

Charsfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Charsfield, Woodbridge, IP13 7QB

Inspection dates 20 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make a good start in Reception because improvements in teaching and the range of daily activities since the previous inspection are effective.
- As they move through the school, the pupils make good progress because they respond very positively to the good teaching they receive.
- Pupils who struggle with any work, or have learning difficulties, make good progress because of the skilled support they receive.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and Charsfield is a harmonious community.
- Pupils say, and parents agree, that they feel safe in school and well looked after.
- Pupils say they like the way subjects are linked together and that they feel this helps them learn.
- With the help of the local authority, governors, the headteacher and other leaders have improved pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- The partnership with a local school has practical benefits; leaders work across both schools, staff share ideas and learn from one another, and finances are used efficiently.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The more-able are not always working at a high enough level to reach the higher standards they should.
- Pupils do not routinely have time to read, understand and respond to their teachers' marking.
- Elements of basic literacy skills such as grammar and handwriting are not good enough.
- The school's analysis of what it needs to do to improve is not sharp enough to enable the school to know what precisely it must do and how it will know it has succeeded.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors sampled parts of six lessons. Some were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, governors, a number of parents and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire, ParentView. The responses to six staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; the school's view of its own performance; records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from the pupil premium is spent; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is low. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is in partnership with Dennington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School. A consultation is underway regarding formal federation.
- The school operates a breakfast club five days a week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that achievement also improves by:
 - ensuring more-able pupils are given tasks that are just at the right level of difficulty so that they are all able to make good progress
 - strengthening pupils' skills in punctuation, grammar and handwriting and ensuring pupils use these skills accurately in all their work, particularly when writing at length
 - checking that pupils read, understand and follow their teachers' advice for improvement in their work, and that teachers routinely give the time for them to do so.
- Improve school self evaluation and development planning by:
 - more accurately identifying areas that need to be improved
 - clearly identifying measurable goals and specifying how and by when they are to be achieved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Reception with varied skills and experiences which vary from year to year but, overall, are above those typical for their age. They have a very good general knowledge, for example of different plants and animals.
- Children make good progress in Reception because the school has fully implemented the advice and guidance given by the local authority specialists after the previous inspection, particularly in the balance of adult and child-led activities. Children have positive attitudes to learning and often follow up and explore further in their own time what they have previously been taught.
- The small number of pupils in each year group means results vary greatly. Pupils generally make good progress as they move through the school, so standards tend to be above average.
- When more-able pupils work with pupils of similar ability not age, this is effective and, at these times, they make faster progress. For example, a Year 2 pupil enjoyed the more-challenging work and contributed well in a lesson with older pupils. At other times, tasks are not hard enough and progress is slower. Pupils will sometimes demonstrate in an answer or statement during the introduction to work that a task is too easy for them.
- Pupils did well in reading and writing in the 2013 Year 6 national tests. On average, they were about a term ahead of where they are expected to be in reading and two terms ahead in writing. However, in the specific skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar they were about a term behind. The school has recognised this and made some changes that are working, for example a short session at the start of the day given to learning and practising these skills. This is beneficial, but pupils are not using these skills to the same level in their general writing and in other subjects.
- The teaching of how letters link to the sounds they represent (phonics) follows a well-planned system with small groups of pupils learning at the right level for them. Because of this improvement, four of the five pupils who failed the national screening in 2012 passed in 2013, as did three of the five taking it for the first time. Pupils observed were fascinated by the different sounds made by combinations of letters and eagerly sought out similarities and differences.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well because they receive extra work carefully tailored to their needs.
- The small number of pupils who benefit from the extra pupil premium funding do well because this money is used to give them, too, the help they need and they make at least as good and often better progress than their peers. In 2013, there were too few pupils in Year 6 to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- Handwriting depends more upon the care the pupil takes than the school's teaching, so in size, shape and formation it is erratic. Some of the eldest pupils do not join their letters yet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils and parents say classes are like 'big happy families,' because relationships between staff

and pupils are so positive they 'hum' with learning.

