

Reculver Church of England Primary School

Hillborough, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 6TA

Inspection dates

9–10 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Rates of progress and levels of attainment have not improved significantly for some pupils since the last inspection.
- The achievement gap between those pupils eligible for additional government funding and their class mates is too wide. Key Stage 2 pupils, particularly boys, do not make enough progress with their reading.
- Teaching is not good enough to ensure all pupils make reasonable or better progress. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Frequent changes in teaching staff have slowed the progress of some pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership, including governance, is good. Leaders know what to improve and how. Collectively, they are working to drive up the standards achieved by all pupils. Senior leaders are exceptional role models for staff.
- Information on pupils' progress is checked regularly, by staff. They know exactly how each pupil is doing and this information is shared with parents. Teaching is adjusted in the light of these checks.
- Children in the Reception year get off to a positive start. They settle well and make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities, and the most able, make consistently good progress.
- The school is an inclusive and harmonious community, where all pupils are welcome. Pupils behave well and work hard. They are happy, feel safe and secure and trust in the adults around them. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is woven through all aspects of school life.
- Staff communicate well with parents.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team carried out 25 observations of teaching, including six jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed collective worship, activities at lunchtimes and break times and watched pupils as they arrived at school. Pupils' workbooks and records of learning were sampled in every class. Pupils from both Key Stages 1 and 2 read aloud to inspectors.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Meetings were also held with representatives from the local authority and the interim executive board (IEB). Inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the inspection and also held meetings with groups of pupils from Years 2 and 6.
- A wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, minutes of meetings including those of the IEB, policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils and information relating to pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked informally with parents, including a representative from the parent council, during the course of the inspection. Inspectors took account of the parent survey conducted last academic year and recent staff survey conducted by the school, as well as the views of 36 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).
- When the school was inspected in January 2013, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school received two monitoring visits. On the occasion of this, the third monitoring visit, the school was no longer deemed to require special measures.
- As this inspection began as a monitoring inspection, inspection questionnaires were not circulated to staff. Staff views of the school were collected through conversations held during the course of the inspection as well as from the recent staff survey completed by the school.

Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson	Seconded Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Reculver Church of England Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The school has strong Christian values.
- The school provides specialist provision for visually impaired pupils. Discussions are being held with the relevant authorities with regard to establishing a unit for pupils with Down's syndrome.
- The majority of pupils are White British; few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action or school action plus is below average, but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is higher than that found in most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding provided for looked after children and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school buildings have been extended and modified over many years. Whilst buildings are well maintained, the classrooms and outdoor learning space for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are old and small, and do not function as originally intended.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching so that all pupils make good or better progress by ensuring that:
 - additional help given to pupils, particularly those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, accelerates their progress
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - the classrooms and outdoor learning space are developed to enable Reception children to further reinforce and extend their communication, numeracy and social skills.
- Improve the teaching of reading at Key Stage 2, with a particular focus on boys' reading, so that all pupils become confident and fluent readers and achieve the expected standards for their ages by ensuring that:
 - teachers and support staff at Key Stage 2 are suitably trained to teach pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read
 - interventions and support strategies are carefully targeted, are regularly evaluated and adjusted to ensure they make a positive impact on pupils' reading abilities.

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 governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because too few pupils make rapid enough progress over

time due to weaknesses in teaching. Not enough Key Stage 2 pupils, particularly boys, make the progress expected in reading.

