

Puller Memorial, Church of England, Voluntary Aided Primary School

High Cross, Ware, SG11 1AZ

Inspection dates 8–9 July 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.

- School leaders and managers, including governors, have established a positive ethos in which pupils feel valued. Their actions have had a direct and positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and in raising achievement of pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because their needs are carefully planned and catered for.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive extra support to help them gain skills in reading, writing and mathematics. They achieve as well as their classmates over time.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given a high priority. As a result, pupils are tolerant and respectful to each other and adults.
- All safeguarding measures are in place and regularly reviewed. Pupils and parents agree that pupils are safe.
- Pupils are proud of their school, behave well and have good relationships with adults and each other. Pupils learn in a calm and purposeful environment.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. Small teaching groups help individual pupils develop their skills effectively and achieve well.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' achievement in writing, and provide many opportunities across the curriculum for its development. As a result, pupils' achievement in writing continues to rise in all key stages.
- Children settle easily and quickly into the good early years provision as teachers provide a well organised and effective school into school life.
- Sports funding is used effectively so pupils experience good quality coaching as part of their weekly lessons. Pupils learn the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in mathematics lessons. Teachers do not always plan activities which challenge their thinking.
- Some pupils do not fully understand how to improve their work in mathematics.
- In early years, children have too few opportunities to excel.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time. This included observing 15 lessons, seven of which were jointly seen with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and looked at their books to take account of the work that has been completed over time and the progress that pupils make.
- During the inspection, the inspector listened to pupils read and talk about their books. The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) was observed.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own work and school development plan. In addition, the school's systems for assessing, tracking and evaluating pupils' progress were examined.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils and arrangements for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were examined, including a scrutiny of the single central register.
- The inspector held informal discussions with parents and took account of the 29 responses from parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).
- 11 responses to the staff questionnaire were analysed.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Puller Memorial, Church of England Primary School is a much smaller than average sized primary school.
- All pupils currently attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Children in the Nursery attend part-time. Children in Reception attend full-time.
- More pupils start or leave the school during the school year than in most primary schools.
- The school meets the government's 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 achievement of pupils by:
 - ensuring that adults identify and provide opportunities for children in the early years to achieve the highest academic standards of which they are capable
 - ensuring activities stretch and challenge pupils' mathematical reasoning and understanding of number, particularly that of the most-able
 - providing precise feedback to pupils in mathematics so that they learn how to improve their work and correct mistakes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, school leaders, including governors have tackled the areas for improvement with energy and determination. Leaders promote equality of opportunity so that pupils have the chance to achieve, whatever their background or starting point. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The headteacher has created a purposeful environment where pupils can thrive and learn well. She ensures that there is a constant focus on improving the quality of teaching and providing opportunities so that every pupil can succeed.
- Leaders track the progress of every pupil regularly, ensuring that targeted support is given to any pupils who may be in danger of falling behind. Leaders organise this support creatively and flexibly to maximise the use of resources in this small school. This has significant impact on pupil progress. For example, phonics is taught in small ability groups across the school with all adults involved. This approach has resulted in an increase in outcomes for pupils in reading.
- The skilful use of the additional pupil premium funding ensures effective support and assistance for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils make good progress in their learning. Disadvantaged pupils make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than those of their age nationally.
- School leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum which interests the pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The core curriculum is enhanced by visits and trips such as the younger pupils' visit to a dinosaur park in Knebworth House as part of their topic work. The school ensures that every pupil attends school trips, and this develops pupils' experience and enthusiasm for learning. As a result, pupils produce work showing enhanced quality.
- Careful planning of assemblies creates many opportunities for pupils to develop a good understanding of British values through work on topics such as democracy and tolerance, and to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. In one successful assembly led by the older pupils, they were helping younger pupils understand tolerance and how to accept individual differences in others. This illustrates the positive way that the school tackles discrimination and also promotes good relationships.
- Primary sports funding is used and monitored very effectively. Staff receive additional training and pupils experience high quality lessons that increase their enjoyment and skills in many sporting activities.
- Middle leaders are effective and passionate about their areas of responsibility. They understand their roles and responsibilities, and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning through regular book monitoring. They offer training and support to staff on a regular basis to ensure consistency.
- Leaders hold all staff to account for the progress of pupils through a systematic approach to performance management and monitoring the quality of teaching. Targets are robust with training opportunities given to all staff to develop them further.
- The leader for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs takes prompt and effective action to support individual needs from the start of his/her education at school. As a result, all adults have high expectations for these pupils who often make exceptional progress in their learning.
- School leaders have ensured that the school is a safe and secure place for pupils and staff. Full safeguarding arrangements are in place with the necessary checks carried out when recruiting staff. Staff are regularly trained. Risk assessments are in place where necessary. Staff use the school's attendance procedures well and consequently for most pupils attendance is good.
- The school commissions support from the local authority when required. School leaders take advantage of moderating assessments between schools. The local authority recognises the strengths of the school and the efforts taken by leaders, staff and governors since the last inspection and provides suitable support when needed.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are ambitious and well informed about the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. They visit regularly to evaluate the quality of the information they receive and are accurate in their evaluation of the school's performance.
- Since the last inspection, governors have begun to ask more challenging and precise questions. As a result, they are now more robust in holding the headteacher to account for the progress of pupils at the school.
- Governors set ambitious targets for the headteacher which are closely linked to developing the quality of teaching in the school. Governors evaluate teachers' performance carefully and manage pay decisions well. They know what is done to reward good teaching and how any underperformance is monitored.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school because of the consistent and positive expectations from adults. They have good relationships with adults. As a result, they show respect and listen well in class.
- Pupils are proud of their school, and welcome new pupils joining them. They are quick to make friends and are happy. One pupil said 'our school is so good that others want to join us, and that is so nice'.
- Older pupils relish the responsibility they are given in school. Through the use of buddy groups, older pupils have the opportunity to take assemblies where they help younger pupils learn about values such as tolerance. As a result, pupils are friendly and look after each other well.
- For the vast majority of pupils, attendance at school is good. School leaders take swift and appropriate action to improve the attendance of the very small minority who do not attend as often as they should.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and value their place within the local community. Recently, they represented the school during a community event around Remembrance Day. Pupils spoke maturely about why and how they made their own ceramic poppies to sell, and the impact of reading historical letters written by soldiers from the time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel safe, and parents agree. They have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, especially when using the internet. Older pupils are clear on how to keep safe online. In school, they are confident that should bullying ever occur, it would be dealt with quickly and well by the adults.
- Staff receive regular and effective training so that all statutory safeguarding procedures and processes are fully in place and robust.
- Risk assessments are robust, and staff consider the needs of pupils well before going on visits. Most staff are fully trained in relevant first aid procedures so that the needs of pupils can be met.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching continues to improve since the last inspection. Teachers generally have high and appropriate expectations of what individual pupils can achieve. Teachers explain the learning clearly and effectively, and consequently most pupils are able to present their work well and make good progress.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. Pupils are taught in small groups across the school irrespective of their age. All adults teach these small groups and help pupils achieve successful outcomes. This is because adults have received quality training and development. As a result, pupil achievement in reading is above

