

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Trinity Road, Gravesend, Kent DA12 1LU

Inspection dates	24–25 February 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders’ evaluations of the school’s work are overgenerous. Improvements since the previous inspection have lacked urgency and, until recently, have been too slow.
- The quality of teaching and assessment across the school is mixed. As a result, pupils make uneven progress and do not achieve their full potential by the end of Year 6, particularly in reading outcomes.
- Teaching does not ensure that the most-able pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable. Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of pupils’ learning and outcomes.
- Learning does not build well enough as pupils move up through the year groups, particularly in reading.
- Not all subject leaders have a sufficiently strong impact on the quality of teaching and learning in their subject area of responsibility.
- Differences in the quality of teaching between the early years classes mean that some children make faster progress than others.
- Some adults in early years do not make good use of children’s interests to engage them in learning.
- Governors have not held leaders to account for pupils’ achievement. Until very recently, they have not had a sufficiently accurate view of the school’s work.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent developments in leadership have increased the pace of improvement.
- There is more effective teaching in the school than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils’ outcomes in writing have improved since the previous inspection.
- Children establish strong relationships with adults when they join Nursery, so that they settle quickly and make rapid progress.
- Pupils’ good behaviour has been sustained since the previous inspection. Pupils are interested in learning and attend school regularly. They feel safe and behave responsibly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' outcomes are good or better, particularly in reading, by ensuring that:
 - learning progressively builds as pupils move up through the year groups
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' learning, including of the most-able pupils
 - subject leaders' roles in checking teaching, learning and assessment become more consistently established and effective.
- Improve leaders' and governors' evaluation of the school's work so that they have a more accurate view of what needs to be done to improve teaching, learning and assessment.
- Secure high-quality teaching in all early years classes, making sure that adults in early years make sufficiently good use of children's interests to engage them in learning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to show how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Until recently, leaders' evaluations of the school's work have been overgenerous. As a result, senior leaders' and governors' actions to lift pupils' achievement have lacked the rigour and urgency needed to secure sustained improvement in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Learning in some subjects does not build strongly enough to ensure pupils of all abilities achieve their full potential. This hampers pupils' progress and development, particularly in reading.
- Leaders have increased the pace of improvement during the past year. They have established more rigorous checks on the quality of teaching; provided good-quality training to help teachers to improve their practice and eradicated an element of the weakest teaching. As a result, there is more teaching in the school which is consistently effective than at the time of the previous inspection. This has quickened pupils' progress, particularly in writing, so that pupils are better prepared for the next stage of their learning at the end of Year 6.
- Senior leaders have strengthened leadership considerably over the past year. For example, phase leaders have an accurate overview of teaching and learning within and across the key stages. They play a confident and increasingly effective part in improving the quality of teaching. Phase leaders provide good-quality guidance and support for colleagues. However, the influence of subject leaders is more mixed. Some subject leaders' responsibilities are better developed than others. While some contribute very well to improvements, others are unclear about the quality of teaching and learning in their subject responsibility and about the part they play in securing developments.
- Senior leaders' expectations of teachers are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection. They have tightened up procedures for managing staff performance. For example, they have linked individual teachers' targets with pupils' outcomes so that teachers are more accountable. This has contributed well to improvements in teaching, helping to clarify teachers' responsibilities for pupils' achievement, including for those who are disadvantaged.
- The deputy headteacher has ensured that the pace of development has been sustained during the headteacher's recent absence. He has maintained a positive and confident atmosphere in the school and has the full confidence of his colleagues. His leadership skills have developed rapidly in the past term under the consultant headteacher's highly effective guidance.
- Most members of staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire feel that the school is a lot better than at the time of the previous inspection. All say they have a clear understanding of the goals the school aims to achieve. Leaders have maintained pupils' good behaviour since the previous inspection.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Over the past year, leaders have made substantial changes to the way they use pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils' learning. For example, the deputy headteacher provides a strong steer for his colleagues, making sure that teachers give disadvantaged pupils' learning a high priority. He works alongside teachers and teaching assistants to check pupils' progress frequently, quickly making changes to the extra help provided for pupils if it is not making sufficient difference to their learning. Improvements have ensured that disadvantaged pupils make at least the same progress as their classmates and, in some cases, better progress.
- Leaders have introduced a curriculum plan to ensure pupils learn an appropriately broad range of subjects. However, they know that more needs to be done to make sure that learning builds more progressively as pupils move up through the year groups. Leaders make sure that learning is supplemented with a good range of visits, special events and a wide range of clubs which contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Leaders use primary physical education and sports funds appropriately. Specialist coaches work with teachers to increase subject knowledge and to provide pupils with a wide range of activities. As a result, teachers confidently teach physical education lessons, successfully encouraging pupils to be physically active. Training for lunchtime supervisors has strengthened their role in supporting pupils' participation in physical activity during the lunch break. A range of special events inspire pupils to try out and participate in activities such as skipping and cheerleading.
- Teaching contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about a number of world religions and about differing beliefs. They listen carefully and respectfully during worship times, happily joining in with prayers and songs.

