

The Cathedral Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Chelmsford

Victoria Road, Chelmsford, CM1 1PA

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2014

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

- Strong leadership from the headteacher and senior leadership have maintained a clear vision for the school and have brought about good improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Teaching across the school is predominantly good.
- All pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics and many reach standards that are above the national averages for these subjects.
- The school successfully places a strong emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children have a good introduction to learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of very strong teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They show care and respect for each other and for adults and are keen to learn.
- Governors know the school well. They are aware of its strengths and provide a good balance of support and challenge.
- The school has strong links with the community and links with partnership schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing is not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics especially for the higher achievers at the higher levels.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage outside area further requires development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or part lessons. Some were joint observations carried out with the deputy head teacher.
- Inspectors carried out a series of short visits to classes across the school, observed two assemblies and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, a group of governors including the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of books and documentation were scrutinised including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- There were 137 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and consideration was taken of the views of parents and carers spoken to in the playground.

Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional Inspector
Stephen Hall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average size primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British Heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and other groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by closing the gap between reading and writing especially for the more-able pupils.
- Improve the quality of the outside learning environment for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Currently children start in the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with levels expected for their age in communication, speaking and listening but below in personal, social and emotional development due to a lack of independence.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the Year one screening checks for the sounds that letters make (phonics) pupils were also broadly average in their attainment. This was a significant rise from the previous year's results that were below the national average.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 in the national tests pupils' attainment levels are above the national averages in reading and mathematics. Some pupils made exceptional progress in reading and mathematics and reached high levels of attainment, which were well above the national levels. However, the number of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in writing was below that of pupils nationally.
- Scrutiny of pupils' books and the school's own monitoring of individual pupils' progress show that pupils are making more rapid progress throughout Key Stage 2 than in the past. This is because pupils' progress is being more accurately monitored and action taken.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make the same good progress as their classmates. The small number of eligible pupils in Year 6 last year means that it is not possible to comment on their attainment in comparison with the others without risk of identifying individual pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational need benefit from good support provided by well-trained teachers and teaching assistants. They make good progress from their starting points in mathematics, reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, again the cohort is too small to make comparisons with the others without risk of identifying individual pupils.
- Pupils read with interest and show an enthusiasm for books. Reading is promoted well, with the result that reading standards are very high. Pupils who read to the inspector, regardless of age, read confidently, accurately and with enthusiasm. They used effective strategies to break down unfamiliar words using their knowledge of phonics. Robust systems of tracking reading enable pupils to measure their own progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good. There are examples of outstanding teaching. There is a strong commitment from all staff to constantly improve. This motivation is shared with the pupils who also want to improve their work. From the time pupils start school they are encouraged to take some responsibility for their learning and use resources such as dictionaries and other books to help them understand.
- Teachers know their pupils well. In the main, they use information about what pupils already know and can do to make sure that work is neither too easy nor too hard.
- In the past pupils have not been given enough opportunities to write at length, especially the

more-able pupils with the result that attainment in writing is lower than the national average. This was masked by the pupils' high achievement in reading so that the overall English grade appeared to be good.