the national average by the end of Key Stage 2.

- Since the last inspection, the teaching of writing has improved and is now good. Pupils have many opportunities to write at length across the curriculum as well as in English. This helps them develop their skills and make good progress. Teachers use their own subject knowledge precisely so that pupils' knowledge and understanding of grammar and punctuation is improving.
- Teachers and support staff use questioning skills to good effect. In one lesson, the older pupils were studying Macbeth. Due to the teacher's specific and careful questioning the pupils were able to understand the challenges of the text and contribute well to the lesson.
- The teaching of physical education is a strength. Pupils receive good quality instruction from their coach so they can be successful in a wide range of activities. In one lesson, the coach ensured that the pupils took responsibility for the leadership of their athletic games. This resulted in the pupils challenging themselves to improve further and enjoying the teamwork opportunities.
- Although the teachers have high expectations of the pupils, this is not always the case for the most-able, particularly in mathematics. Activities for these pupils do not always move them on further; they produce more work of the same standard rather than deepening their understanding through different activities.
- Marking and feedback has improved in English and other subjects such as religious education. But for the most-able pupils there are not enough specific comments on how to improve their work or challenge them further in mathematics. This results in pupils not being able to develop their thinking and reasoning skills to an even more sophisticated level.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Individual starting points vary widely from year to year. On entry children have skills below or similar to those typical of their age. They make good progress regardless of the starting point, especially in reading and writing.
- When they move into Year 1, pupils rapidly build on their knowledge of phonics already established in Reception. Pupils sound and blend unfamiliar words quickly and build words using phonics to help them spell new words in their writing. Consequently, when their phonic knowledge is checked in Year 1, more are successful. In 2015, achievement is expected to be in line with national average, despite pupils' low starting points.
- With small numbers of pupils in each group, comparisons with national data on pupils' attainment are not always reliable and can fluctuate widely from year to year depending on the academic profile of each year group. Nonetheless, pupils' attainment over time continues to rise. In 2014, all Year 6 pupils reached the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and over half of the year group exceeded expectations to reach Level 5 in the national tests in reading and writing. Indications from the work produced by current Year 6 pupils suggest that this is set to continue again this year, particularly at the higher levels.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils to compare their performance with that of others without potentially identifying them. Across the school disadvantaged pupils make good or often better progress from their individual starting points. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils that make even better than expected progress is higher than average in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the gap between these pupils and their classmates closed in 2014.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress because the school meets their needs well. As a result, they achieve the expected levels by the time they reach the end of their primary school education and are well prepared for the next stage.
- The most-able pupils enjoy the challenge they receive and by the end of Key Stage 2 a larger proportion

achieve higher levels than is the case nationally, in reading and writing. However, this is not always the case in mathematics, where these pupils do not consistently experience enough variety to challenge their thinking.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in both the Nursery and Reception years make good progress in their learning, from their individual starting points. This is because they experience a variety of activities in a safe and caring environment as a result of mostly good teaching.
- There is effective leadership and support provided in the early years. Leaders work well with parents to welcome new children into the school. As a result, children in early years settle easily, behave well and quickly become confident learners. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children share, listen to each other and develop their friendships well. This is because adults ensure the class is calm and safe so that children can develop their confidence and skills. For example, in one lesson a child was choosing the resources she required to decorate a 'dinosaur foot'. She used scissors well, following the template carefully, and explaining her reasoning using appropriate vocabulary. After persevering, she was pleased with the outcome.
- Adults use the children's learning journeys effectively to show the range of work across all the areas of the curriculum. There is much evidence to show that children are making rapid progress in their writing skills and making at least good progress from their individual starting points in all other aspects.
- At times, even more could be expected of the children in the early years, so that children can exceed expectations and make even more rapid progress in their academic skills at this age.

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	117453
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	465374

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Thomas Metz
Headteacher	Tracy Keddie
Date of previous school inspection	04 March 2014
Telephone number	01920 463178
Fax number	N/A
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