

Bulmer St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Bulmer, Sudbury, CO10 7EH

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2014

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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress, particularly in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress in writing is sometimes not good enough for some pupils.
- The good foundations which are built in Reception are not well developed and few pupils attain the higher levels by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Some pupils who have special educational needs and a few pupils supported through pupil premium funding do not make as much progress as they should.
- Marking often does not include clear guidance for pupils about how to improve their work.
- Work set does not consistently stretch and challenge all pupils, including the most and least able.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation and standards of work are not high enough.
- Adults do not always provide the necessary extra help as quickly as possible to move pupils' learning on.
- Targets in the school development plan and for staff performance are not precise enough to measure improvement.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement have remained consistently good.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is a welcoming community where pupils feel safe and behave well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.
- The school is well resourced to support learning.
- Pupils are known as individuals.
- Leaders have improved the teaching of reading, particularly in Key Stage 2 and Reception classes.
- Governors offer good support and challenge to school leaders.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or part lessons across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Three of these were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other members of staff, governors and two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector held informal discussions with nine parents. Responses to the school's recent survey from 22 parents were considered alongside comments made by parents who spoke to the inspector during the inspection. Responses to the online, Parent View, survey were too few to provide an analysis. The inspector also analysed 10 responses from staff to a questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work in lessons and also separately with the headteacher. She heard pupils reading and observed them in class and around the school, including at informal times.
- A wide range of school documentation was considered. This included: information provided by the school on pupils' attainment and progress; the performance management of staff; evidence of checks on teaching; external evaluations of the school; the school's website; development plans; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's self-evaluation and behaviour records and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bulmer St Andrew's Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- More pupils than in most schools join the school other than at the usual times.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs have increased since the school was last inspected.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority or those with a parent or carer in the armed services, is broadly average.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Children in Reception learn in a mixed-age class alongside Key Stage 1 pupils. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 form one class and those in Years 5 and 6 another.
- Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher were absent for part of the last academic year; the deputy headteacher has since left the school. The headteacher now works for four days a week and teaches classes on two of these days.
- The numbers of pupils have decreased since the school was last inspected, mainly as a result of changes in the local area.
- The privately run nursery which was located on the school site at the time of the last inspection has since closed.
- The school works with 12 local schools within the Colne Valley Consortium of schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better so that pupils make better progress, particularly in mathematics and in writing, by making sure that:
 - work challenges all pupils, including the least and most able
 - marking, particularly in mathematics, includes clear guidance for pupils on how to improve their work
 - pupils are given regular opportunities to correct their work
 - the highest expectations are set for pupils' presentation and standards of work
 - adults intervene in a timely way in lessons to support and challenge pupils so that they are moved on in their learning.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - raising the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels, particularly in Key Stage 1, and ensuring that disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium funding make consistently good progress
 - ensuring that targets in the school development plan and for staff performance are precise enough to measure the success of staff in helping pupils to achieve well
 - developing links with a special school to enhance provision for the increasing numbers of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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 management may be improved.



Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in mathematics. Progress is not strong in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1. Work in pupils' books over time shows that, while pupils sometimes make good gains in their learning, this is not consistent across Years 1 to 6.
- Children enter Reception with skills which are broadly typical for their age, but small year groups lead to variations in attainment on entry. One or two enter the school with slightly weaker skills in literacy and mathematics. Children often make good progress in Reception, so that they are well prepared for learning across the rest of the school. Many achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- The good level of development in Reception is not well built upon in Key Stage 1. Few pupils enter Key Stage 2 having achieved the higher levels in English and mathematics in Year 2.
- In 2013, attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 was broadly average and declined from the previous year, particularly in mathematics. Few pupils attained the higher levels in either key stage.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not make good progress because support provided is not always of a high quality and work is not always set at the right level for them. Some struggle to make the progress they should, particularly in writing.
- Pupils' progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 is good in reading but weaker in mathematics. Pupils' scores in the Year 1 check on phonics (linking sounds and letters) were ahead of national results in 2012 and 2013. Progress in reading is good. Pupils continue to achieve well in reading. Year 6 reading standards were ahead of national results at Level 5 or above in 2013.
- Pupils who enter the school during Key Stage 2 sometimes have lower attainment on entry than their classmates. Some, but not all, late entrants make good progress with the support they receive on arrival.
- There were too few pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 in 2013 to evaluate their attainment in English and mathematics without identifying them. However, current school data indicate that eligible pupils are making similar progress to that of their peers in Key Stage 2, but are behind others in Key Stage 1. Pupils supported through pupil premium funding generally attain in line with others, but some pupils lag behind by up to two terms in either English or mathematics.
- The most-able pupils generally make at least the progress that they should and, sometimes, make good progress. Occasionally, when they are not well supported or challenged in lessons, their progress slows.
- The primary sports funding has been used effectively to provide additional coaching for pupils and to develop a link with a local secondary school, where teachers' skills are being improved. These actions and the effective use made of the large outdoor area have improved pupils' physical skills and well-being. Pupils attend sports clubs regularly and take part in an increasing range of sporting competitions.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Work does not always stretch and challenge all pupils. Consequently, they do not make consistently good progress in mathematics and writing. Work covered is sometimes already understood by the most-able pupils so that they do not make good gains in their learning in some lessons.
- While marking is regular and reinforces learning, guidance provided to pupils about how to improve is not of a consistently good quality, particularly in mathematics. Pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to correct marked work.
- Pupils are not always expected to present their work neatly and work set often does not give them opportunities to improve their presentation. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' standard of work.
- Outdoor provision and opportunities for children to learn a range of skills in Reception have improved since the school was last inspected. Assessment is regular and children's learning is well tracked. However, adults are not always as active as possible in guiding children in their learning in lessons, so while children in Reception often make good gains in their learning, they do not yet make more rapid progress.
- Where pupils make good gains in their knowledge and skills, teachers set clear expectations for pupils' learning and how pupils can succeed. They give pupils a good level of challenge and make learning meaningful for them. This was seen in literacy where Key Stage 2 pupils prepared for a written argument, and in mathematics where they budgeted for food for a party. Successful learning was seen when incidents in a novel were compared to pupils' own experiences to make learning more real and pupils were challenged to consider the rights and wrongs of a situation.
- The size of the school and class groups mean that, when adults are proactive, pupils usually receive lots of individual attention. They have good opportunities to share their learning and their social development is well promoted. Their communication and reading skills are well promoted through working together in lessons, easy access to resources in class and in a well-resourced library. However, adults do not always actively provide the support some pupils require in lessons. In these situations, the skills of some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not developed as effectively as possible.
- An organised programme of reading ensures that pupils' work in lessons is complemented by work at home so that they make good gains in their reading. Writing and mathematics, with a current focus on calculation, are taught discretely and across other subjects, but less effectively than reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, friendly and respectful. Pupils socialise well together at break time, and only occasionally fall out with one another. When this happens, they say that play leaders, their friends and teachers readily help to sort things out.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and this ensures that, even in lessons where teaching is not strong, they make some progress.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and they know about different forms of bullying – such as, verbal, physical, cyber and racist bullying. They say that instances of

