

Churchgate Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hobbs Cross Road, Harlow, CM17 0LB

Inspection dates 15–16 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The school is a warm and welcoming place. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to their school work. They cooperate with each other and conduct themselves well. They know they are safe and valued in school.
- Leadership is good at all levels and has ensured considerable improvement in school performance. School leaders have high expectations and, through well-targeted support and coaching, have helped staff to improve their teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement has risen.
- The governing body has greatly improved its effectiveness in monitoring the work of the school. It offers a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders. Governors are well informed and focus on improving teaching and achievement to continue the school's improvement.
- Teaching is typically good and some practice is outstanding. Activities engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils make good progress across the school and reach at least average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave. They learn to read well and to speak clearly and confidently.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils develop a good understanding of the values and attitudes necessary to equip them for life in modern Britain.
- Children make a good start in the well-organised early years department. They quickly develop their social skills and get into the expected routines. They enjoy learning in the caring and stimulating environment, and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, some teachers do not provide activities that fully challenge the most-able pupils.
- Not all teachers follow the school's marking policy closely enough, so marking does not always help pupils know how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils of all ages engaged in a range of activities in different subjects. They shared two observations with the headteacher. They looked at pupils’ written work in all years and checked the records of children’s learning in the Reception class.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other school leaders and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors spoke to two representatives of the local authority and an education improvement service.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school. An inspector listened to pupils reading and spoke to them about their reading habits.
- Inspectors examined several school documents. These included the school’s evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, notes of governors’ meetings, information about pupils’ progress and attainment, evidence about the quality of teaching, and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 38 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views expressed by parents as they arrived at school and in one letter. The 26 questionnaires returned by staff were analysed.

Inspection team

James McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ann McCarthy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There is one full-time Reception class and one class in each year from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers always provide activities that fully challenge the most-able pupils and make them think hard
 - all teachers apply the school's marking policy closely so that pupils know how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors share high expectations of staff and pupils, and have engendered a team spirit and common purpose within the school. Leaders have successfully established a purposeful school ethos reflected in pupils' good behaviour and effective teaching.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development. Their understanding is informed by their own observations and that of consultants who have provided an accurate external view of the school's work. Consequently, the school's effective action plan is being implemented successfully and is bringing about major improvements in teaching and achievement.
- School leaders have greatly improved the quality of teaching, which is good but not yet outstanding. They tackle underperformance effectively and set clear expectations for teachers' work, backed up with regular training and coaching. Leaders regularly analyse how well different groups of pupils are achieving and put effective extra help in place for any pupils in danger of slipping behind. As a consequence of better teaching and the provision of extra help, pupils' progress has improved.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic and well organised. They are bringing about improvements in their areas of responsibility by checking the quality of teaching and contributing to training and coaching of staff. They are well supported to develop strong leadership and management skills and are held accountable for the progress pupils make in their subjects. The impact of subject leaders is evident in good teaching and progress in all subjects.
- The school offers an extensive range of subjects that interest and engage pupils. There is a suitable emphasis on literacy and mathematics due to the school's focus on raising attainment in these subjects. Music and physical education extend pupils' learning opportunities and are particularly enjoyed by all. After-school clubs, trips and visitors to the school further enrich pupils' experience. All learning opportunities are contributing well to pupils' improved achievement.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is spent effectively to engage pupils in more physical activities and extend the coaching skills of teachers. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the sporting opportunities they took part in, including competitions involving other schools. All pupils are expected to be able to swim by the time they leave school. Consequently, pupils have gained in health and well-being from the additional funding.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to school life. Assemblies, visits to places of worship and project work, such as on India, promote understanding of and respect for different cultures. Pupils explore the meaning of a different moral value each month. For example, they can explain what is meant by 'fairness' and 'responsibility'. The school is taking advantage of the forthcoming general election to plan events in which pupils learn about British values, such as democracy. Pupils are well prepared to play a responsible part in modern British society.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity for all and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. For example, leaders have acted decisively to ensure that the few pupils who have not made enough progress in the past due to weaker teaching are now achieving well. Extra help is enabling them to catch up with their peers.
- Leaders use the pupil premium effectively to make sure the few disadvantaged pupils get extra help to accelerate their rates of progress. The school makes sure that these pupils have the same access to trips and clubs as others.
- Senior leaders are trained and experienced in keeping pupils safe. They ensure that staff are also appropriately trained and have a good understanding of safeguarding pupils. Health and safety procedures

are well managed and understood. As a result, pupils are well cared for and safe in school.

