

# Raynsford Church of England Academy

Park Lane, Henlow, SG16 6AT

**Inspection dates** 28–29 January 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Good		2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' attainment is consistently above average, significantly so in reading and writing. From their different starting points pupils make good progress.
- The school's values and vision are fully reflected in the conduct of all members of the school community. Pupils feel happy, attend regularly and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Teaching is typically at least good.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children achieve well, becoming self-confident learners who play and learn together well.
- There is a strong partnership between home and school. Almost all parents would recommend the school to others.
- Pupils behave well in classrooms, the dining hall and around the school. They get along well. They understand about different forms of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Senior leaders know individual pupils extremely well. They are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve highly and do as well as they can. The headteacher has a sharp focus on further improving the quality of teaching.
- Governors provide effective support and challenge. They know the school well and recognise its important place in the local community.
- The whole school is committed to continuing to improve. It is well placed to do so.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not do as well in mathematics as in reading and writing.
- Older pupils and the most able do not make enough use of their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to help them read and spell unfamiliar words.
- Not all teachers have a good understanding of the school's new assessment and tracking systems.
- The school's improvement plans lack a sufficiently sharp focus on pupils' achievement. It is unclear exactly when actions are expected to be completed or who is responsible for them.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in all six classes twice. Five observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, and an independent school improvement consultant. The inspector met with the school council, (the Owl Parliament), and spoke informally with pupils in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and data on the progress of pupils. Documents relating to pupils' behaviour, child protection and safeguarding and a range of policy documents, were also scrutinised.
- Account was taken of the 56 responses to the online questionnaire, (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Robert Lovett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Raynsford Church of England Academy converted to become an academy on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school, Raynsford VC Lower School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is 4.2%, which is lower than the national average for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is 4.9%, which is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority. These groups of disadvantaged pupils underachieve nationally.
- Almost 90% of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Pupils attend from Reception to Year 4. Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils achievement so that it is outstanding by;
  - making better use of the new system for tracking how well pupils are doing so that teachers are clearer about pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that pupils make as much progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing
  - ensuring that all pupils, particularly the most-able, continue to practise and make use of their phonics skills to improve their reading and spelling.
- Refine the school's improvement planning so that:
  - it is clearer exactly how the impact of the school's actions on outcomes for pupils will be measured
  - both timelines for completion and milestones are explicit
  - it is clear who is responsible for doing things and who will check to ensure that they have been done
  - responsibility for school improvement is shared across all staff.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher, well supported by the leadership team, has been very successful in establishing a clear vision for improvement through a set of shared values. She has quickly gained the confidence of parents with almost all saying they would recommend the school. She is well supported by an effective deputy headteacher and leadership team who clearly know what the school needs to do to become outstanding. They have sustained a school culture where adults know each pupil extremely well and where they are valued as individuals. The school has a strong commitment to the professional development of all staff. As a result the quality of teaching has improved.
- There is strong leadership of special educational needs (SEN). The special educational needs leader knows each pupil, quickly identifies what the school can do to help them succeed, and carefully tracks their progress. As a result, pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates.
- As a relatively small school, management roles are shared across the staff. As staff training enhances their skills and knowledge they are increasingly well placed to assume a greater role in promoting school improvement and monitoring how well the school is doing.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. It values its history as a Church of England school which it uses to help promote pupils' understanding of peace, love and forgiveness. The whole school community models these qualities and other core values such as understanding extremely well. Pupils learn about different communities, cultures and religions, and how to contribute positively to the life of the school.
- The school teaches a broad curriculum which successfully promotes both core skills and a creative approach to the curriculum which embraces art, physical education and ukulele playing. This broad curriculum, together with the schools' ethos and values, which include tolerance, fairness, honesty and responsibility prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Additional funding to encourage participation in sport is used well. The school actively encourages participation in a range of competitive sports and games. Physical education (PE) within the school is well taught by a PE specialist.
- The school has a very strong commitment to the professional development of all staff. As a result it has built up a significant reservoir of skills and experience in all adults. This expertise could be shared more widely in order to improve the teaching of all.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school very well. They know what the school is good at and what it needs to improve. They contribute to the process of self-evaluation and improvement planning well. The school's evaluation of how well it is doing is generally accurate and recognises that pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and leadership and management are good.
  - Governors are prevented from holding the school to account more rigorously because the improvement plan is not clear about who is responsible for carrying out and monitoring actions and when they are due to be completed. The plan is unclear about expected impact of the school's actions on pupils' achievement.
  - Governors have a good knowledge of how well disadvantaged pupils are doing and the measures the school is taking to help them do as well as possible. They know in which subjects pupils do best. They also recognise where further improvement is required.
  - The school's performance management has a good focus on the quality of teaching and governors carefully monitor the relationship between staff pay and pupils' achievement.
  - Governors bring a wide range of skills which they use to good effect in carrying out their roles.

