

Parsons Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Templewood Road, Colchester, CO4 3EZ

Inspection dates

5–6 December 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

- Teaching has not been good enough to help all groups of pupils make good progress during their time in the school.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling are lower than expected nationally.
- Teachers' marking does not always make clear to pupils what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Teachers do not always give pupils clear targets to help them take the next steps in their learning.
- Recent improvements in some areas of the school's work have not yet been sustained by leaders.
- The effectiveness of subject leadership has been variable in the past, but current leadership is not yet having enough impact on pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school's plans for improvement are not always sharply focused on raising achievement and improving teaching for all groups.
- Leaders do not check pupils' achievement regularly enough to ensure that any pupils who are falling behind are quickly helped to catch up.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards in Key Stage 1 have risen and were above average in 2013.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are polite, kind and enthusiastic learners. There is a calm, respectful atmosphere in the school.
- The teaching of phonics (the linking of letters and sounds) has improved. The results of the latest phonics check were above average.
- Children are taught well in Reception, where they make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 16 lessons, three of which were seen jointly with the headteacher. Pupils were also observed in assembly, during break and at lunch time.
- Discussions were held with staff, governors and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors met formally with a group of pupils from Years 1 to 6 and talked informally with others. They listened to pupils read in both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The views of 19 parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, were considered. This represents a small proportion of the school’s population.
- A range of documentation was checked, particularly that relating to pupils’ progress and keeping them safe, the school’s evaluation of its own effectiveness and its plans for improvement.
- Questionnaires from 30 members of staff were considered, as were their views during informal conversations and formal meetings.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela Podmore

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, and has seven classes.
- Most pupils are White British with a few from different minority ethnic groups. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support the education of pupils who are looked after by the local authority, have a parent in the armed forces, or are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The school cares for pupils before the beginning of the school day in a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching good or better to improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - pupils' skills in reading and mathematics are developed consistently well throughout the school, so all ability groups make good progress in every year group
 - pupils' targets support them so that they know how well they are doing, what they need to do next to improve, and the steps they need to take to get there
 - marking consistently includes written comments to help pupils improve their work.
- Increase the impact that leaders have on raising achievement by:
 - sharpening the plans for improvement to focus more on raising achievement and improving teaching
 - increasing the frequency and rigour of the meetings which check on the progress of both individual pupils and groups
 - strengthening the leadership of individual subjects by sharing the good practice which exists.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2013 too few pupils attained the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils made better progress in writing than in reading and particularly in mathematics. The most able pupils made better progress than the least able, but too few reached the higher levels in their work.
- The pupil premium funding is being used appropriately to support pupils through a number of one-to-one activities and small-group work. In 2013, pupils supported by the pupil premium did less well than those who were not and finished Year 6 a term behind their classmates in both English and mathematics. Current data indicate that eligible pupils are making better progress as a result of more support in groups and through one-to-one tuition.
- Phonics is being consistently well taught across Key Stage 1. This is helping children to use their skills when reading. As a result, children are well prepared for the phonics reading check and attained above the national average in 2013.
- Children in Reception enter the school with skills and understanding typical of those expected at this age. They are taught well and make good progress into Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 had been significantly below average for the previous two years, but rose to above average in 2013.
- The rate of progress in reading and mathematics is improving across the school, though pupils still have ground to make up. Where teaching is good, pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning are helping to drive this recent improvement.
- In Key Stage 2 in 2013, the small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs did not all make expected progress in mathematics, reading and writing. The school's current shows that this group are now making progress that is expected of them, as are those from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. This is because of improving teaching and the good support these pupils are receiving.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Some teaching in the past has been weak or inconsistent. The improvement in teaching has not been rapid enough to secure good progress for all groups of pupils over time, particularly in mathematics, reading and punctuation, spelling and grammar. As a result, in 2013 pupils did not reach the expected standard in English and mathematics at the end of the key stage.
- The marking of pupils' written work is improving in quality. Pupils' successes are mostly identified, and sometimes they are provided with comments to help them improve. However, this is not yet consistent across all subjects or year groups.
- In some classes and subjects pupils are given clear targets to help them improve. This practice is also not yet consistent across the school.
- Children in Reception benefit from good teaching, leading to good progress. Language and social skills are promoted well. Children make effective use of the outdoor area and enjoy learning through practical tasks and a stimulating environment. One child, designing a house on paper

and then with bricks, told inspectors confidently that 'it will be tricky but I will do it!'

