

St Luke's Church of England VA Primary School

St Crispin Drive, Duston, Northampton, NN5 4BL

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 make good progress and are achieving well in all subjects.
- Teachers know their pupils well and plan and make lessons interesting for them.
- Pupils behave well. They work hard in lessons and want to do well.
- Pupils feel safe in school. The school looks after them well and teaches them how to stay safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They develop well as responsible and thoughtful young people.
- The recently appointed interim senior leaders have made a very positive impact on the school in a short time. Leaders at all levels, including governors, check thoroughly the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making. As a result, teaching and pupils' achievement continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make better progress in some areas of learning than in others. The school's recording of their progress varies in quality.
- A small minority of parents feel the school does not respond well to their concerns, or provide them with enough information about their child's progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons, attended an assembly and looked at children’s work. They spoke to pupils informally about their views of the school, and observed them at play and during lunch breaks.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, staff, school leaders, governors and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents at the start of each day of the inspection. They looked at the 93 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and at the 26 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at documents including: the school’s own review of its strengths and weaknesses; its plans for improvement; records of the quality of teaching; school information on the progress of pupils; and nationally published results. Inspectors also looked at records of pupils’ behaviour and attendance, and at how the school keeps pupils safe.
- All pupils in Year 4 were out of school on a residential visit for most of the first day and all of the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kevin McHenry

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is much lower than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than average. This is extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Following the retirement of the previous headteacher in December 2013, the school is currently led by an acting headteacher, and by an executive headteacher who is supporting the school on a part-time basis. A substantive headteacher has been appointed from September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work more effectively with parents by:
 - responding more promptly and positively to any concerns they raise
 - providing more frequent information on their children's progress
 - making sure that parents can more easily speak to school leaders; for example, at the start or end of the school day.
- Improve the recording of children's achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage so a closer check is made on their progress in all areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress in all subjects. Current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach standards that are well above average in 2014.
- Checks of work in pupils' books carried out by inspectors confirm that pupils from all backgrounds, including those from minority ethnic groups, are currently making good progress in all subjects and year groups in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils have a good understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and can sound out unfamiliar words. Their achievement was broadly average in the Year 1 phonics check in 2013. Older pupils are enthusiastic about reading, and they read widely at home and at school.
- The school provides pupils with many opportunities to write at length in different subjects and in different styles. This means they make good progress in developing their writing skills.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics fell to national average levels in 2013 because there was some inaccuracy in teachers' assessment of their progress. Pupils currently in Year 2 are making good progress and are on course to reach standards that are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates. They receive good support so their individual needs are met and they make good progress.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 in 2013 made good progress. They were around a term behind their peers in mathematics and reading, and were around half a term ahead in writing. This is much better than this group achieves nationally. Too few pupils in previous years were eligible for the pupil premium to judge whether any gaps in the achievement of supported pupils are closing. Funds from the pupil premium have been spent on individual support for pupils, on a learning mentor and on funding places on school visits. This enables eligible pupils to achieve well throughout the school.
- More-able pupils make good progress because work in lessons is carefully planned to give them an appropriate level of challenge. A higher than average proportion of pupils in Year 6 are on course to reach the highest levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014.
- Pupils' progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2013, particularly in mathematics, was slower than in most previous years. School leaders are clear on the reasons for this, and particularly the previous inaccuracies in some teachers' assessments. They have taken effective measures to ensure that this will not happen again. More regular and accurate checks on pupils' progress mean that teachers now have a detailed understanding of what pupils can do, and where additional help is needed.
- Children join Reception with skills that are typical of those expected for their age. They make better progress in literacy, communication and language than in mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school, with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils know their targets and how to reach them. Older pupils, for example, have individual targets for their writing recorded on a bookmark in their exercise books. This enables them to check their writing against their targets in order to produce their best work.
- Teachers make lessons interesting so that pupils are fully engaged. In an English lesson, for example, the teacher used drama techniques and props, including an upturned bench and an electric fan, to recreate the experience of a tightrope walker. Pupils in Year 6 were wholly engrossed, and produced some outstanding creative writing as a result.
- Pupils' books show that they take a pride in their work and present it neatly. Teachers' marking generates a dialogue about learning between teachers and pupils. Teachers show pupils clearly how to improve their work and pupils act on the advice they receive.
- Pupils who need extra help are very effectively supported by skilled teaching assistants, both in classrooms and in extra sessions to help them catch up. In a mathematics session, for example, Reception children made good progress in counting because the tasks set were closely matched to their abilities and any misconceptions were quickly picked up and corrected.
- The recording of children's achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage has not in the past given teachers an accurate view of which areas of learning children needed to concentrate on.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have good attitudes to learning and this helps them to make good progress. In lessons and around school, they respond quickly to instructions. They are polite, well mannered, confident and articulate.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and positive. There is a calm and caring atmosphere in the school. One pupil, speaking for many, commented: 'It's like a second home here – everyone makes you feel welcome.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school takes great care to make sure that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet all requirements.
- Pupils say that bullying rarely happens, but are confident that bullying would stop if they told an adult. They say they feel safe in school. Pupils are aware of different kinds of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, and know how to stay safe in potentially dangerous situations, like using the internet.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in pupils' attendance, which is above average. The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View said their children were well looked after and felt happy at school.
- Pupils develop a sense of responsibility through taking on roles such as membership of the school council, leading assemblies and acting as hosts for the Lent lunch. Older pupils help to look after younger ones at break and lunchtimes.

