

# Rivenhall Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Rivenhall, Witham, CM8 3PQ

## Inspection dates

7–8 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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.

- Pupils, particularly the more able, do not make good progress year on year and do as well as they could.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can learn. Tasks are not set at the right level of difficulty and often too easy for more-able pupils.
- Teacher's marking does not consistently provide pupils with clear guidance on how improve their skills.
- In mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and develop their problem-solving skills.
- Pupils are not challenged sufficiently to extend their writing skills. They have too few opportunities to use these skills in different subjects.
- Subject leaders have not been sufficiently involved in the drive to improve teaching and raise standards.
- Checks on the quality of teaching have not focused, until recently, on the progress of all groups of pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving after a period of underperformance. Leaders and governors have worked systematically to ensure that the quality of teaching is better and that all groups of pupils make faster progress.
- Provision for Reception children is good and helps them to make rapid progress.
- Teachers promote good behaviour at all times and treat pupils as individuals. Relationships are harmonious and respectful.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They say they feel safe and well cared for in their school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in six lessons, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of other short visits to lessons and learning areas. The inspector also listened to pupils reading in Years 2 and 6.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 18 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, documentation relating to teachers' performance over time and records relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. These are for the Reception-age children and Year1, and for pupils in Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is well below the national average. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language and none at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been several changes in staffing, including to the senior leadership team, over the past year. Several teachers left and joined the school in the past two years. The current headteacher took up her post in January 2013. She is leaving at the end of the summer term 2014. The governing body, in consultation with the local authority, has appointed the headteacher of a local school as the executive headteacher to start from September 2014. The executive headteacher, who is a Local Leader in Education, has already started to support the school. The governing body also have several new governors who joined in the current school year.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - making sure that tasks set in lessons stretch all pupils consistently, especially more-able pupils
  - raising teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work and how much they are able to achieve
  - making sure that marking clearly shows pupils how to improve their work.
- Raise achievement, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
  - extending the opportunities for pupils, including the more able, to apply their writing skills in all subjects
  - giving pupils in all classes sufficient opportunities to develop skills for solving problems in mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that checks on the quality of teaching and learning are consistently rigorous and focused on the progress of all groups of pupils
  - developing the capacity of the subject leaders to check teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility accurately and effectively.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have not risen over the past three years and teaching is not consistently strong enough to speed up pupils' progress in all classes. As a result, very few pupils, especially the more able, made more than the expected progress by the time they left Year 6. Standards at the end of Year 2 dipped in 2013 and were well below average. They were a year behind pupils nationally in writing and mathematics.
- Following an unstable period, the school has since taken effective actions to raise standards. A rigorous system has been implemented to analyse and assess pupils' progress from their starting points and to check the effectiveness of teaching in accelerating pupils' learning. These are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school's data on current pupils' progress in both key stages and the work seen in their books and in lessons, indicate that pupils have made rapid progress in all areas of learning over the past year and that attainment is rising.
- Children join the Reception Year with skills that are below the levels typically expected for their age. They make good progress because a range of stimulating activities promotes their basic skills well. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the time they start in Year 1 is above that found nationally.
- Pupils' reading skills are improving rapidly. Results of the check in Year 1 on how well pupils link letters and sounds (phonics) in 2013, although improved since 2012, were below average. During the inspection, younger pupils showed they can use their knowledge of phonics to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils are gaining an increasing understanding of different styles of writing by different authors.
- Pupils are increasingly writing for different purposes in English. However, they do not have the opportunity to write at length in different subjects. In mathematics, pupils' problem-solving skills are not well enough developed to raise standards further.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making faster progress than previously and are now making similar progress to their classmates. This is because teachers are identifying their needs earlier and providing good support in lessons which help them to learn effectively.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress as their classmates. This reflects the school's strong commitment to ensure equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils. However, leaders are aware that work is not yet equally challenging for pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are supported well. The very small number of pupils in Year 6 in 2012 and 2013 means that their attainment cannot be reported without the risk of identifying individual pupils. However, the school's data indicates that pupils supported through the pupil premium make the same or faster progress compared with other pupils and the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates is narrowing.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching has not yet resulted in consistently good achievement throughout the school. As a result, pupils do not acquire all the key skills necessary for them to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Although teaching has improved, there is not enough good

teaching to ensure that that more pupils exceed expected progress.

- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of their pupils. They do not make enough demands on all pupils, particularly the more able. They do not ensure that all groups, particularly the more-able pupils, are consistently stretched so that they all reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide the clear guidance that pupils need to help them improve their work. Some of the comments made when teachers mark work are not specific enough to accelerate pupils' learning.
- There is a good relationship between adults and pupils, and among pupils themselves. A positive climate for learning in lessons ensures that pupils respond readily to tasks, showing interest and enthusiasm.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to check on pupils' understanding and build on what they already know. For example, in a literacy lesson in the mixed-age Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher used demanding questions to make sure that pupils developed a good understanding of how to record their findings after reading about a fictional island.
- The teaching of phonics has improved because teachers now use a consistent method so that pupils can build on what they are learning from week to week.
- In the Reception Year, children are developing their phonics skills well and apply them consistently to read new words. Stimulating resources and lively teaching contribute to children's good progress. In a session during the inspection, children read 'The Gruffalo' and deepened their understanding of the story through different indoor and outdoor activities, including role play.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and respectful of each other and of adults. They have positive attitudes to learning and work well together with a partner or in groups. Even when tasks are not sufficiently demanding, most pupils work through them conscientiously.
- The school's behaviour policy is applied consistently and pupils respond well to it. Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate the way they are trusted and their views are valued.
- Close links with the church and local community have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe at school. Most parents who responded to the online Parent View survey agree that their children are safe at school at all times.
- Pupils have a good understanding about internet safety and how to guard their personal details. They are well aware of legal and illegal drugs, and the dangers of illegal drugs.
- Pupils report very little bullying and are confident that, if it did occur, it would be dealt with quickly and fairly. They explain that they 'might fall out sometimes' but sort out any

disagreement quickly with the support of 'buddies' and adults in the playground.

- Pupils are keen to take responsibility through their commitment to school council work and various fundraising activities. They raised funds for the improvement of the school playground and to replace sports equipment. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 run an effective 'buddy system' supporting younger pupils.
- Attendance has been average over the past two years and improved in the current year. This is evidence of the school's effective work with external agencies and with individual families over the past year to raise attendance.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Checks on the quality of teaching have not focused in sufficient detail, until recently, on the progress made by individual pupils. A revised system is helping staff to measure progress more rigorously. This means that pupils who fall behind are now being identified more promptly and support being given more effectively.
- Subject leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and points of development in their areas of responsibility. Nevertheless, they have not yet been sufficiently involved in the drive to improve teaching and raise standards.
- The current headteacher, aptly supported by the governors, the executive headteacher and staff, has implemented a range of measures to improve teaching and to accelerate pupils' progress. The system for checking teachers' performance is now rigorous and targets are linked to pupils' performance. The recent review of teachers' performance shows that this is having a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- The school provides a range of subjects, with a strong focus on English and mathematics and enhanced by trips and visitors. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a strong focus on teaching music and art, assemblies and sports.
- The primary schools sports funding is being spent on coaching, equipment and a wide range of sporting activities. This has resulted in increased participation by pupils, a high level of performance in sports, and a positive impact on pupils' well-being.
- The local authority has worked effectively with the leaders and governors, providing good support for the school during a difficult period. This has helped the school to make accurate judgements about its performance and to bring about improvement.

### **■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has undergone considerable changes and appointed several new members over the past year. Since the current headteacher took up post, governors have become more involved in checking how well the school is doing. For example, they are involved in the scrutiny of pupils' work and rigorous analysis of pupils' progress data. They use their expertise and the findings from their visits to school to hold leaders to account about how any underperformance in teaching and in pupils' achievement are being tackled. The governing body has been prompt in appointing the executive headteacher to lead the school from September to ensure that the rising trend of pupils' achievement continues. They set challenging targets for the headteacher and they see to it that each member of staff is paid according to their performance and progress towards their targets. Governors check whether the pupil premium spending is used effectively to raise the attainment of these particular

pupils. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are robust and that all statutory requirements 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115105
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	443830

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	101
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Hope
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cathy Mann
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 July 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01376 514509
<b>Fax number</b>	01376 502452
<b>Email address</b>	admin@rivenhall.essex.sch.uk

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