- Pupils regularly discuss the importance of British values. For example, discussions about the rule of law are linked to consideration of classroom rules, developing pupils' awareness of how their actions affect others. Activities such as these ensure pupils are well prepared with some of the personal skills which will support them in their future lives in modern Britain.
- While a small minority of parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire expressed concerns about the school's leadership, most of those who spoke with inspectors were positive about the school's work. They recognise improvements since the previous inspection, with more opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning, commenting on the value of events such as 'open door Thursdays', when they can see their children's work.
- The local authority has been more involved with the school since the publication of the 2015 national test and assessment results. Local authority personnel have held leaders and governors effectively to account for the school's work and for pupils' achievement. Improvements in leadership ensure the school now has the capacity to secure the further improvements necessary.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are enthusiastic and increasingly knowledgeable about the school's work. However, until recently, they have had an overgenerous view of the school's work and have not held leaders sufficiently to account for pupils' achievement.
 - More frequent meetings to check pupils' progress are giving governors clearer information about the quality of teaching and learning. Governors supplement this information with visits to classrooms and discussions with leaders. As a result, governors are more visible in the school and better informed about its work. However, while governors are undoubtedly clearer about their roles, they are not yet holding leaders fully to account. Some governors play a more effective role in the school's improvement than others.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school is tidy and well maintained. Coded entry, well-established checks and attentive office staff ensure visitors to the school are clearly identified and supervised appropriately. Securely fenced outdoor areas mean pupils feel comfortable, well cared for and safe. Leaders make sure staff and governors are well qualified, so they know what to do if they have a concern. They engage well with parents and agencies, acting on specialist advice where needed to ensure pupils are safe and well supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Variations in the quality of teaching between classes mean that pupils make uneven progress. Teaching does not build well enough to secure good outcomes in all subjects at the end of Year 6, particularly in reading. Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to guide teaching and to ensure pupils of all abilities make rapid progress, particularly the most able.
- The role played by teaching assistants varies in quality. Some provide good support for pupils, including for those with disability or special educational needs. They are knowledgeable about individual pupils' needs, using questioning well to probe and develop pupils' understanding. However, others play a more limited part in supporting pupils' learning.
- There is more consistently effective teaching in the school than at the time of the previous inspection. For example, in a number of classes across the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning. They set stimulating and challenging work for pupils of all abilities, including the most able. Pupils make better progress where this is the case because teaching extends and deepens their learning very well.
- The teaching of writing has improved. Well-established phonics teaching ensures pupils have a good grounding in the basic skills needed to write successfully. (Phonics refers to letters and the sounds that they make.) Teachers provide a wide range of engaging and purposeful writing activities across different subjects so that pupils learn how to write competently and confidently.
- Confident mathematics teaching in most classes equips pupils with secure mathematical knowledge and skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language. For example, they introduce pupils to new vocabulary prior to working on new topics in the classroom. This helps pupils to be better prepared for learning and more confident when learning with their classmates.

