

Long Melford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cordell Road, Long Melford, Sudbury, CO10 9ED

Inspection dates 2–3 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The checks that leaders and governors make on teaching are not effective. As a consequence, weaknesses have not been addressed and achievement is not as good as it should be.
- Leaders at all levels do not make good use of assessment. They are not, therefore, effective in challenging pupils and moving them on to the next steps in their learning.
- The school's plans for improvement are not focused tightly enough on the key issues.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is not good enough because teaching requires improvement. In contrast to the teaching of reading where improvements have been made.
- Teaching requires improvement. Too often pupils are not challenged and their errors remain uncorrected.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. Their conduct in and around school is good. However, pupils do not take enough pride in their work and their handwriting and presentation are poor.
- Teachers do not have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, too few of the most-able pupils and those who are disadvantaged achieve well.
- Pupils say that their work is sometimes too easy and they do not try hard enough to achieve the best they can.
- The early years provision requires improvement. Not enough children have achieved the level of development that is expected nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe and secure are good.
- The school's provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons involving all classes. Five observations were undertaken jointly with the interim headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, the local authority, senior and middle leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including: pupils' exercise books; achievement and progress information; documents relating to safeguarding; and school policies and procedures. The team listened to pupils read and talk about their work. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's latest self-evaluation statement, external reports on the school and the school's action plans.
- The inspection team noted the 40 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke to parents in informal meetings and received written correspondence from a number of other parents.
- The inspection team took account of the 30 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Tomkow

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Long Melford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is of average size and has a Nursery.
- Since the last inspection there have been a number of leadership and staff changes. An interim headteacher (referred to as the headteacher throughout this report) has been in post since March 2015.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Children in the Nursery class attend in the mornings only. Children in the Reception class attend full time. The current leader of the early years has been in post for half a term and teaches the Reception class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school does not meet 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.
- Since the last inspection, the school has expanded its age range, adding a Year 5 and Year 6 class.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management at all levels, including governance of the school, by:
 - ensuring that leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development
 - making use of information from assessments to check regularly on the progress of pupils
 - ensuring that the plans for improvement are more tightly focused on the key issues that need to be addressed
 - developing the role of middle leaders so that they play a key part in the improvement of the school
 - ensuring that governors challenge the leadership of the school from an independent view of the school's performance and are not overly reliant on the headteacher.
- Improve pupils' achievement and behaviour by improving the quality of teaching across the school so that it is at least good by:
 - ensuring that the mathematics curriculum is well planned and taught effectively throughout the school
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils, particularly those that are disadvantaged and the most able, can achieve in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils take greater pride in their work
 - giving pupils better guidance in lessons and in their books as to how they can improve their work.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- 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 management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- The checks that school leaders make on the quality of teaching and learning are inadequate. Senior leaders do not regularly observe teaching or examine the work of pupils. As a consequence, senior leaders do not have an accurate view of the quality of teaching, or pupils' achievement across the school. A culture of good teaching and behaviour for learning is not evident although staff and pupils are very supportive of the changes that are beginning to be implemented.
- School leaders do not use assessment effectively to analyse pupils' progress and attainment. As a result, they do not know whether or not pupils are making good progress. Recent improvements to assessment processes are yet to have an impact.
- The school's systems for appraising the work of teachers are not regular, rigorous or robust. Senior leaders do not know the targets that have been set for teachers this year or how these would make a difference to whole-school improvement.
- Many subject leaders are new in post. Although they are keen to develop their understanding and play a more active part in the school's improvement, they are not yet clear about what their roles involve. As a result, the quality of work in different subjects varies considerably.
- Appropriate plans are in place to ensure coverage of the new curriculum. Displays around the school and work in pupils' books show that subjects, such as drama and music, have an important place in the curriculum. Pupils also benefit from a variety of clubs which are well attended and valued by the pupils.
- The school's plans for improvement are not focused tightly enough on the key areas that need to improve. Targets are not clear and it is difficult for leaders and governors to measure the impact of the actions taken, for example, whether or not they are improving pupils' achievement.
- The pupil premium funding is not being effectively used to make sure disadvantaged pupils get the extra help they need. Although there are new systems in place to target the support that teachers give pupils, too many vulnerable pupils underachieve.
- The school has used well the additional sports funding to improve the teaching of physical education and provide a wider range of after-school clubs, including football, basketball and hockey. A swimming instructor has also been employed and additional equipment has been purchased.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity, fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination. British values are promoted effectively across different subjects and through school leaders' high expectations of how pupils should behave towards each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted. The good-quality displays in the shared areas show how pupils learn about other cultures and develop an understanding of concepts such as democracy and tolerance.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils effectively meet statutory requirements.
- Following a decline in standards in 2014, the local authority provided extensive support for the school. This was hampered by the need to work with three different leaders over the past year. The impact therefore, has been minimal and it has failed to help the school to maintain its previously good performance.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is ineffective. Governors have relied too heavily on the information given to them by school leaders and have not always checked the accuracy of this information or whether relevant actions have been completed. As a result, governors have not successfully held the school's leaders, over time, to account for the quality of teaching or the standards being achieved at the school.