- Pupils' behaviour and safety are not outstanding because on the rare occasions that teaching does not fully engage them, some pupils lose focus and learn less well.

The leadership and management are good

- The recently appointed acting headteacher and executive headteacher have made a very positive impact on the school and on pupils' achievement. They have quickly and accurately assessed the school's strengths and weaknesses, and put in place plans for improvement which focus on the right areas. Strong leadership at all levels, leading to rapid recent improvements, indicates that the school is well placed to improve further.
- School leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching, planning and marking. Systems for managing teachers' performance are robust. Teachers' targets are based on the progress made by their pupils. Underperformance in teaching is tackled rigorously.
- School leaders regularly check the progress made by pupils. Teachers are held to account in regular meetings for the progress of their pupils. If pupils start to fall behind, they quickly receive effective help.
- Subject leaders and other leaders are now playing a greater part in school improvement, and they carry out checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility. They have welcomed the opportunities to develop their leadership skills.
- The school's 'Connected Creative Curriculum' provides pupils with interesting topics and experiences, and allows them to make links between different areas of learning. Pupils go on many visits, and there is a wide range of clubs and activities, including choir, tap dancing, gardening and art, in addition to a number of sports. These contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent. The school has close links with the local church, and pupils develop a good awareness of other faiths and cultures. As a result, they become confident, thoughtful, and responsible young people.
- Primary sport funding is spent on giving pupils increased access to competitive sports and competitions, and on increasing the number and variety of lunchtime sports clubs. As a result, more pupils are taking part in a wider range of sports.
- Every pupil is known and valued as an individual. This represents the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and to ensuring every child reaches his or her full potential.
- The school receives an appropriate light-touch level of support from the local authority.
- The very large majority of parents are supportive of the school and its leaders. A small minority of parents, however, feel that the school does not respond well to their concerns. They say that they do not always find school leaders approachable or easy to contact. They would like more information on how well their children are doing in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are frequent visitors to the school so they have a detailed, first-hand knowledge of the daily life of the school. They have a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses,

and they are ambitious to see the school improve further. They were involved with senior leaders and an external consultant in drawing up the school's improvement plan. Some governors have carried out learning walks, and others help with pupils' learning, so they have a good idea of the quality of teaching in the school. They know how any underperformance is tackled, and they have established that teachers' pay rises are tied to the progress their pupils make.

- Many governors have recently been trained in analysing data on pupils' performance. This means that they have a good awareness of how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally, and they hold school leaders to account for how well pupils achieve. Governors oversee the school's budget well and understand how extra funding – for example, from the pupil premium – is spent, and with what impact on pupils' progress and attainment.

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	122009
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	441172

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	366
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Rowley
Headteacher	Rachel Bailey (Acting Headteacher), Jill Ramshaw (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2010
Telephone number	01604 592008
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