

Christ Church CofE (VA) Primary School and Nursery, Ware

New Road, Ware, SG12 7BT

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- The school has made good improvements since its last inspection. It has benefitted well from sharing ideas with other schools and using specialist advice effectively.
- Pupils' attainment has risen steadily. They make good progress throughout the school.
- Senior leaders are effectively improving the quality of teaching and learning even further.
- Close links with the church, an emphasis on values and the way the school helps pupils understand different beliefs contribute well to the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and use stimulating resources well to help them understand their work. They keep a close eye on how well learning is going.
- Pupils' behaviour and their knowledge of safety are good. They are looked after well.
- Governors are effective and keep a close check on the how well the school is doing.
- Parents have positive views of the school and are pleased that their children attend.
- The school has a good understanding of its strengths and knows where it can improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Writing could be improved further. Older pupils do not all join up their letters.
- Not all lessons in mathematics are pitched accurately to meet the needs of all learners, including the more able ones.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has other important responsibilities, and so staff in this stage are not supported as well as they could be.
- Teachers' marking is not always effective in helping the pupils improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Twenty-five lessons or parts of lessons were observed. One was jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, various members of staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a group of pupils.
- A telephone conversation was held with a member of the local authority’s advisory staff.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- They sampled pupils’ work in different year groups, examined records of pupils’ progress, and read the school’s own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and improvement plan. A range of other documentation was examined, including that relating to safeguarding.
- The views of staff were sought and the views of 15 who responded to a written questionnaire were taken into account.
- The inspectors looked at the 40 responses on Parent View, the government’s website for parents’ views about their children’s school, and also at the school’s own most recent parent survey.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional Inspector

Vreta Bagilhole

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has a Nursery, which the children attend part-time, and two Reception classes. The admission number of 45 results in one class for each year group and additionally three classes containing mixed ages, Years 1/ 2, 3/ 4 and 5/ 6.
- Most Nursery children transfer to the Reception classes. New children take up any spare places as the children enter the Reception classes.
- A large majority of the pupils (85.3%) are White British. A small number of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to be used for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals, is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is around the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has its own breakfast and after school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils are better aware how they can improve their work.
- Ensure able pupils are challenged well in mathematics lessons, and that pupils are encouraged to use a ruler where needed in the subject.
- Improve writing by:
 - building on the good start made to improve pupils' interest in writing stories
 - ensuring that older pupils join up their letters in handwriting.
- Review the current arrangements for the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage to make sure members of staff in this part of the school are supported more and are guided more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When pupils enter the Nursery, attainment is often below that typically expected for this age. They make good progress in the Nursery. Attainment is frequently close to that expected when they start the Reception classes where the good progress continues. In 2013, results at the end of Reception were close to average. Preliminary results for the current year show an improvement.
- Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 has been rising since 2011. Results in 2013 were the highest ever. Pupils made particularly good progress in reading and significant improvement in mathematics.
- Results from the Year 1 national phonics (the sounds that letters make) check have compared favourably with the average with a further improvement in the current year due to good teaching of letter sounds.
- Pupils' overall attainment has also been rising continuously for several years in Key Stage 2 although writing, despite pupils' good knowledge of grammar, is overall not as strong as mathematics and reading. New approaches to the teaching of writing seen in pupils' books indicate a rapidly improving picture. Pupils are increasingly selecting a good range of vocabulary and writing at length. They are starting to become more interested in writing stories.
- Pupils' handwriting is not always as good as it could be as some pupils do not consistently write with joined-up letters, which slows their speed of working. In mathematics, pupils do not always use rulers when they draw shapes, and this lowers the quality of their work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because learning difficulties are identified early and quick action is taken to help the pupils with any problems. Pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium make good progress. The very small number of these pupils in Year 6 means their results cannot be validly compared with others.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar rates of progress to other pupils. Able pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics but it has not been as good in writing. Their progress in this is improving due to new teaching approaches.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good relationships staff have with pupils and their good management of pupils' behaviour ensure that lessons proceed in a calm atmosphere and help the pupils to concentrate and do their best.
- Teachers use teaching assistants well. Their support is effective and gives pupils confidence.
- Good planning of lessons ensures that work builds up well on previous learning and contributes to pupils' understanding. Teachers introduce new learning to pupils clearly, for example using large screens, so they know what they have to do.
- Teachers use learning resources well to help the pupils' understanding, especially in

mathematics. They make sure that all pupils try to find an answer, rather than waiting for others to tell them. For example, the use of individual whiteboards allows pupils to write down their own answer to questions or try out phrases in English, ensuring that all pupils think for themselves.