- Teachers make sure that classrooms are attractive, positive and purposeful environments for learning. They provide a wide range of good-quality books for pupils to enjoy reading in the well-stocked book corners.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are friendly and polite. They are proud of their school and dress smartly in their school uniform. Pupils take care with their work, which is usually neat and well presented.
- Strong relationships ensure pupils feel secure and confident. Pupils get on well together. They cooperate with each other successfully in lessons and enjoy spending time with their friends during playtimes. They happily welcome visitors and talk enthusiastically about their school.
- Pupils know why school is important and attend regularly. Attendance is consistently above the national average. The proportions of pupils persistently absent from school are much lower than the national average.
- Pupils know what to do if they are worried about something they have seen or heard. Teachers routinely remind pupils about how to stay safe, including when using the internet. Pupils feel well supported by adults in school and say that teachers reassure them if they are unhappy.
- Older pupils carry out their responsibilities maturely. For example, they work together constructively to prepare the hall for worship times.
- The breakfast club provides a bright, welcoming and happy start to the school day for those pupils who attend.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils work hard and behave very well. Pupils say that behaviour is mostly good and that adults quickly deal with any misbehaviour; a view supported by school records over time. Pupils want to do their best and are keen to please their teachers.
- Pupils know some of the different forms bullying can take and know what to do if they or their friends are concerned. School records show that bullying is rare and that leaders take appropriate steps when necessary.
- Most pupils behave well during playtimes. Occasional falling out among pupils is promptly addressed by adults and pupils quickly make up.
- Pupils behave sensibly and safely during physical education lessons. They listen carefully to teachers' instructions, responding quickly to their requests.
- Most parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that pupils are well behaved and safe.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because sometimes a few pupils lose focus during lessons, particularly when the work set for them is too easy or too difficult.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Pupils make uneven progress as they move up through the year groups. Variations in the quality of teaching mean that pupils make slower progress in some classes. Too few pupils make the progress they should.
- Pupils make slower progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. Pupils do not build reading skills securely enough as they move up through the year groups. As a result, they do not achieve their full potential, including the most able. In 2015, pupils' attainment in reading was below average at both key stages. The proportions attaining the higher levels in reading in 2015 were much lower than the national average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6.
- Progress made by the most-able pupils varies between year groups, according to the quality of teaching. While they make good progress in some classes, they make slower progress in others. The proportions of pupils achieving the higher standards (level 3) at the end of Year 2 have been much lower than the

national average in all subjects for several years. However, stronger teaching in the upper school quickens pupils' progress here, so that they make up for some lost ground by the end of Year 6. In 2015, this ensured that average proportions achieved the higher levels in mathematics at the end of Year 6 and above-average proportions in writing.

