

Hertford St Andrew CofE Primary School

Calton Avenue, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG14 2EP

Inspection dates 21–22 May 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 new headteacher, senior leaders and governors provide strong leadership which has brought about significant improvements since the previous inspection in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The gap in attainment between these pupils and their classmates has closed in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, it has closed in reading and mathematics.
- British values are promoted well and filter through to everything that the pupils do. They care about each other and others in the local and global communities.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of probing questions to help pupils think for themselves, with the result that pupils are making better progress and standards are rising.
- Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and feel safe. This is reflected in their eagerness to learn and their attentiveness to adults in lessons
- Attendance has improved and is now average due to the concerted effort made by the senior leaders to praise regular attendance.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the care and attention they receive from well-trained teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teachers' marking in pupils' books is consistent in showing pupils how to move forward in their learning.
- Governors are well informed and support the school effectively. They have a clear understanding of their role to support and hold leaders to account for the progress pupils make.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes, teachers set work for the more-able learners that is too easy for them.
- Adults do not provide enough exciting activities in the early years outside area to encourage children to extend their learning, and especially their writing skills.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 2 did not have the benefit of learning the sounds letters make (phonics) and this has slowed their progress in reading, writing and spelling.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons, most of which were seen jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspector met with pupils, senior leaders, subject leaders, the early years leader, the special needs coordinator, six members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work from Years 2, 4 and 6 and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector took account of the views of the 18 parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, and also the 80 responses from a recent survey by governors. The inspector also took account of the 14 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documentation, including safeguarding policies, records and training; the school's evaluation of its own work; minutes of meetings of the governing body; attendance figures; and information about pupils' progress across the school, including in the early years.

Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hertford St Andrew CofE primary school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has a Nursery which children attend part time. Children attend full time in the Reception Year.
- Most pupils are White British.
- A well above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional funding for pupils in care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The school has its own nurture room where individual pupils and small groups of pupils are given support from adults qualified in behaviour management.
- Older pupils are divided into mixed-age groups: Years 2 and 3; Years 3 and 4; Years 5 and 6.
- There have been several changes in staff in the last eighteen months, including a new headteacher appointed in January 2014 and a new deputy headteacher appointed in September 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make the best possible progress by:
 - setting more demanding work for the most-able pupils to challenge and extend their learning
 - extending the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) into Key Stage 2 to help older pupils with their reading, writing and spelling.
- In the early years outside area, provide more exciting activities to stimulate children's learning and develop their writing skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has had a dramatic impact in the school by providing a clear focused lead in raising pupils' attainment and progress. She is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher and supported by the governing body. She has a clear vision and high expectations for the pupils and the staff, with the result standards have improved in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Senior and subject leaders check teaching regularly and give individual developmental feedback to teachers on how to improve their work. The local authority has also been instrumental in ensuring that teachers know what is effective teaching. This has brought about improvement since the previous inspection.
- Subject leaders are relatively new to their roles but have a good grasp on the developments needed within their subjects to improve progress and standards. They monitor teaching and pupils' books. The deputy headteacher coaches individual teachers by teaching alongside them as well as by observing lessons. A regular space in the weekly staff meeting is set aside to share books and check pupils' levels of attainment. This ensures that all teachers have an accurate picture of how well their pupils are progressing.
- Pupil-premium funding is used effectively to teach eligible pupils either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Some of this funding is used to support pupils in the nurture room, which was introduced by the current headteacher. This has been a very successful resource to manage vulnerable pupils and reintegrate them in their classes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very well supported. The deputy headteacher and the new special needs coordinator oversee the planning and implementation of the work provided for teaching assistants and class teachers. This has ensured that these pupils' progress is monitored regularly.
- The school's evaluation of its work is accurate. The school improvement planning document is the school's working tool toward improvement in teaching and better progress for pupils. It is used well and monitored by the governors.
- Teachers are set objectives to improve not only their performance, but also the performance of their pupils. Training opportunities are identified to address any areas of weakness and offered to teachers and teaching assistants. The local authority has supported this with expert help and guidance.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively to promote better health and well-being for the pupils. The school has established a strong link with its local secondary school and their physical education teacher is a regular visitor to coach pupils and staff. There is greater participation in local sports events like tag-rugby and tri-golf. Although the pupils have yet to win a tournament, they were presented with a Fair Play award in recognition of their attitude as participants. The school has two sports ambassadors, one of whom has been nominated for a local sports partnership award, which recognises her commitment to sport and being a good role model.
- The new primary curriculum has been implemented to provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the world and other faiths, promoting strong social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. During the inspection, the school had undertaken an Arts Week. The theme was Australia, and some detailed Aboriginal designs were being completed through the link with the local secondary school art department. The school often has themed weeks to develop the curriculum; the most recent being a Science Week. The pupils say they particularly enjoyed this because they had visits from a dentist and someone to talk about bones and how to keep them strong. The school has a long-term project with Hertford theatre and museum staff to develop work across different subjects.