- Governors are not aware that the school's systems for appraising teachers' work and managing the performance of teachers are not effective.
- Governing body minutes provide little evidence of how governors challenge leaders over time.
- Governors have not ensured that disadvantaged pupils have benefited from the additional funding that the school has received. For example, governors have received information from leaders on the use of the pupil premium and sports premium, but this has not always been accurate.
- Governors know that standards and achievement are not as good as they should be. They are aware of the need to have a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are committed to overseeing the necessary improvements.
- Governors have ensured the school meets all safeguarding and child protection requirements well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school, many do not try as hard as they could and challenge themselves to do their best. Scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that some do not take pride in their work.
- Pupils are respectful to each other and to the adults they work with. They respond well in lessons, working well together and listening carefully to others.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and like to meet up with their friends. In a themed assembly about 'value', pupils showed an awareness that this was more than just about money and identified friendship, pets and love as being of value to them.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare and when they do occur they are dealt with effectively and quickly.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school and this is evident in their confidence when talking to adults about their school and their work.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare at the school and that staff deal with it effectively when it does occur.
- Pupils spoken to during this inspection showed a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They receive regular reminders about how to stay safe when using computers, and understand the dangers of talking to people not known to them. Parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for at the school. The overwhelming majority of the parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are happy at the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers often set work that is insufficiently challenging and does not meet pupils' needs. As a consequence, too few pupils make good progress and achieve what they are capable of.
- Some teachers do not make good use of assessment to plan activities which challenge pupils. They do not have a clear understanding of what individuals or groups of pupils can do and what the next steps in their learning should be.
- Many teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve, including the most able and the disadvantaged. Pupils say their work is sometimes 'too easy'. In some lessons seen during the inspection, teachers did not encourage pupils to challenge themselves. As a result, pupils who were able to try the more demanding tasks often did not do so.

- Many aspects of mathematics, with the exception of number, are not taught well enough across the school. Pupils spend too much time repeating number work that they can already do, rather than using their mathematical skills to investigate and solve problems. They also spend too little time learning other aspects of mathematics, such as geometry and measurement.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) has become more effective and this has led to improving outcomes for pupils. Pupils who read with inspectors used their phonic knowledge well to make sense of what they were reading.
- Some adults use questioning effectively to focus pupils on their learning. A good example of this was seen in a science lesson about reflection. Pupils were constantly encouraged to re-examine which surface would best reflect their face and whether colour or a 'shiny' surface made a difference. However, questioning often does not encourage pupils to develop their responses or think about how they could make their work even better.
- Teachers' marking and feedback vary across year groups and within subjects. Sometimes teachers do not correct pupils' basic errors. Often, feedback does not make clear to students how well they are doing, or what it is they need to do next in order to improve. Teachers often do not challenge students when they produce work that is of poor quality.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils and make a good contribution to teaching and learning. Pupils say they find the additional support given to them by teaching assistants helpful. Some teachers use the skills of individual teaching assistants well to target specific areas that they have identified, for example, phonics.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress across Key Stage 2 has not been good enough, particularly in writing and mathematics. Reading however, is taught well and current pupils are making better progress.

Too few pupils achieve well in mathematics. This is because many of the most-able pupils do not make enough progress across Key Stage 2. Lack of progress was evident in the most-able pupils' work books.

- Achievement in Key Stage 1 requires improvement. It has declined since 2012. Different groups of pupils such as disadvantaged pupils, do not make good enough progress from their starting points.
- There were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to comment, specifically, about their achievement. However, most disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are achieving as well as their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils in the school. This means that most of these pupils do not make enough progress from their various starting points. Recent improvements to the way in which these pupils are supported are beginning to have a positive impact on their progress. This is reflected in the school's current assessment information.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children start at the school with skills and abilities that are generally at least in line with those typical for their age. Inspectors scrutinised the local authority's report on the school's moderated results for 2015 which confirmed the accuracy of assessments. These assessments evidence a marked improvement on 2014. New leaders have accurately highlighted areas that need improvement. As a result they have ensured that teachers take account of children's starting points to plan effectively to move them on swiftly in their learning.
- The quality of teaching currently in the early years requires improvement because teaching is not consistently good across the Foundation Stage. Teachers plan well to cover all areas of learning over the year and a range of activities are carefully selected to match the current theme. Children respond well to

these activities in both the indoor and outdoor areas and some adults focus questions to take children further in their understanding. Children tend to move too quickly between activities and do not always concentrate hard. However, during adult-led sessions, children learn the basic skills they need to be ready to start Year 1, such as letter formation and simple sentence construction.

- Some additional adults support children well with activities. They explain what students need to do very carefully, and ask carefully-selected questions. For example, when playing in the 'police station', children took phone calls from adults who were reporting 'accidents'. The adults constantly asked questions to make the children think about their responses. 'How long will it take for someone to come to me?' was answered by a lengthy and logical sentence: 'We have a lot going on here because there is a fire next door but we will come to you after that.'
- Children speak confidently to each other and adults. For example, when one girl was forming the first letter of her name, another said, 'You need to make the curve at the top of the letter more of a round shape.'
- Children are safe and feel safe and happy in this friendly and well-managed learning environment. As a result, children behave well – and better than in the main school. They follow adults' directions quickly and enthusiastically. There is a 'buzz' of business with children playing and interacting well with each other.

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	124707
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	461649

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	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Duke
Headteacher	Janet Tringham (Interim Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2011
Telephone number	01787 379929
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