- Pupils' learning has improved in all classes in the past year, and substantially so in some classes during the last term, as better teaching takes effect. Pupils make faster progress in writing than at the time of the previous inspection, producing work of increasingly good quality. Pupils develop an even, legible handwriting style which enables them to write more quickly and fluently. They learn how to write competently in different subjects and for a wide range of purposes. This ensures they are more effectively prepared for the next stage in their learning by the end of Year 6. While attainment at the end of Year 2 was below average in 2015, attainment at the end of Year 6 improved to above the national average.
- The teaching of phonics has improved, so that younger pupils develop secure strategies for reading. The results of the Year 1 phonics check have steadily increased since the previous inspection and were in line with the national average in 2015.
- The work in pupils' books indicates better progress in mathematics since the previous inspection, particularly during Key Stage 1. Stronger mathematical knowledge and skills by the end of Year 2 means pupils are better equipped with some of the key skills needed to learn successfully in Key Stage 2. While attainment at the end of Year 2 was below average in mathematics in 2015, it was higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2015 was in line with the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils make at least the same progress as their classmates and, in some cases, better progress. However, as with other groups, their progress differs between classes and year groups according to the quality of teaching. While the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers nationally increased at the end of Key Stage 2 in all subjects in 2015, these gaps are now shrinking, as teaching continues to improve.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do at least as well as other pupils. Children in early years quickly learn the key vocabulary they need to participate fully in school life. Meanwhile, pupils in other year groups learn new words and phrases before starting topics of work, so that they are well prepared for learning with their classmates in classroom lessons.
- Pupils with disability and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Some with significant additional needs make rapid progress in developing the personal skills and attitudes needed to achieve well.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Variations in the quality of teaching lead to differences in children's progress during early years. While most children make rapid progress in Nursery, some make slower progress in Reception. As in the other key stages, learning does not always build well enough as children move up through the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Adults do not make sufficiently good use of children's interests to engage them in learning. For example, while adults provide some interesting activities and resources for writing and mark-making, some adults miss opportunities to encourage more children to participate. This means that some children benefit more than others.
- Leaders have secured some improvements in the quality of teaching during the past year, so that, while variations remain, there are fewer than at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers regularly discuss their practice with leaders and with each other, acting on advice and trying out ideas. They are more knowledgeable about how they can support children's individual needs. They plan activities increasingly well to move children's learning forward, although this remains a focus for development. Teachers make sure that the classrooms are stimulating, welcoming and safe places for children to play and learn.
- Better teaching lifted the proportion of children achieving a good level of development substantially in 2015 to levels above the national average. The small number of disadvantaged children make similar progress to their classmates. Rising achievement at the end of Reception ensures children are increasingly well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Strong relationships help children to settle quickly and feel secure. Adults confidently assess children's

needs when they join the school, working closely with parents so that they quickly get to know the children.

- Children move sensibly and confidently between activities in the well-organised classrooms. Most behave well. They get on companionably with each other, happily chatting about activities and sharing toys and equipment. Children want to please their teachers and listen carefully to adults.
- Adults help children to develop good social skills and manners. For example, in Nursery, adults make sure snack times are pleasant and sociable times for children to relax and get to know each other.
- Leaders ensure areas are secure, including the outdoor areas, so that children are safe. Adults are well qualified in safeguarding and first aid procedures. Adults routinely remind children about how they can help to keep themselves safe by, for example, using soap to wash their hands before snack time.
- Leaders make sure that children who speak English as an additional language are well supported. Bilingual teachers and teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to children's well-being when they start school. Well-established routines and clear expectations ensure they feel comfortable and grow rapidly in confidence.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the priorities for developments in teaching and learning. She has successfully improved the quality of teaching in early years over the past year, providing good-quality support and guidance for colleagues. She is fully aware of further improvements needed and works closely with the local authority to provide training to strengthen teaching.

School details

Unique reference number	118848
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10002362

This inspection 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	482
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Blakemore
Headteacher	Karen O'Brien
Telephone number	01474 534746
Website	www.holytrinity-gravesend.kent.sch.uk
Email address	admin@holytrinity-gravesend.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils with disability and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides part-time early years provision in the Nursery class and full-time early years provision in two Reception classes.
- There is a breakfast club on-site, which is run and managed by the school and was included in this inspection.
- The deputy headteacher is currently acting headteacher. The headteacher of The Brent Primary School in Dartford is providing support in the role of consultant headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in 24 lessons or part lessons, including four observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspection team held discussions with the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils. A meeting also took place with the Chair of Governors and seven other governors.
- The inspection team took account of 55 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 32 staff questionnaires. In addition, they considered the views expressed by parents who spoke with them informally at the start of the school day.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies.
- The inspection team looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as looking at pupils' work in lessons. They also listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading.

Inspection team

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Krista Dawkins	Ofsted Inspector

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