

St Matthew's High Brooms Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Powder Mill Lane, High Brooms, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9DY

Inspection dates

16–17 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- This is a rapidly improving school.
- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in lessons and over time. Those eligible for additional funding achieve as well other pupils, and sometimes better.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make as much progress as other pupils.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to make sure that pupils make good progress. Staff take great pride in their work and are committed to continual improvement.
- Leaders have improved teaching and pupils' achievement at a phenomenal rate. Decisive action, unrelentingly high expectations and the effective use of robust systems have made sure that improvements have been extremely swift and can be sustained.
- Governors challenge and support leaders effectively. They know the school well and check that improvements are made at the right rate.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and usually smartly dressed. They are kept safe at school and are taught how to keep themselves safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils make rapid and sustained progress because teaching is not yet outstanding overall.
- Occasionally, some pupils do not make as much progress as they could in lessons because the work they are set is not challenging enough.
- Marking and feedback in subjects other than English and mathematics are inconsistent. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils' spelling and presentation, whilst improving, are not of a consistently high standard.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, nine of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors made short visits to a further eight lessons.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised, including safeguarding procedures, minutes of governing body meetings, records of attendance and behavioural incidents, information about pupils' achievement and checks by the school on how well it is doing.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, teachers, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils by talking to them around the school, in lessons and by meeting with the school council. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils' work was analysed in order to gather evidence about their achievement and the quality of teachers' marking. Inspectors heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors met with a group of parents. There were 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and these were taken into consideration.
- Evidence from Ofsted's previous monitoring visits was also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Matthew Haynes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Simon Hughes

Her Majesty's Inspector

Evelyn Riley

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

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported at school action is slightly above average, but the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement further so that it is outstanding by:
 - challenging all pupils in lessons by always setting them work that is well suited to their abilities
 - matching the high quality of marking and feedback in English and mathematics in other subjects so that pupils know what they have got to do to improve their work
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching through the further use of the existing effective processes to improve the quality of teaching
 - making sure that there are consistently high expectations of pupils' spelling and presentation of their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement has risen significantly since the previous inspection. Both parents and pupils recognise a marked improvement.
- Pupils' skills on entry to the school in Reception are generally lower than expected for their age. Pupils reach standards at the end of Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 that are average or above average. This is because, overall, they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Early reading skills are taught effectively. Consequently, pupils' attainment in phonics (the sounds that letters make) is above average. Pupils read enthusiastically, widely and regularly. They make good use of the school library as well as the well-stocked class libraries.
- Pupils write with motivation and imagination. They are given good opportunities to write at length, including in subjects across the curriculum. However, spelling errors are not always corrected. While teachers' expectations of pupils' spelling are rising, they are not yet consistently high.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because the curriculum has a good balance between calculation and problem solving. Pupils increasingly develop and apply their knowledge and skills in other subjects, especially science.
- The quality of how pupils present their work varies. Many pupils take great care to organise their work well and present it neatly, but not all.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is good. They are generally set challenging work which enables them to reach the higher levels.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding make as much progress as other pupils, and often more. Gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are therefore closing rapidly. They attain more highly in reading, writing and mathematics than similar pupils in other schools, and are, on average, three months behind other pupils in this school. The pupil premium funding is spent effectively. For example, by providing pupils with additional support and help outside of lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as other pupils. This is because their individual needs are identified accurately, allowing teachers and teaching assistants to provide the right extra support in and outside of lessons.
- Most pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good overall because, over time, pupils make good progress. Teaching has improved at an impressive rate since the last inspection. Some teaching is outstanding.
- In the best lessons, teachers question pupils well and this extends their thinking. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and what they need to do to achieve success. Teachers know the pupils well and establish good relationships within lessons. Teachers keep track of how well pupils are doing in lessons, making adjustments when necessary.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and improving, especially in English and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They provide good feedback and support for pupils without doing too much for them.
- Teachers work together to plan challenging lessons with high expectations. However, occasionally, pupils do not make as much progress as they could because the tasks they are given are not sufficiently challenging or well suited to their levels of ability.
- Teachers' marking in English and mathematics is effective. Pupils are given regular detailed feedback about what to improve in their work and are given opportunities to make these improvements. This contributes to pupils' good progress in these subjects. Marking is not as

strong in other subjects. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to make further progress.

- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is accurate. Leaders ensure that there is consistency and accuracy across all year groups.
- Parents feel that they are well informed by teachers, both about their children's progress and about what pupils are learning during any given week. The parents spoken to during the inspection said that this helps them support their children's learning at home.
- Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement, especially when tasks are short, focused and build on pupils' learning in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in the vast majority of lessons is good, and sometimes outstanding. Pupils are enthusiastic and apply themselves well. Pupils generally work well together and are hungry to learn.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, for example through the consistent use of the green, yellow and red card system. This is understood well by the pupils, and parents have seen a definite improvement in behaviour since the last inspection.
- Occasionally pupils lose concentration, especially when they are not fully challenged in lessons.
- Pupils behave very well at break and lunchtimes. They play together well and move around the school sensibly. Pupils are usually, but not always, smartly dressed. They are polite to each other and to adults.
- Pupils look forward to going to school and enjoy being there. As a result, attendance is above average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet.
- The school site is secure and levels of supervision around the school are good.
- Bullying is rare. When it occurs it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils know about the different types of bullying. There have been a small number of racist incidents during the last year which have been recorded properly and dealt with decisively.
- Leaders ensure that the necessary policies to keep pupils safe are implemented effectively, including doing thorough checks on members of staff. Child protection arrangements are particularly successful because leaders liaise closely with other agencies and professionals.

The leadership and management

are good

- The exceptional leadership of the headteacher, combined with the highly-effective leadership of the deputy headteacher, has meant that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved at a phenomenal rate. They have acted decisively, effectively and swiftly to address previous inadequacies. As a result, teaching and achievement are good and improving.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics and the key stage leaders have clearly defined roles in improving teaching and pupils' achievement. Their impact is good and there is strong capacity for further improvement.
- Since joining the school in January 2014, the leader in charge of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has made sure that the achievement of these pupils has risen significantly.
- Leaders' checks on teachers' performance are very regular, thorough and accurate. Teachers receive high quality feedback about how they need to improve further and get the training and support required to do this. Leaders check that improvements are made rapidly. Consequently,

teachers are held very strongly to account for the achievement of the pupils that they teach.

- Leaders set unremittingly high expectations of teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers take great professional pride in their work and are tireless in their drive to improve.
- Pupils' achievement is tracked in detail by leaders and teachers. Pupils who are at risk of underachieving are identified quickly and the necessary extra help and support are put in place.
- Leaders' accurate view of the performance of the school is based on a wide range of appropriate evidence. Actions to bring about further improvements are carefully planned.
- The curriculum ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed and that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils develop a good range of knowledge, skills and understanding and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand and respect the differences between people from different backgrounds and beliefs and show tolerance for these differences. The daily act of collective worship and the improving curriculum for religious education mean that the Christian ethos of the school is developing.
- The range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils has grown hugely over the last year. About three quarters of pupils participate in these activities. Music is a growing strength of the school and pupils' singing, in particular, is good.
- An ex-Commonwealth athlete, who is a teaching assistant, leads the development of sport and physical education in the school. Pupils are increasingly involved in competitive sport both in and outside of the curriculum. The primary sport funding is used effectively to support these developments, including through the use of specialist coaches who not only coach pupils but who have also begun to train the teachers.
- Leaders ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- The local authority has provided effective support which has been steadily withdrawn as leaders have demonstrated the capacity to make necessary improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors hold school leaders robustly to account for the school's improvement. They set challenging targets for the headteacher. They visit the school regularly to check in detail whether improvements are being made at the right rate. They know how well pupils are achieving compared to other schools because they have a good understanding of the regular, detailed information they receive about pupils' progress. They have an accurate view about the quality of teaching and ensure that only good performance by staff is rewarded. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and track the good impact it is having, as well as that of the sport funding. They manage the school's budget well.

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	118709
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	441752

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Stevenson
Headteacher	Judith Lees
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 June 2013
Telephone number	01892 528098
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