- Pupils use the guidance stuck into their workbooks to tell them in broad terms how to be successful. Pupils are also aware of their own learning target, which is the next large step that they should aim to achieve. However, though their work is marked regularly and accurately, marking is not always successful in showing them how to improve specific things they have just completed in their work.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The spacious and pleasant outdoor area has a range of equipment which promotes the children's learning and social development, although its use is more restricted during wet weather due to lack of cover. Reception children benefit from the many stimulating things put out by the teacher. For example, they took their roles in the 'veterinary surgery' very seriously as they cared for the sick 'animals'.
- Staff check how well pupils are learning so that they pick up on any misunderstandings quickly. Even when giving small groups some teaching on a specific area in a lesson, they also review what other pupils are doing.
- Teachers do not always ensure more-able pupils are challenged enough in mathematics. For example, when the same new learning is introduced to the wide range of abilities it can be too easy for some.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils understand cyber-bullying and how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Parents feel that their children are well cared for and behave well.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know whom to turn to if they have any problems. They feel well cared for during the day and at the breakfast and after school clubs. They are taught how to be aware of abuse and how to stop it.
- Pupils are clear that very little bullying takes place in school and are aware of the different forms that bullying can take. They say, 'We've got a good enough school to stop bullying.'
- Attendance is above average. They are punctual for school. Several attend the breakfast and after school clubs, which promote their social development well.
- Pupils develop a good understanding about values. They know the importance of 'respect for others'. They raise money for a school in Gambia with each class raising money from their own efforts to buy special things for the school, such as lanterns and pupils' uniform.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school and find lessons fun. They adopt good attitudes to learning. Pupils behave well in class. They are polite to each other and respect their teachers. When at play they get along well together. There have been no racist incidents. When pupils are moving around the school, behaviour is not always quite as good because they occasionally do not follow the rules about sensible movement in the corridors.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher's effective work in leading the school and their willingness to accept specialist advice have done much to move the school forward since the last inspection. These things have resulted in particularly good improvements in mathematics.
- Senior leadership and staff meetings focus on teaching, learning and pupils' progress. The involvement of representative governors in leadership meetings keeps them well informed and able to challenge the school and ask questions. Most teachers in charge of subjects or sections of the school are doing an effective job.
- A good range of activities take place to check on the quality of teaching and learning, including sampling pupils' work and talking to pupils about their learning. The results of these analyses feed effectively into discussions with staff to improve what they offer to pupils.
- The school's good links with other schools help in sharing ideas, developing teaching quality and enhancing pupils' progress. For example, some current improvements in writing have arisen from discussion with and observation of what other schools have found to be successful.
- Annual performance reviews of all staff result in relevant individual targets. It is easy to measure the progress targets because they are linked to data.
- There is no evidence of discrimination in the school, and equal opportunities are promoted effectively. Pupil premium money, spent partly on therapists, has helped a few pupils with emotional problems and they are now more ready to work. The proportion spent on teaching staff has enabled small groups to be formed. Extra coaching helps to plug gaps in pupils' learning.
- The national primary school sports grant has been used well to pay for specialist advisers to strengthen staff's confidence in teaching physical education. Additionally, the employment of a sports coach has widened the range of sports and increased competitive sport. In turn this has contributed to pupils' health and well-being.
- The school teaches a wide range of subjects and pupils' learning is supported by a good range of extra activities which widen their interests. Increasingly good attention is paid to the use of pupils' numeracy and literacy skills in other subjects, for example in recording science investigations.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage also leads another key part of the school and this makes it difficult to give the specialist attention needed in the Early Years. As a result the vision for the future of this part of the school is not fully developed, and teamwork has suffered a little because staff have not had as much support as in other areas.
- The local authority has worked well with the school and its advice has contributed significantly to the progress made in key subjects.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well led. Governors are committed to seeking the best for the pupils and challenge the school effectively.
- Governors are keen to keep updated and frequently take part in training sessions with staff, for example on the analysis and interpretation of data
- They understand how effective teaching is. They have made appropriate arrangements for the review of teachers' performance and its link to pay and to the teachers' standards.
- Governors know how any extra funding the school receives is spent and the impact of the spending.
- Their arrangements for safeguarding the pupils meet requirements and are very thorough.

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	117473
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	442004

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marcia Walkerdine
Headteacher	Ania Vaughan
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2012
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