- Parents are regularly informed about their children's progress. For example, weekly newsletters and workshops, including a recent one about cyber bullying, keep parents up to date. Parents report that teachers are very approachable, helpful and accessible when they collect their children from school.
- The headteacher uses the local authority as an effective source of support and training. Regular visits from educational consultants and local authority representatives have helped senior leaders and governors to improve their own leadership skills and to raise the quality of teaching.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. The previous inspection's findings galvanised the governing body into action. As a result of reorganisation and further training, the governing body is better equipped to check how well the school is doing and to hold leaders to account for their actions in taking the school forward. Governors have an extensive range of relevant skills and an effective approach to strategic management of the school. They give it good support.
- Governors have a clear picture of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching and of information on pupils' attainment and progress. They gather a wide range of evidence through their own regular and focused visits, meetings with the headteacher and reports about the school's work. They are effective in canvassing parents' views and respond directly to any concerns.
- Governors ensure that school finances are used effectively for the benefit of pupils. For example, they make certain pay awards are justified and that the pupil premium is used effectively to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. They understand how well the performance of teachers is managed. Governors set demanding targets for the headteacher to meet and make sure any underperformance is tackled promptly.
- Governors ensure all arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves well in lessons and when moving around the school. Pupils know the school's rules on behaviour and understand the consequences of any misbehaviour. They know the sanctions applied for slipping down from the creditable 'learning zone' and are keen to behave well and move into the 'gold zone'. They like gaining the learning certificates they are awarded for their efforts in learning and for demonstrating in practice the key value in focus that month.
- Pupils talk proudly about their school and appreciate the opportunities they are given. There are many responsibilities for them to take on, such as play leader, dinner monitor and school council representative. They take their jobs seriously. Pupils get along well with each other at playtimes and always have someone to play with.
- The school records incidents of misbehaviour clearly and applies the appropriate sanctions fairly. Such incidents are resolved quickly and records show that good behaviour is improving further.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They like their teachers and enjoy lessons. They share resources fairly and usually listen to others carefully. Written work is well presented and exercises are usually fully completed.
- Pupils follow teachers' instructions and settle down to work readily. A few pupils with special educational needs sometimes display challenging behaviour but adults, who consistently apply the school's approach to managing behaviour, are adept at refocusing them on their classwork without disrupting the lesson.
- Pupils report that lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. Sometimes, though, if tasks are not interesting or challenging enough, some pupils, including the most able, lose concentration and do not progress as well as they should.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The site is secure and school leaders ensure that all areas where pupils are working or playing are well supervised. Staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and have an adult they can turn to if they are upset in any way.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying and what to do if they see bullying or are themselves bullied. Pupils spoken to said bullying is rare and they have confidence in their teachers to sort any incident out quickly. They report that teachers do not tolerate derogatory language or name calling.
- Pupils learn how to be healthy and to stay safe. For example, they have learned about a healthy diet and e-safety.
- The school is rigorous in checking pupils' attendance. The school's effective focus and promotion of regular attendance have ensured improvement. Reference is made to attendance figures for each class in every newsletter so that parents and pupils know how important regular attendance is to pupils' successful learning and personal development. Consequently, attendance is rising and is above the latest national figures for primary schools.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good. Teachers are enabling pupils to make good progress in all subjects, including literacy, reading and mathematics, so that they achieve well. They establish good relationships with pupils. Behaviour is managed well and pupils follow instructions promptly. Teachers have high expectations of the amount of thought and effort pupils put into their work and of their behaviour.
- Classrooms are well maintained and give pupils a learning environment where they can succeed. Rooms have clear displays that provide pupils with helpful guidance about current work with use of excellent examples. Effective organisation within classrooms encourages reading and research.
- Teachers often question pupils skilfully to make them think hard. They give pupils time to think of the answer and follow up with additional questions that provoke further explanation and better understanding. For example, effective questioning stimulated pupils to engage in a lively discussion about different styles of fiction. Pupils made good progress in understanding the characteristics of the main fiction genres.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. They are well prepared to support pupils in each activity and record pupils' progress meticulously. Teachers use these records in planning future learning.
- Teachers provide clear explanations of what they want pupils to learn and helpful guidance on how pupils can check how well they are doing. Pupils are expected to use the correct technical words in their subject work and have many opportunities to explain their thinking. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 spoke enthusiastically in activities about telling the time and showed they were making good progress, using the expressions of 'o'clock', 'minutes to' and 'minutes past' correctly.
- Pupils' work is assessed regularly and results are used by teachers to plan learning activities to build on what pupils already know. Teachers meet with senior leaders each half term to agree strategies to support individual pupils' learning. They check the accuracy of their evaluations of pupils' work with colleagues.
- Teachers mark written work regularly using a system that pupils fully understand. All marking celebrates pupils' achievements. Some teachers write challenging questions in pupils' books to test understanding or to stretch that individual further. However, this useful aid to learning, which pupils say is very helpful, is not consistently used by all teachers in their marking so that pupils know how to improve.