bullying are rare and that these are effectively dealt with by the school. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

- Logs of reported incidents are well kept with careful records of actions and regular discussions of pupils' behaviour by staff are noted.
- The schools' work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. There are regular fire drills, a programme of e-safety and all staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding children. The site is secure and pupils say that they feel safe both on site and when taking part in educational visits. Pupils can explain how to keep themselves safe in case of a fire, when travelling and when using the internet.
- Parents who responded to the school's survey and those who spoke to the inspector said that their children were kept safe and that behaviour was good.
- Pupils currently attend regularly. Attendance has improved this year so that it is now above what it was at the same time last year. There have been no exclusions of pupils in the recent past.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because pupils said that they sometimes have disagreements, particularly in the playground, and a few individuals do not take as much pride over their work as they could when teaching does not demand their best presentation.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- While leaders are committed to improving the school, they have not ensured that pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are consistently good.
- The absence of senior leaders last year adversely affected the progress made by pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and led to a fall in pupil numbers. Leaders have since worked hard to improve progress and raise pupil numbers with some success.
- Although checks on teaching are regular and have improved pupils' progress in English, particularly reading, their progress in mathematics and sometimes writing is not good.
- The headteacher has created a positive culture in the school where most staff are entirely supportive of leaders and where pupils feel safe and are happy. Pupils are known individually by the headteacher and relationships are positive across the school. Leadership is distributed across the staff in this small school. For example, checks on the accuracy of assessment of progress and attainment are carried out effectively as a shared activity among staff across the age range, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Although there are effective systems in place to track pupils' progress, the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels, particularly in Key Stage 1, is below average because teaching varies in quality.
- Targets set for the management of staff performance and priorities in the school development plan are not as specific as they need to be to ensure that the effectiveness of actions taken is readily measurable so that staff can be held fully to account for pupils' achievement.
- Leaders provide a wide range of support to pupils to help them make up gaps in their learning and liaise with external agencies to help pupils overcome barriers to learning. However, these

actions are not having a consistently positive impact. In particular, support provided to some pupils who have special educational needs is not always good. Consequently, the promotion of equal opportunities is adequate rather than good. The school acknowledges that it would benefit from developing a link with a special school to look at the best way to support the increasing number of pupils with special educational needs.

- Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report related to practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They also improved opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider world, attendance and pupils' achievement in reading. They, therefore, demonstrate the capacity to bring about further improvements.
- Until the current academic year, the local authority has provided limited support to the school, with a focus on the Early Years Foundation Stage, reading and numeracy. This year the local authority has recognised that greater capacity to support the school is needed and has focused its attention on increasing pupil numbers and improving achievement.
- The school's recent parental survey indicates that all parents would recommend the school to others. All parents spoken to during the inspection were positive about their experiences in dealing with the school.
- Subjects are well organised and give pupils breadth and balance of knowledge. There are helpful opportunities beyond the school timetable to enrich pupils' learning. The school works well with other schools in a local consortium of schools to improve the accuracy of assessment, prepare pupils for movement to secondary school and to enhance sports provision. It also works effectively with the local community and parish providing pupils with good opportunities to develop spiritually and to contribute to the local and wider community through fund-raising activities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Changes to the governing body have improved its range of expertise and its capacity to challenge leaders and hold them accountable for the school's performance. Governors provide good support to the school, for example, by setting up a link with a school in Newham that is different in its social and ethnic intake to widen pupils' experiences. They undertake regular visits to the school and oversee targets in the school development plan, but are less actively involved in the school's self-evaluation of its performance.
 - Much of the governing body's recent attention has been on increasing pupil numbers and ensuring that the financial viability of the school continues.
 - Governors have some idea about the quality of teaching in the school and pupils' achievement. They ask some searching questions about the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and the way that pupil premium funding is spent, but have not ensured that funding for these pupils is making a consistently positive difference to their achievement.
 - Performance management systems are in place and appropriate targets are set for the headteacher but governors have not ensured that targets for the performance management of staff are always as specific as possible so that staff are held fully to account for pupils' achievement and there is always a secure link between salary progression and pupils' achievement.
 - They ensure that sports funding is used well to enhance sports provision and is having a good impact on pupils' participation rates in sports.
 - They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet 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	115067
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	444087

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	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Hoogewerfe
Headteacher	Ellena Mortimer
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2009
Telephone number	01787 372383
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