- British values are promoted well. The school council visited the local council offices at Hertford Castle to see the inauguration of the new Mayor of Hertford and discussed with her the duties a mayor performs.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The Chair of the Governing Body visits regularly to check all health and safety issues. The recent local authority audit and inspection evidence confirmed that all safeguarding requirements were being met and that records were up to date.
- Attendance has improved and is now average. Leaders give rewards for 100% attendance and parents are now more aware of the implications of poor attendance. The headteacher explains this to all new parents who register their child at the school.
- The local authority has supported the school very well to help the new headteacher and staff move pupils forward quickly since the previous inspection. Successful support has been given to all staff to develop teaching and learning and to subject leaders, who have received individual support in carrying out their management roles.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have undertaken a review of their roles and now have a good understanding of pupils' attainment and how this compares with that of pupils nationally. They are aware that the school has improved much through the leadership of the new headteacher who, they recognise, had a lot to do to get the school moving in the right direction. They also recognise that they have an active part in raising standards. They monitor the work of staff through visits, observations, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' work. Subject leaders take a turn at presenting their subject to the governing body, when governors have the opportunity to pose challenging questions.
 - With the support of the local authority, governors set challenging targets for the headteacher and the school. They support the headteacher to eradicate underperformance and have attended relevant training to do so. Training as governors is high on their agenda. One governor monitors all training and identifies training needs. Governors have their own action plan and support the school development plan by taking a strand each to monitor and report back to the governing body on progress made.
 - Governors take an active part in parent evenings and engaged parents in a questionnaire about the school. The feedback was very positive, showing that most parents are embracing the changes that have been made since the arrival of the new headteacher.
 - Governors ensure that health, safety and safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and the Chair of the Governing Body inspects the school site regularly. Funding is continually monitored as a standing item on the agenda for governing body meeting to ensure that the pupil premium, sports funding and other money is spent appropriately.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground and around the school. They enter and leave the school hall quietly for assembly and are rewarded with Pot of Gold certificates because they have reached the end of the rainbow (a ladder of steps to good behaviour). The school's golden rules underpin the behaviour policy. They are displayed in every classroom and understood by even the youngest of pupils.
- Relationships with each other and with adults are good. Pupils care about each other and support each other well. For example, the older pupils run a lunchtime club for younger pupils. They play board games and encourage reading. The older pupils take their responsibilities seriously, especially the school councillors, who meet regularly.
- Pupils enjoy school. As one pupil explained, 'We get lots of opportunities to make decisions for ourselves in this school now'.
- A group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils went to Hertford Castle to see the Silent Ceremony for the new mayor to take up her office. The school was complimented on how quiet the pupils sat through this ancient ceremony, which takes place in total silence. Pupils also take part in services at the local church, and

members of the congregation comment on their good behaviour and attentiveness.

- Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They take pride in their school and they are highly respectful toward adults. They are cooperative and eager to learn in the classrooms. They listen attentively to adults and to each other when discussing work.
- Pupils enjoy marking each other's work. Their work is well presented and their handwriting is well developed. They respond to teachers' comments sensibly.
- A recent governing body survey of parental views, and the online Parent View questionnaire, shows that the very large majority of parents are happy with the behaviour in school and feel their children are kept safe.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Appropriate procedures ensure that new staff are vetted for suitability and all visitors are checked on entry to the school. All outings are assessed for risk to pupils and all volunteer helpers are checked for suitability to accompany pupils.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that the school takes it very seriously and deals with it very quickly if it occurs. They know what bullying is. Some pupils from Years 5 and 6 were chosen to take part in an anti-bullying film for National Anti-bullying Week. The focus was to promote equal opportunity and respect differences. They attended the 'red carpet' premier showing of the film in a London cinema.
- A very small minority of pupils have difficulty controlling their anger. These pupils visit the nurture room to calm down and they benefit from adults who have been highly trained in behaviour management. They are quickly reintegrated into their classrooms. This is highly successful and has attracted extra funding from the local authority to help promote its success to other schools.
- Pupils fully understand the need for fire drills and know how to evacuate the building if the fire bell goes. They know how to stay safe when using computers and mobile telephones.
- Attendance has increased and is now average. This is due to the work that teachers and school staff have put in to explaining why it is important to be in school and the headteacher's rewards for 100% attendance.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the previous inspection, teaching has improved throughout the school, including in the early years. Senior leaders and the local authority have successfully supported teachers to understand what good teaching looks like and how to improve their practice.
- Teachers' marking is consistently effective throughout the school because it shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils respond to advice and teachers ensure that pupils fully understand how to move forward. Teachers have focused on handwriting and presentation, and evidence in books show that this has been a successful initiative.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons. They understand the need to question pupils to enable them to think for themselves rather than just answering for them. For example, in a Year 1 guided reading session, pupils were encouraged to read the glossary to find out the meaning of words rather than be told the meaning.
- Underachievement is quickly identified at pupil progress meetings and pupils are given support to prevent them falling behind their classmates. Pupils talk readily about their targets and know how to get to the next level of attainment because, as pupils pointed out, 'They are clearly printed at the front of our books to remind us.'

