

Church Hill Infant School

Church Hill Road, Thurmaston, Leicester, LE4 8DE

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- Pupils, staff and parents are proud of their school. They greatly value the school's warm and caring family atmosphere.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- By the end of Year 2 pupils have made good progress from their low starting points. Their attainment in English and mathematics in national tests is broadly in line with the average.
- Teaching is good. Every pupil's progress is closely tracked so that anyone falling behind is spotted quickly and support is given.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well and work hard in lessons. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted by all staff.
- Teaching assistants and other adults work closely with the teachers to ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates.
- The headteacher and governing body provide a clear direction for the development of the school.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has raised expectations of staff, improved the quality of teaching and the punctuality and attendance of pupils. The school is well placed to build on these improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work is sometimes not hard enough, especially for the most-able pupils.
- Some subject leaders do not have a detailed enough knowledge of the quality of teaching and pupils' learning throughout the school to bring about further and rapid improvement in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, three of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils and four members of the governing body. A meeting was held with a representative of the academy trust.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them informally at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the 46 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's most recent parental survey. They had conversations with parents and carers as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- School documentation was examined, including data on pupils' current progress and records of governing body meetings, teachers' performance, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Documentation relating to the care of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was also carefully reviewed.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anita McVeigh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Church Hill Infants is an average-sized primary school.
- Two thirds of pupils are of White British heritage, and nearly one fifth of Indian heritage. Over a quarter of pupils speak English as a second language, and a few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for certain groups, which in this school includes pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is lower average.
- The school converted to academy status and joined the Syston and Thurmaston Educational Partnership (STEP) in November 2012.
- When its predecessor school, Church Hill Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- Since September 2012, the governors have appointed a new headteacher, a new deputy headteacher and five new teachers.
- The deputy headteacher is a specialist leader for education in early years' provision and supports schools in the academy trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that expectations are consistently high and that work is sufficiently demanding, so that pupils make the progress of which they are capable, especially the most able.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they are able to make a more effective contribution to improving the quality of teaching to outstanding and raising standards.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below, and sometimes well below, those expected for their age. Children in the Reception Year are highly motivated to learn and achieve. Consequently, they make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority are working towards and a few are achieving a good level of development across all areas of learning.
- In 2013 standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average. Girls' attainment was broadly average in writing and mathematics, and boys did better. Pupils of Indian heritage attained well, especially in mathematics. Some pupils eligible for free school meals did not attain as well as their classmates in reading. The school has responded promptly and effectively. The school's robust data and inspection evidence suggest that the vast majority of pupils, including girls and those eligible for free school meals, are now making good progress and are on track to attain the expected standards for pupils of their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Some pupils are making very good progress.
- The school's drive to raise pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) resulted in a well-above average proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the 2013 Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils make good progress in developing early reading skills. In 2013, attainment in reading for pupils in Year 2 was broadly average. Pupils are starting to read widely for enjoyment and effectively to obtain information in a range of subjects.
- Teachers make sure that pupils' writing skills are secure and that they have opportunities to write in a range of styles in different subjects. By Year 2, pupils write well in a range of different formats, such as character sketches, stories or biographies.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. The teaching promotes pupils' basic calculation skills and teachers ensure that pupils apply these skills effectively to everyday situations.
- The school keeps a very close watch on the progress pupils are making, with regular checks to ensure that no-one is falling behind. Any one falling behind is quickly given a special programme to support effective improvement.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those who need extra help, including those at an early stage of learning English, are fully included in all learning activities. This reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunities. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding progress well and gaps between the achievement of these and other pupils are closing rapidly. Current school data shows that their attainment is close to two terms behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- While pupils generally make good progress, the most able pupils are not always challenged to do their very best. This is because some teachers do not always set work that really challenges their thinking. Lesson observations, pupils' work in books and the school's records confirm this is the case. This is why achievement is good and not outstanding.