- Teachers are making increasingly good use of improved assessment systems to give pupils work that is neither too hard nor too easy. Work with other schools is increasing the accuracy of teachers' assessment at each key stage, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Additional adults help create a positive climate for learning in lessons and generally pupils are engaged and interested.
- Most teachers use questioning skilfully. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were overheard having a lively debate about the possible number sequence that could be created whilst adding a row of matchstick triangles to a pyramid. They excitedly made predictions, questioned one another and worked collaboratively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- This is a caring school where pupils and adults get on well together and there is a genuine desire, according to pupils, 'not to spoil' any aspect of the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school site in between classes, and on the playground. They show respect for each other and in the lunch room during meal times, queue sensibly and display good manners.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to talk about their learning. They follow instructions and explanations given by all adults well. When given the opportunity, they are keen to please and are able to work independently.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare, but they are confident that effective action would be taken should it occur. Year 6 pupils are 'buddy group leaders' and are proud of their role.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school and have been taught how to stay safe when using the internet, on the road and when using their bicycles.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud of it, saying they would recommend it to other children. The school uses robust systems to track attendance, but despite many initiatives to promote good attendance this was only average in 2013.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills are well developed. Pictures around the school reflect its values of 'belonging, endurance, compassion, respect, trust and friendship'. Displays promote understanding of different cultures and countries like China and Russia whilst also celebrating the different languages that children in the school speak.
- Pupils participate in a range of sports activities, and the school has used its additional sports funding to employ a sports coach who provides expertise in school time and in clubs after school. The school also provides a range of other activities. During the inspection recorder and clarinet classes were seen and children were taking part in a football match with a local school.
- A small minority of parents and staff raised some concerns about pupils' behaviour through Parent View and staff questionnaires. The team, however, found pupils' behaviour to be good and the management of it effective.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have sustained the positive environment which is valued by parents and carers, but their impact on improving pupils' academic achievement has been less effective. The leadership of individual subjects varies in quality, and overall it is not having sufficient impact on raising standards.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly. They know what teachers need to do to improve their teaching. Although they acknowledge that in the past they have been slow to act, support is now provided where teaching is weak. However, the improvements made to secure good teaching so pupils achieve well still vary in their effectiveness.
- The leadership of Reception is good. Information on what children understand and can do is used well to identify and provide the right support. As a result children make good progress, and in 2013 entered Year 1 with standards above expected levels for their age.
- Teachers' targets to help them improve their work are now closely linked to pupils' progress, their individual needs and the school's priorities to raise standards and improve pupils' progress. This information is used to determine whether governors should be asked to approve an improvement in a teacher's salary.
- The school works in partnership with other schools locally to look at the quality of pupils' work. Teachers now have a better understanding of how to identify the next steps for pupils in their work, and are sharing their expertise for the benefit of the wider community.
- In 2013 the school's focus on phonics led to pupils achieving well in the phonics screening check in Year 1 and a high proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading at Key Stage 1.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The members of the governing body bring a good range of experience and skills to their role. They know their school well, recognise the challenges that lie ahead and acknowledge that pupils' achievement is not yet where it should be. The identified areas of development are clear and supported well by a comprehensive plan in which governors play an important part. They are becoming more proficient at asking searching questions about the progress pupils make. Governors understand the importance of using pupil premium funding effectively and are monitoring its use. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities well, ensuring that safeguarding meets all current national 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

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| Unique reference number | 115088 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 425366 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 205 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Reverend Tony Bushell |
| Headteacher | Sheena Clover |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 September 2008 |
| Telephone number | 01206 860612 |
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