- Teachers spend time each week at staff meetings looking at pupils' work to ensure that their assessments are accurate. This has helped to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and has resulted in teachers planning more challenging work to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment. However, occasionally in lessons, more-able pupils are given work that is too easy for them.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment in the 2014 Key Stage 1 end-of-year tests was average. This represented a small rise in relation to the previous year. Inspection evidence and pupils' books suggest the improvement will continue.
- The 2014 Key Stage 2 end-of-year test results were in line with the national average. An above-average proportion of pupils attained the higher level in mathematics, but not enough pupils reached the higher levels of attainment in reading and writing. This year group entered Year 6 significantly below levels expected for their age in all subjects and made good progress to reach average levels by the end of the year. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to do better than pupils in previous years.
- Pupils have joined Key Stage 2 with levels much lower than pupils nationally for several years. This legacy of underachievement has been addressed. Pupils' books and other inspection evidence show that there has been a marked improvement across key stages from low starting points in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of early years.
- Pupil-premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. One-to-one teaching and teaching in small groups have supported these pupils well, and they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in both key stages. The gap between these pupils and pupils nationally has closed in Key Stage 1, and it has closed in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 were around six months behind pupils nationally in writing. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 last year was above that of their classmates in reading and mathematics, but was a term behind them in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from the use of the nurture room with its well-trained staff. They also benefit from one-to-one teaching and some work within the classroom in small groups. Pupils' individual learning needs are identified promptly and appropriate support is given to help them keep up with their classmates. These pupils make better progress than their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils make similar progress to their classmates but not enough reach the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading and writing.
- Key Stage 2 pupils did not benefit from the systematic approach to teaching phonics that is now in place in Key Stage 1. This means that some of the older less-able readers lack the tools to help them unpick difficult words or spellings.
- Pupils read well now from books at appropriate levels; however, they do not read widely. In order to address this, the school is in the process of purchasing a wide range of books to motivate and engage pupils. Members of the local community volunteer to listen to pupils read to provide further stimulus to read more frequently. Key Stage 1 pupils use their recently acquired phonics skills by breaking words down and building them up to help them read difficult words. However, they do not always understand what they have read.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in the phonics screening in Year 1 has been well below the national average. However, in 2014, results were better; nearly doubling the previous year's results, although they were still below the national average. This year, results are on track to be in line with or above national expectations because the school has adopted a more systematic approach to the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1.

The early years provision is good

- Children in the early years start in the Nursery with gaps in their development in all areas of learning, especially in personal, social emotional development, communication, literacy and mathematics skills. Their starting points are well below what is typical for their age.
- School data show that the number reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has risen. However, it is still below the national average. Children's skills remain weaker in literacy and mathematics when they join Key Stage 1. Although they have made good progress from their starting points, they have not made enough progress to ensure they are completely ready for the next stage of school life.
- The early years leader is relatively new and has implemented advice received from the local authority adviser for early years. This has worked well and teaching is good. Activities provide experiences to help children make progress toward the early learning goals. This is because the teachers and adults have a good understanding of the areas of learning and how children learn.
- Adults model vocabulary and good sentence formation. They ask questions continually throughout the sessions and encourage children to reply in sentences. They also encourage children to talk to a partner to reinforce learning and develop speaking and listening skills.
- Behaviour is managed well. Positive behaviour is encouraged and a reward system reinforces good behaviour, in line with the school's behaviour policy. Children respond to adult's requests when required. Children are happy and growing in confidence in this secure, safe environment. All staff are trained in first aid some have specific training in paediatric first aid.
- Parents are welcomed into the school and feel happy about their child's welfare and progress. External agencies, for example the speech therapist, make a strong contribution to helping children receive the early support they need.
- The outside area is secure and offers many opportunities for children to develop. However, some of the activities are not made interesting and exciting enough for the children to stimulate their imagination or to promote early writing skills.

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	117397
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	462086

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Heath and Laura Ramsey
Headteacher	Lyn Stark
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2013
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