- Governors have a strong commitment to the safeguarding of pupils. They promote equality of opportunity for all pupils through reinforcing the school's inclusive ethos, high expectations and careful monitoring of achievement, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupil is used to good effect.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils and staff contributed to the school's list of core values which are highly visible throughout the school. These values are consistently modelled by staff and pupils in their dealings with one another. The cross in the school hall, containing a visual reminder of the values is a focal point for school assemblies and prayers.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. They have generally positive attitudes to learning, although in some classes a small number of pupils can become inattentive unless under the direct supervision of an adult.
- Pupils behave particularly well in the dining hall; they eat quietly and sensibly and demonstrate good table manners. Even when things go wrong and a bag of crisps bursts across the table and floor, pupils react calmly and sensibly, quickly clearing up the resulting debris. On the playground, pupils get along and play together well. They make good use of the equipment available to them, with a Year 2 pupil using the opportunity of playtime to hone his already impressive basketball skills.
- Pupils make an active contribution to the life of the school through voting for representatives for the Owl Parliament, and undertaking a range of other responsibilities such as acting as playground buddies to encourage friendship. Pupils also recognise that it is the responsibility of all pupils, old and young, to encourage friendship and understanding. They value the sense of community at the school, and that each pupil is well known as an individual to all of the staff.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are punctual and their attendance is above average.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They understand that there are different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. If an incident of bullying or name-calling occurs, they are rightly confident that they can tell an adult who will sort it out quickly.
- The school offers regular safety sessions for parents in order to further enhance pupils' safety and strengthen the relationship with parents.
- The on-line questionnaire indicates that most parents who responded feel that their children are kept safe in school, are well looked after and that any bullying is dealt with effectively.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are effective in keeping pupils safe. All staff safeguarding training is up to date.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Where teaching is most effective, adults use questioning very well to keep the interest of all pupils and assess how well they are doing. Pupils work together extremely well. They value the comments of their peers when assessing one another's work, and as a Year 1 pupil said, 'getting a friend to check your work is really good because they tell what you are doing wrong and help you put it right'.
- There is a very effective partnership between teachers and teaching assistants which results in well focused support for pupils and improves their learning. The school has a skilled group of teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to pupils' good progress, both when teaching small groups

and the whole class.

- Most classrooms are bright and attractive. Displays of pupils' work are often of high quality and exemplify learning across a range of subjects. The home produced jungle dioramas in Year 3 not only look attractive but demonstrate the schools' strong commitment to working in partnership with parents. In a very successful lesson, pupils used jungle smells, sounds and sights as stimuli for exciting descriptive writing. The use of a facial steamer to replicate high humidity was an inspired idea which added greatly to the tropical experience while also steaming-up pupils' glasses.
- Teachers make good use of the time available. Pupils come in from the playground quickly and sensibly so that lessons get off to a prompt start and little time is wasted.
- While almost all teaching is good not enough is yet outstanding. Where it is less strong, adults do not explain carefully enough what they want pupils to learn. As a result they start doing the wrong thing and this is not detected quickly enough. In some lessons expectations are not sufficiently high or consistent. When an adult asks for the class to be quiet, the expectation should be that all pupils will listen quickly.
- Because relationships between pupils and with adults are strong, pupils are enthusiastic, confident learners.
- Teachers' marking has improved significantly. Where it is best it tells pupils what they are doing well and how to improve further. Verbal feedback and encouragement is strong.
- While scrutiny of pupils' books confirms their good progress across the school, not all teachers are yet confident in using the new system for tracking pupils' progress. As a result, achievement data are less secure than they should be.
- Pupils are enthusiastic readers. They talk confidently about their books and make good use of a range of contextual and visual cues to help them understand the story. The teaching of literacy is a strength. Adults encourage pupils to think carefully about their oral and written responses. As a result, pupils' story writing is imaginative and exciting.
- Mathematics is well taught. Teachers set interesting practical problems and ensure a range of appropriate resources are readily available if required.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Most children join the Reception class with a range of skills and knowledge typical for their age. They make good progress.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching at least the expected level in the Year 1 national phonics check was well above average. While girls did better than boys, almost all pupils did well. All of the small number who needed to re-take the phonics check as Year 2 pupils in 2014 reached the expected level.
- By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils at every national curriculum level in all subjects was above the national average. In recent years overall attainment has been significantly above average. In 2014 pupils' attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics, significantly so in reading and writing.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is so small that it is not possible to describe their achievement without the risk of identifying them.
- Because teaching is typically good, pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress and achieve well. Through extensive reading, and exposure to a language rich environment, many older pupils possess a wide vocabulary. They use this to enliven their writing. In a successful Year 4 English lesson, pupils developed a sense of mystery and practised their story writing skills through watching a video clip, trying out their

writing on classmates and reading aloud. This resulted in some high quality descriptive writing.

- Overall, the most able pupils make good progress across a range of subjects. Those pupils who left Year 2 with well above average levels of attainment have made at least the expected progress. As pupils move through the school they do not always continue to apply the basic skills and knowledge acquired when they were younger. Phonics skills are used well by the majority of pupils but some of the most able, and some older readers, do not always apply their phonics skills well enough to help them read or spell unfamiliar words.
- The school has had a successful focus on raising achievement in writing, but across the school, too few pupils are making more than expected progress in mathematics. While many pupils form letters carefully and take care to present their work neatly, too few are using a joined cursive script.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve well. This is because their learning needs are carefully assessed, their progress rigorously monitored, and effective strategies are put in place to help them succeed.
- Pupils leave Year 4 well prepared for the next stage in their education.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with a wide range of abilities. Most enter with the communication and number skills typical for their age. Children are able to learn and play together well.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Adults know children well and carefully match learning to their development needs. While records of children's progress and achievements are generally well maintained, not all planned assessment opportunities have happened in a timely manner.
- Children make good progress because resources to support learning are very well organised and readily accessible, so that children can make some decisions for themselves which increases their independence and self-confidence.
- The quality of teaching by all adults is good. There is particularly strong team working in the Reception class. All of the adults who work with children are skilled in asking searching questions which encourage children to think carefully, discuss their ideas and reach conclusions. In an effective phonics session, children sensibly discussed what they could see in pictures and then had a go at writing the key words, using their knowledge of letters and their sounds to write the first letter. One of the most able children responded by writing a full sentence, beginning with capital letters and ending with a full stop.
- Relationships are strong, routines are well established and expectations high. Children are eager learners and behaviour is good.
- Because they make good progress and have positive attitudes to learning, children are well prepared to move into Year 1.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139473
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	453172

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nicola Cooper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Ashwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01462 812319
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