The quality of teaching is good

- Work in pupils' books and the school's records of the checks made on teaching indicate that teaching is typically good and improving. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they make sure that lessons are planned to meet the needs of the wide range of pupils' abilities. This ensures that pupils learn well over time.
- There are positive relationships between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils. As a result, pupils want to do well and are prepared to work hard. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong.
- Staff quickly build warm relationships with the Reception children. A strong focus on personal development means that children quickly become confident in speaking and in getting along with one another and with adults. Staff take every opportunity to engage children in conversations and extend their learning.
- Teachers make sure that pupils understand what is expected of them. They use a range of well-chosen resources which support learning very well. For example, in a Year 1 class, pupils were exploring the characters from a story. They were able to draw on a wide range of prompts and resources to frame questions about the characters and to predict what happened next. At the end of the lesson they talked with confidence about the characters and express their opinions about the story.
- Staff help pupils to review and improve their work throughout lessons. For example, this was observed in a writing lesson when pupils were observed writing dialogue in their version of a traditional story using good punctuation and imaginative writing. They persevered well and made rapid progress by the end of the lesson.
- The marking of pupils' work, with helpful guidance, is helping pupils to learn well. Comments seen in pupils' books led them to make corrections and practise the points for improvement.
- Learning support assistants are well informed and work in close partnership with teachers. They take the initiative during lessons and are quick to spot where pupils need extra help. They also provide sensitive and tailored support outside the classroom when withdrawing small groups for intensive tuition.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they prepare work for pupils of different abilities. However, this is not always effective, particularly in extending the learning of the most-able pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in and around the school and this has a positive effect on their good achievement. Inspectors saw exemplary behaviour during a whole-school assembly, and during a wet playtime during which all pupils stayed in classrooms and amicably played together with the wide range of games provided.
- The school is a welcoming and friendly place and pupils, parents and carers say how much they appreciate its family atmosphere. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy being there. Punctuality and attendance, including for pupils eligible for free school meals, have improved and are now average.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered, and show genuine concern and care for one another. In lessons they are willing to contribute ideas and respect their classmates' views. They generally

play very happily together at break and lunchtimes.

- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because some pupils lose concentration, on occasion, and need to be reminded to pay attention. However, pupils told inspectors children get on well together and that their learning in lessons is never hampered by poor behaviour.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are safe and secure and settle quickly because of the very good quality care provided.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for in school and the school helps them to understand how they can be responsible for being healthy and staying safe in and out of school. All parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that their children are happy at school and feel safe. Almost all think children are well looked after and behave well.
- Pupils say there is no bullying in school, but they are confident that, should any incidents occur, staff would deal with them promptly and fairly. They have a good awareness that bullying can take different forms, including name calling, physical and cyber-bullying. They understand the school's behaviour policy well. Pupils value the wide range of responsibilities they have, as play leaders and members of the pupil councils.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations for the school and its future development. These are shared by staff, governors and parents and shown by the very strong support for the school in the parent and staff questionnaires. Staff are increasingly benefiting from the close collaboration with other schools in the partnership; for example, from joint training.
- Leaders set high expectations for the performance of staff and keep a watchful eye on pupils' progress. Extensive monitoring and analysis enable the school to devise well-focused plans. As a result, the quality of teaching is at least good and leaders are taking effective steps to improve the quality of teaching still further.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because regular and accurate assessments are made of what children know and can do, and activities which steadily build skills and knowledge are carefully planned.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Information on pupils' progress is taken into account when judging how well pupils are doing, and is considered when making decisions about pay.
- The school knows its pupils very well as individuals. There are effective systems to check the progress that each pupil is making, and any underachievement is addressed by providing extra help or support if it is needed. This ensures that all pupils in the school achieve well and shows the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The well planned curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs, trips and visits including sport, drama, music and cultural activities. These activities contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The primary sport funding has increased pupils' participation in physical education and sport and is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being and healthy lifestyle. The recently used Space Dome enabled pupils to effectively study and make links through writing about science, technology and astronomy.

- While teachers readily and effectively take on responsibilities, some subject leaders do not have a detailed enough knowledge of the quality of teaching and pupils' learning throughout the school to bring about further and rapid improvement in their subject. This is what prevents leadership and management from being outstanding.

- The STEP academy trust collaboratively supports the school effectively and has every confidence in the school's leadership to drive further improvement. As part of the partnership the headteacher works collaboratively with other schools, and links with Church Hill Junior School are particularly beneficial for the joint moderation of the standards of pupils' work.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well because they are regular visitors. They check the information available on pupils' progress and attainment through raising questions at governor's meetings. Governors know how the pupil premium and primary school sport funding are spent and the impact of these funds on pupils' learning. They set challenging targets as part of the headteacher's appraisal and make sure that pupils' performance is considered when making decisions about the pay of teachers and learning support assistants. Governors ensure that the school's finances are well managed and are clear that they meet all statutory duties including those related to safeguarding. Governors participate in regular training and keep their effectiveness under review.

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	138929
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	440153

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kiran Mistry
Headteacher	Meera Bulsara
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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