- The school has a system where pupils evaluate their own learning and discuss with their friends and teachers what would make it better. They are clear about their targets and what they could do to improve their work. Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves during lessons with a range of tasks of varying difficulty, which in the lessons seen, was working well and pupils did not take the easy option but accepted challenges in order to attain their targets.
- Teaching is strong, subject knowledge is secure, expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and questioning, from both the teacher and teaching assistant, is skilled. More-able pupils are now more accurately identified and supported to encourage their skills and abilities.
- Pupils and staff benefit from members of staff who are specialists, for example, drama, dance, sport, music, counselling and languages. These staff willingly shares their knowledge and skills with their pupils, and also with their colleagues, which not only raises pupils' interest but also their enjoyment of lessons.
- Additional adults are well deployed in the classrooms. They understand what they have to do to assist the learning and intervene only when necessary allowing pupils to think for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated and settle quickly to learning. Behaviour in and around the school is exemplary. This includes in the well-managed breakfast club. Pupils are proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about their achievements.
- Pupils' exemplary attitudes to learning ensure that they all stay focussed in lessons and that their learning is never distracted by any background noise.
- The school's strong emphases on spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is apparent in all aspects of school life. Worship is enhanced by story and music and themes about good manners, social skills, caring for others and respect for others give pupils a firm foundation for developing life skills.
- Pupils in Year 6 monitor the projector for assembly and choose songs or hymns which fit with the week's theme. Children are encouraged to listen to different composers and think about the feelings the music promotes. All of this is carried out without fuss. Pupils learn well how to be an audience.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are compliant with regulations, and all aspects of health and safety are implemented well. Risk assessments are in place for educational trips. The local authority safeguarding review graded the school's work on safety as very good.
- Pupils' say that they are very happy at school that bullying and name-calling is rare. They feel safe and are fully aware of how to keep themselves safe especially on the internet. Pupils are reassured by having a named member of staff to whom they can go in confidence to discuss concerns.

- Year 6 take part in Crucial Crew which is an interactive safety game for children, which covers fire safety, cycling safety, electricity safety, gangs, drugs, building site and knife awareness in an accessible format. All Year 6 pupils take on a range of responsibilities including being play-leaders during the lunchtime and being eco aware.
- Attendance in the past was well below that of schools nationally. The school has worked hard to combat inappropriate loss of schooling through family holidays out of school holiday time and other improper days out of school. Attendance is above average showing that pupils enjoy their learning and want to be at school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, others with whole school responsibility and governors have a clear unified vision for the school. They consistently communicate high expectations and ambition, which cascades to all staff and pupils. Senior leaders are very much a team with each taking responsibility for increasing pupils' attainment and expecting high quality teaching.
- The self-evaluation is accurate and prioritises the correct areas of concern. Senior leaders are completely clear about what to do to bring about the changes necessary and are working toward this end. Robust systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress. Training is closely linked to school priorities and is open to both teachers and teaching assistants to ensure close teamwork in every class.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led but the leader is aware that the outside area could be improved. Recent changes she has made have brought about rapid improvement in the children's learning and the inside area is stimulating and exciting.
- Pupil premium grant is spent on a variety of activities to promote learning. This includes music tuition as well as one-to-one opportunities to work with a teacher.
- The curriculum is greatly enhanced with additional music as well as after school activities that include sports. Many of the pupils are choristers in the cathedral. Music is promoted well. There is a pupil choir and a staff choir. The school is committed to equal opportunity and the personal talents of individual teachers are also deployed to promote excellence.
- Discrimination would not be tolerated but does not happen due to the way pupils are taught to behave and care through a large number of assembly topics as well as through the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum.
- The school links with other schools particularly with St Peters Primary School Gatituri, Kenya as this too is linked to a cathedral. There are also links with a French school and another in Germany. Two pupils from the German school will visit the school in June.
- Several specialist teachers are employed for instrumental music tuition. To enhance the curriculum further a specialist teacher is employed for Year 6 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. The additional funding provided by the government to help pupils become more active and improve their fitness is used appropriately to employ a sports coach in collaboration with a group of local schools to make a Sports Partnership. The coach not only teaches the pupils but also helps to develop teachers' skills.

- The local authority has only been required to provide limited support to the school but has visited the school to monitor the progress in pupils' writing.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very proud of the school and its achievements. They visit frequently and are very clear about pupils' attainment. One governor has prepared a data booklet that clearly shows both local and national statistics and where the school is in relation to both. This ensures that governors are able to challenge the school regularly.
- Governors offer a wide variety of personal experiences to ensure strong governance. Focus visits to the school ensure they link and monitor the progress of pupils and the school development plan.
- They are fully aware of how teachers' performance is managed and how this links to pay progression. Finances are secure. Governors understand how the pupil premium money is spent, and the impact it has. They have also overseen decisions on how best to use the primary sports funding provided by the government.

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	115289
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	431250

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Minta
Headteacher	Anthea Kenna
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2009
Telephone number	01245 354459
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