- In the youngest class, children try hard and do their best to please. When learning about letter sounds, for example, they meet their teaching assistant's high expectations that they will follow her lead closely.
- Pupils know exactly what is expected of them because it is made clear to them each lesson, what everyone must do, with harder work suggested for middle ability pupils, and further extension work for the most-able. Teachers challenge pupils to work at the highest level they can and those working at the first two levels often succeed in doing this. However, for many of the most-able pupils, even the hardest work is often too easy for them, so they do not make enough progress.
- Staff use technology well, both to give a visual stimulus to their teaching and a 'hook' to get their pupils' interested. Pupils say that this often helps them understand more clearly.
- Questions are at the right level, neither too easy nor too hard, because teachers vary them depending upon each pupil's level. For example, a lesson started with the teacher saying, 'This will get your brains going,' and pupils responding enthusiastically. Pupils answered questions that made them think, using what they already knew, to predict what might happen next.
- Pupils use specific vocabulary, such as 'subordinate clause', in the right context and demonstrate deep understanding because they have been taught accurately.
- Marking is explicit about what pupils' achieve and, more broadly, about how they can improve. However, the impact is reduced because pupils are not routinely given the time to respond, and staff do not sufficiently check they understand.
- Teaching assistants are well trained in the extra courses they teach. As a result, when pupils do not understand, they are generally able to change and modify the task so the pupil succeeds.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are clear about the behaviour code, and follow it closely. Pupils say there is no bullying and the very few arguments are quickly resolved. One pupil said, 'Charsfield is a small school so I know everyone and we are all friends.' Another echoed this, 'At my last school I was bullied but I really like it here because no one bullies me.'
- Pupils know themselves as learners, how they are doing and are diligent about areas they need to improve. With the help of staff and their parents, they learn and use a variety of techniques to remember key facts, such as multiplication tables.
- Pupils enjoy meeting, working and competing with others from other local schools, including from the partner school.
- Pupils say they like working at their group tables because they are all of similar levels and can help one another. One summed it up, 'I like working on my own and using my ideas but if you work with someone else and they understand it a bit more they can explain it to you.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a very good understanding of safety, whether riding a bicycle or when using the internet.

- All parents spoken to said their children were very happy at school and that the staff were like a second family to them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a strong sense of community within the school, and beyond. In assembly, they empathised with those less fortunate than themselves and proudly discussed their fundraising experiences. Their good relationships and behaviour are evident in a variety of situations, such as in breakfast club, for example.
- Pupils feel they have a real voice in the school. Through the school council and generally, they feel staff listen to their views and often act on them.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and the school uses many incentives to encourage pupils to be on time and in school.

The leadership and management are good

- Teaching is managed well. Staff meetings focus on teaching and learning, rather than administration, with every teacher asked to give a recent example of effective learning. In this way, good ideas are shared.
- Strong links are made between subjects which pupils say help them understand better, and make more sense. Visits, such as that to the science museum, add colour to learning.
- The school offers all pupils numerous opportunities and strives to give each equal opportunities to all pupils of everything it offers.
- Additional funding for sports is used well to give pupils more varied opportunities. A wider range is provided after school, too. Expert coaching develops pupils' skills better, and they recognise the exertion they make and its effect on their bodies. However, while staff training is planned, it has not yet begun.
- The partnership with parents is very good. All the parents spoken to were positive. Parents say communication has improved greatly since the previous inspection, and they particularly like the convenience of texting.
- The relationship with the partner school has many benefits. Visits are more cost-effective, staff expertise is shared more, and pupils have more chances to work with others of a similar ability.
- The local 'pyramid' of schools extends the subjects and experiences taught in school well. Pupils enjoyed, for example, the experience of singing with many others at 'music day.' Staff benefit from sharing ideas, particularly with those with similar job responsibilities to themselves.
- The local authority has given the school a lot of support since the previous inspection. In particular it has contributed to better teaching and progress, especially in the Reception year. Because things have gone well, this is being reduced.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but they do not define clearly enough precisely what needs to be done to make it better. Nor do they say how and by when this will happen, so it is difficult to say an objective has been successfully

reached.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has been forward-thinking in developing the partnership which enables both schools to seek benefits while maintaining their individuality. They were described as, 'Growing together in friendship.' A more formal link is currently being considered. The Chair is particularly proud that governors visit much more regularly than in the recent past, and share this information usefully. They monitor particularly progress towards the current Action Plan. The school recognises that governors' questions challenge what is happening and why, and that this sometimes leads to beneficial changes. Finances are monitored closely, particularly because governors are committed to maintaining three classes and they know this has a cost implication. They know that the new hall offers many benefits to learning and school life generally. Governors know how pupil premium funds are adding value to these pupils' education, through extra staff and learning programmes for specific skills. Pay policy is linked to performance, and the governing body already have experience of tackling underperformance successfully. Statutory requirements, including safeguarding, are met.

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	124725
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	430799

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

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	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Purcell
Headteacher	Valerie Jones
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2012
Telephone number	01473 737347
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