- Gaps in achievement between pupils eligible for additional government funding, and their peers, have not closed. For around one third of pupils in receipt of additional funding extra support has made little difference. They remain around six months behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is therefore not successful in ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in mathematics and English was broadly average. More pupils attained the expected levels in writing, spelling and grammar and mathematics than in reading.
- Reading is developed well at Key Stage 1. Leaders have established a systematic approach to supporting pupils with their early reading skills. Pupils apply the strategies they have learnt to help them work out how to read unknown or difficult words. Pupils of all ages say that they enjoy reading and are expected to read regularly at home as well as at school. Older pupils have not benefited from the current approach, which is reflected in their weaker attainment. Senior leaders acknowledge that improving the reading skills of the older pupils, particularly boys, is a priority.
- Throughout the school, pupils' rates of progress and levels of attainment in mathematics, science and other subject areas have risen significantly since the previous inspection. While gains in learning are steadier as pupils move through the school, there are still some individual classes where progress remains too slow. The most able pupils, in all year groups, are given suitably challenging work. Workbooks reveal a broad range of interesting learning activities that motivates pupils to work hard.
- Levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014 have risen, and are now broadly average. Pupils who had made little progress previously, due to weak teaching in the past, have successfully made up the lost ground and have reached the levels they should. At the end of Key Stage 1, a third of all pupils is reading at the higher levels, and a quarter is attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. By the end of the Reception Year in 2014, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was average, which represents good progress. Detailed observations and interactions between staff and children ensure that checks of what children can do are accurate to inform next steps.
- Good teaching enables children to make steady progress in Reception and gaps with national expectations are closed. The poor quality of the classroom buildings and outdoor area restricts further opportunities for children to develop their communication, numeracy and social skills.
- The progress of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is often better than those of their peers. Individually tailored support, including for those with visual impairments and those with Down's syndrome, ensures that every pupil accesses the help they need to fully participate in school life. Evaluations of the effectiveness of additional support are routine, as is the monitoring of progress and communication with families and other professionals. This thorough and sensitive approach is clearly successful.
- Progress in school is supported by homework projects that promote the joy of learning together.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable. It requires improvement because there is not enough that is consistently good to ensure all pupils make good progress in all classes and subjects. Whilst teachers across each year group work from the same plans, the quality of learning varies between classes.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a high turnover of teaching staff. As a result of the drive to secure permanent skilled staff, some pupils have had as many as three class teachers during the current academic year. Because of some weak teaching and frequent changes to

staffing, not all pupils have made the progress of which they were capable.

- In classes where expectations are high, pupils progress quickly. For example, in one Year 4 class, pupils were using specialist equipment to investigate and categorise two-dimensional shapes. The work was challenging. However, this high level of expectation is not uniform.
- In Key Stage 1, teachers and teaching assistants have become more skilled at teaching reading. Pupils are grouped, according to reading ability, every morning. Progress is reviewed every six weeks and groups changed as a consequence. Key Stage 1 pupils have made faster progress in reading than older pupils. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have plentiful opportunities to read. However, because of less focused and skilled teaching over time, pupils, in particular boys, have made much slower progress.
- Teaching has been a focus for improvement since the last inspection. The results are clear to see in the majority of observations and pupils' books. Typically, pupils' work is very carefully marked. Teachers indicate what has been done well and what a pupil could do next to improve even more. In addition to spoken conversation, pupils engage in active written dialogue with their teachers about their learning. Pupils are unanimous in the view that marking helps them to improve their work.
- Pupils' writing has improved. In most classes, pupils take great care in how they present their work; handwriting is neat and dates and titles underlined. Teachers ensure pupils have the opportunity to write in different styles while keeping a focus on the skill being learnt. For example, in one Year 6 class, pupils were excited to be writing 'spooky stories'; the focus of their learning was developing techniques to build suspense.
- Teachers are now developing pupils' skills in mathematics in a more consistent way. Pupils access a range of work in lessons to help them understand a new concept or to practise a new skill. 'Learning ladders' identify sequential steps in learning. When a pupil demonstrates they understand a 'step' well enough, they move on. Time is not wasted on unnecessary repetition.
- In Reception, adults provide an exciting range of activities. Staff are quick to grasp opportunities to develop children's communication, literacy, numeracy and personal skills. Children's ideas are valued and there are valuable opportunities for them to develop their scientific knowledge, for example through sand and water play.
- Pupils with visual impairments report that their teachers expect them to do their best. They say that all adults, including the specialist teachers and teaching assistants, help them learn well. Data and observations of learning confirm that these pupils are making consistently good progress.
- Teaching assistants are clear about their role in promoting learning. Teachers identify in planning how supporting adults will be used and these plans are clearly communicated.
- Most teachers assess pupils' progress very well. They use checks on pupils' progress to plan activities that build on what pupils know and can do. Sequences of sessions are well thought out, so that pupils can learn and test out their understanding in different ways.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In classrooms, they are keen to learn and settle quickly to the tasks they are set. However, behaviour is not outstanding because sometimes when pupils find a lesson less exciting, the pace of learning slows and their attention sometimes wanders.
- A few pupils find it difficult to concentrate for long periods. These pupils are very effectively supported by staff and disruption to lessons is rare.
- Pupils identified as 'leaders of learning' take the role seriously and even those still in Year 1 provide genuine help and guidance to their peers. Pupils participate confidently and animatedly in discussions about their learning.
- Around the school, pupils are very polite. They move through the corridors and buildings sensibly, standing back and holding doors open for visitors and staff. At break and lunchtimes, pupils play well together. They are sensitive to the individual needs of their friends and make sure everyone is included in games. The school promotes positive relationships effectively and

ensures there is no discrimination.

