than the previous year because the headteacher is now teaching part-time in this year group.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to well-targeted support. They reach standards that are similar to their classmates and pupils nationally.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding do not make the progress they should in writing. They make expected progress in reading and mathematics, and make similar progress to their classmates. Numbers were too small in Year 6 last year for meaningful comparisons to be made about their attainment relative to their classmates.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not good enough and there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length. This is holding back their progress in writing.
- Pupils' books show that learning has been patchy and expectations have not been high enough in some classes. Pages were missed and some pages contained scribble which was not removed. Marking is inconsistent and does not give pupils enough information for them to improve their work. Too often, corrections are not made. Poor presentation, spelling, grammar and handwriting are not always corrected.

- Sometimes the work pupils are asked to do is too easy. On these occasions, pupils' attention drifts and they waste time chatting.

Teaching in the Nursery and Key Stage 1 has improved because of recent training from the local authority's advisers. In these classes, pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with each other. Adults question pupils well, giving them time to listen carefully and repeat words. Adults talk to children, consistently asking about what they are doing and offering clear explanations to help them expand their vocabulary.

- Pupils also develop mathematical skills through their play and song. For example, in one lesson, the teacher had wrapped parcels of different weights with different types and quality of paper, and using different coloured paper. The pupils then had to write a description for their classmates to guess the parcel that matched. Pupils of all abilities were able to join in this activity and all were keen to read their description.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the groups with which they are working. They are very experienced and help with targeted support for some pupils. This means that pupils who are beginning to fall behind are quickly identified and given extra help to bring them up to similar standards as their classmates.
- Pupils' 'learning journey' files in the Early Years Foundation Stage effectively show the progress they are making through areas of learning with photographic and written evidence.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- Where the work is too easy, some pupils chat too much. The change from one lesson to another also gives rise to minor disruption, which is not always dealt with.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils understand many types of danger and know about the different forms that bullying can take. They mainly feel that bullying is dealt with quickly and all know that they should inform an adult on the rare occasions it occurs. Pupils show respect for each other, take turns without fuss and open doors willingly when they see an adult approaching.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. A link has been established with an urban school with a multicultural intake to help broaden pupils' awareness of other cultures. Pupils raise money for a school in Gambia, as well as for a number of local and national charities. The school has strong links with the community and the local church. The vicar leads a weekly act of worship.
- Conduct around the school and in the playground is generally good. Pupils are polite and friendly.
- To help pupils with behavioural, emotional or social difficulties the school has purchased some tablet computers and employed an art therapist. This is beginning to have a positive impact.
- Attendance has increased steadily and is now average.

### **The leadership and management** are inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not dealt with some of the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Improvements that have been made are recent and are fragile, as they rely on local

authority support. The school has not shown the capacity to bring about and sustain improvements without the external support of the local authority.

- Leaders have not ensured that all staff consistently follow school policies, notably over the marking of pupils' work.
- In their responses to the school's own questionnaire and Parent View, a number of parents indicated a lack of confidence in school leaders for dealing with their concerns and therefore leading the school well. This was well founded, as inadequate teaching was not dealt with quickly enough in the past. In order to improve standards, the headteacher took on an increased teaching role which was at the expense of being able to drive improvement and address the areas for improvement from the previous inspection.
- Until very recently, systems for managing the performance of staff had not been implemented. However, they have now been completed. Checks on the quality of teaching are also very recent and have therefore had limited impact in securing improvements.
- The school is in the process of moving to a new computerised system for tracking the progress pupils make. This means that some important assessment information is not yet readily accessible to staff.
- The local authority has provided intensive support to improve leadership and management and support teachers. This is beginning to be effective as improvements can be seen in pupils' attainment throughout the school for last year. Local authority support is due to continue next term.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Some leaders and managers with whole-school responsibility are very new to their roles and so cannot show the impact of their leadership. There is also a new Early Years Foundation Stage leader this term. All are enthusiastic and look forward to applying the knowledge they have gained from training.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is very recent. Although it shows a fairly realistic view of the school's current position, it is generous in its assessment of how well the school is doing. Leaders acknowledge that some recent initiatives are incomplete and therefore their impact cannot be measured.
- The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of interest, such as the Royal Gunpowder Mills and a local farm, visitors and some after-school clubs. The farmer visits the school and pupils are instructed how to make scarecrows. These are then put in his field.
- An after-school club offers cricket and football for boys and girls. Services from a local sports partnership are funded by the primary school sport grant to help pupils be active and improve their fitness. Teachers' also learn skills and abilities from the coach, ensuring that they are secure in their ability to teach games. The impact of this is that pupils have increased opportunity to play team games with and against other schools, and teachers are increasingly confident in teaching sports skills.
- Safeguarding requirements are met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- In the past, areas of weakness have not been challenged rigorously and improvements have not been brought in quickly enough. Governors sought local authority support last year, with the result that they feel more confident in holding the school to account for its performance and the quality of teaching. This work in building the capacity of the governing body is still being developed.
- Governors are now more aware of and beginning to tackle the school's shortcomings. With the assistance of the local authority, governors have instigated regular meetings with senior leaders, during which time they have scrutinised books and compared the marking to the new marking policy.
- Governors know how the pupil premium money is used and its impact on pupils' learning.
- Governors attend regular training and have set objectives for performance management to bring about improvements in leadership and management, pupils' achievement and progress and the quality of teaching.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117439
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	430759

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	48
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jackie King
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Reade
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01763 289201
<b>Fax number</b>	01763 289620
<b>Email address</b>	admin@hormead.herts.sch.uk

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