- Teachers usually plan and provide learning activities that interest and engage pupils and challenge all of them. However, occasionally, activities planned for the most-able pupils are not demanding enough and some of these pupils do not progress as rapidly as they could. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 were asked to write a word or short sentence to describe 'an alien'. The task did not stretch the thinking of the most-able pupils enough and they finished it very quickly.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and reach at least average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave school in Year 6. There has been a trend of rising attainment in these subjects in both key stages over the last two years. In 2014, pupils in Year 6 made good progress in reading, mathematics and particularly in writing.
- Children make good progress in Reception from typical starting points. In 2014, a higher proportion reached a good level of development than nationally on entry to Year 1.
- Work seen in pupils' books and the school's own records of pupils' achievement show that all groups of pupils are currently making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Children in Reception are making good progress in all the areas of learning.
- Pupils' reading skills have improved. Their work in phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) has improved considerably, and Year 1 pupils' results in 2014 exceeded the standard expected nationally. Pupils develop the skills to sound out unfamiliar words. The school promotes reading well through such activities as reading competitions, providing a junior national newspaper, library visits and a judicious selection of texts to catch the interests of both boys and girls.
- Support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well planned and effective. The few pupils who need extra support to manage their behaviour are making good progress in their personal development. These pupils and the others with special educational needs are making good progress academically.
- The few disadvantaged pupils in each year group receive effective support, such as one-to-one tuition and after-school enrichment activities, to ensure that they make good progress. In 2014, the small group of pupils eligible for the pupil premium made good progress, but by the end of Year 6 were behind their classmates by around three terms in reading and mathematics and two terms in writing. Comparing them to other pupils nationally, the gaps in attainment were smaller, at two and a half terms in reading and mathematics and one and a half terms in writing. School information and work seen in books indicate that eligible pupils are continuing to make good progress and gaps in attainment are closing considerably in all three subjects.
- The most-able pupils are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, more Year 6 pupils attained Level 5 or above in writing than in most schools. Attainment at Level 3 or above at the end of Key Stage 1 was also ahead of national results. Overall, the most-able pupils are making similarly good progress to that of their classmates. However, because suitably challenging activities are not always provided for them, a few do not make as much progress as they could.

The early years provision

is good

- The Reception department is well led and managed. Teachers give children activities that motivate them and help them build successfully on the skills and abilities they already have. For example, children were seen developing their speaking skills well. After taking turns to speak about their holidays, children were asked to check how well the teacher could describe a dog during a game. 'You're not speaking loudly enough,' reported one child. Children understood the need to speak clearly and look the audience in the eye, as well as to listen carefully.

- Teachers set challenging steps for improvement for each child. For example, the most-able children are challenged by working with older pupils in phonics, where they further develop their skills of how to pronounce and spell words. Adults regularly engage children in conversation and observe and record the progress each child makes. Accurate records of each child's progress in each area of learning are maintained. Parents report they are kept well informed of how well their children are doing and use a school recording method to describe examples of learning observed in the home environment to contribute to learning records.
- All the children have regular opportunities to write words or sentences, to count and recognise numbers and use mathematical terms. Activities challenge the children and help them to guide their own learning.
- The school checks children's abilities when they join Reception and has effective procedures to help them settle in quickly. Children build effectively on their skills from entry so they leave Reception well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children develop good personal and social skills and behave well. They work cooperatively with each other, take turns and share materials fairly. They learn the expected routines for behaviour well, such as tidying up after themselves, and follow instructions. When they have chosen particular activities, they concentrate on them and rarely become distracted.
- All safeguarding precautions are taken and children feel cared for and safe. They are well looked after.
- The Reception area is well maintained. There are many resources and displays rich in text and numbers that are used to prompt children's thinking. Although not large, the outside area is used well to provide activities related to all aspects of learning.

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	115170
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	462107

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Tucker
Headteacher	Jonathan Tye
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2013
Telephone number	01279 866 059
Fax number	01279 866 059
Email address	admin@churchgate.essex.sch.uk

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