- Pupils are respectful of each other and adults. Pupils are clear that there is little unkind behaviour and they are confident to resolve most disputes themselves. Pupils understand what bullying is, but say that very little happens. Should they need help, pupils are confident to ask for support.
- Older pupils report that there has been a significant improvement in behaviour since the current headteacher joined the school. Pupils are clear about expectations for conduct. Pupils report that expectations, sanctions and rewards are consistently applied by their teachers.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils of all ages say that they feel safe in school. Pupils spoke of fencing and security doors, but also demonstrated a mature understanding of feeling emotionally secure. Interactive displays help pupils to become thoughtful and reflective and challenge thinking by posing questions such as, 'Why am I wonderful?' Pupils learn well about safe use of the internet and mobile phones.
- Attendance has improved and is currently above average. Pupils are usually punctual to school. An attendance officer and a family liaison officer have been appointed. These staff monitor attendance and punctuality closely and help families to ensure their children's good attendance.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides powerful and dynamic leadership. As a result, they have secured improvements in pupils' rates of progress and levels of attainment, as well as behaviour. Teaching is more consistent and leads to reasonable or better progress. Nevertheless, leadership and management are not outstanding because leaders have not secured good enough teaching to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential.
- The school community has a profound commitment to inclusion and ensuring equality of opportunity. On a practical level, this means that all pupils are welcome in this school and are taught and supported by adults and peers who are ambitious that all children succeed. However, this ambition has not yet been achieved. The gap between those in receipt of additional government funding and all others is too wide. A recently appointed senior leader now has responsibility for this urgent aspect of school improvement.
- Staff members understand their role in raising achievement by improving their teaching. Frequent monitoring by senior leaders ensures that teachers are employing agreed school approaches, and are securing good progress for pupils in their class. Where this is not the case, further action is taken. The review of teachers' performance by leaders is thorough, including deciding whether pay increases are to be awarded, based on pupils' progress.
- Accurate and detailed self-evaluation, underpinned by a rigorous framework for checking pupils' progress, has resulted in significant improvements. The impact of actions taken including the employment of a family liaison officer and specific planning for the most able pupils is evident in increased rates of attendance and accelerated progress.
- Subject leaders have good levels of subject-specific knowledge. The range of subjects is rich and exciting and builds knowledge and skills year on year. Specialist teaching using additional music and physical education funding provides increased challenge for all pupils, including the most able, as well as a range of new experiences. The most able pupils in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 have benefited from daily specialist teaching. This has resulted in pupils reaching higher levels of attainment than ever before.
- Phase leaders and staff in charge of special educational needs retain a robust oversight of the quality of learning and teaching in their area of responsibility. They contribute to improvement through supporting colleagues with planning and providing informal advice as well as formal monitoring.
- A strong Christian ethos is evident throughout the school. School assemblies make an outstanding contribution to the character of the school. An atmosphere of trust, respect and friendship prevail. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is exceptionally well developed.

- Communication with parents is particularly good. Parents are kept very well informed about their child's education and changes at school. The parent council gives parents a genuine platform to engage with school leaders in aspects of decision making.
- Procedures for safeguarding meet current requirements.
- The local authority has provided high quality and effective support that meets the school's needs and promotes improvement. The current light touch support reflects the ability of school leaders to continue to improve the school without outside help.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The IEB has been pivotal in securing improvement. A small group of knowledgeable and skilled professionals, with expertise in governance, has ensured that plans for improvement are challenging, yet realistic. Monitoring of the impact of actions taken to drive improvement forms a core of their work. Members are clear about the standards of teaching and the quality of leadership and the impact they have on pupils' achievement. They hold all senior leaders to account through perceptive and challenging questioning. They check written reports, understand performance information and know how it compares with similar schools nationally. Board members are skilled at financial management. Budgetary decisions are sound and inextricably linked to school improvement planning. They are involved in reviewing all key documents and policies. The IEB ensures safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and that regular training is provided.

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	118656
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	432552

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	479
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Richard Webster
Headteacher	Jon Fox
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2013
Telephone number	01227 375907
Fax number	01227 743761
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