

# Rivenhall Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Rivenhall, Witham, Essex CM8 3PQ

## Inspection dates

19–20 April 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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The pace of improvement since the previous inspection has, until recently, been too slow. Pupils' attainment has not improved sufficiently. Consequently, there continue to be pockets of underachievement across the school.
- Middle leaders have too little effect on improving provision. They lack the skills needed to support the headteacher in identifying weaknesses and improving the quality of teaching.
- The school's information on pupils' progress gives a misleading picture of how well they are doing and does not help the headteacher hold teachers to account.
- Written improvement planning does not set high enough targets for pupils' attainment.
- Teaching is not consistently good. As a result, pupils make uneven progress and do not attain as highly as they should, given their starting points.
- Teachers in key stages 1 and 2 expect too little of pupils. They accept work that is not as good as it should be. They sometimes plan work that is too hard or too easy for pupils.
- Pupils repeat errors in their work because they are not always given the feedback needed to help them improve.
- Pupils do not take enough care with their work to ensure that it is neat and well-presented.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and governors have taken swift action to begin remedying weaknesses. Good improvements are already being seen in many aspects of the school's work, especially for children in the early years.
- Children make good progress in early years provision. They are taught well and enjoy their work.
- Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They keenly take responsibility and develop important values such as tolerance, respect and kindness.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and of recent improvements under the new headteacher.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - helping middle leaders develop the skills needed to play a larger part in supporting the headteacher to improve outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching
  - ensuring that information on pupils' learning gives a clearer and more accurate picture of their progress over time
  - ensuring that improvement planning sets higher attainment targets for the school to aim to achieve.
- Improve teaching in key stages 1 and 2 so that pupils make good progress from their starting points by:
  - ensuring that work is not too hard or too easy for pupils
  - ensuring that teachers always expect enough of their pupils and do not accept work that is not good enough
  - making better use of feedback to pupils to eliminate errors and to help them understand how to improve
  - giving teachers more opportunity to share good practice in school and to see it in other schools.
- Improve the presentation of work by ensuring that pupils understand the importance of always doing their best.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not secured sufficient school improvement since the previous inspection. The pace of change has not been fast enough. It has been adversely affected by staffing turnover and changes in leadership. Until recently, too little had been done to deal with the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Consequently, there remain pockets of underachievement, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- Middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects, do not play a big enough part in securing improvement. They have an overgenerous view of school effectiveness. Although they are now involved in checking provision for themselves, the effect of this has been limited. Not all middle leaders are good role models in their own practice. Together, they lack the skills needed to support the headteacher in securing improvement. Across the school, there are too few opportunities for teachers to share good practice or to see it elsewhere.
- The school has a wealth of information on pupils' progress but it is not helpful in identifying where additional support is needed. The headteacher agrees that it gives a misleading picture of pupils' progress over time, making it difficult to hold teachers to account for the quality of their work.
- The rate at which the school has been improving has picked up considerably since the arrival of the new headteacher. She has shown great rigour in making significant improvements since joining the school less than a year ago. Governors share the new headteacher's ambitions for the school. Together, their planning for improvement is focusing on the key areas necessary to secure good progress for all pupils. However, targets in the school improvement plan for the level of attainment to be reached by pupils are too low.
- The local authority has provided considerable support for the school since September 2015, including setting up an improvement board to support and challenge leaders. This has been an important factor in recent improvements in the quality of teaching, especially for children in the early years provision.
- Pupil premium funding was not previously used well enough to improve the progress of the small number of disadvantaged pupils. The new headteacher immediately reviewed its use. The good effect of this is beginning to be seen in the improved progress of disadvantaged pupils, especially when they are being given additional support outside lessons.
- The curriculum (the topics and subjects taught) meets statutory requirements. It is enriched by a good range of clubs and visits for a school of this size. Pupils are especially positive about their residential visit where they learnt new skills such as abseiling.
- School leaders successfully support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and their understanding of British values as an integral part of the curriculum. It is particularly evident in the pupils' caring and thoughtful attitude to each other. They show a mature understanding for their age of the importance of rules and why they are sometimes broken. This understanding, together with the culture of respect and tolerance which underpins all the school's work, prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Additional government funding for primary sports is being used well. It has increased the quality of physical education, staff expertise and pupil participation in sport. Pupils have regular access to sports activities. The use of the fund to employ play leaders has helped to improve physical activity at lunchtime.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents. They support it well by raising funds for different projects and by helping their children with work at home. Parents are very positive about the changes that have been made by the new headteacher, typically making comments such as 'The school has improved immensely and I can only see it getting better' and 'The headteacher has already had a good effect on all aspects of school life.'
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance has greatly improved since the start of the academic year, when the new headteacher and the local authority identified significant weaknesses in provision across the school.
  - The governing body responded decisively to criticism of their role. They now provide much greater challenge than in the past. They are able to do this because the headteacher is keeping them well informed but also because they are doing much more to find things out for themselves.
  - Systems for governors to check provision are now good. This means that they have a realistic picture of the current position. They know what needs to be done to improve teaching further and are providing the headteacher with the support needed to make this happen.

- Governors ensure that the performance management for staff is suitably administered. They update key policies and make sure that they have regular training in important areas such as safeguarding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The new headteacher provided additional safeguarding training for all staff when she took up post to ensure that responsibilities are clearly understood. The school has good procedures to respond to and resolve any concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders work closely with a number of external agencies to make sure that vulnerable pupils get the help they need.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is requires improvement**

- Previous weaknesses in teaching and assessment and a high turnover of teaching staff have detrimentally affected pupils' achievement over time. Although teaching is now improving, it is not yet consistently good.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils and sometimes accept work which is not as good as it could be. Teachers plan work that is sometimes too easy for the most able or too hard for the less able, including those who have special educational needs or a disability. When this happens, pupils lose interest in their work and becoming disengaged.
- Teachers do not always check how well pupils are learning as they work. As a result, teachers do not always reshape activities, where necessary, to provide the right level of challenge for pupils. For example, a group of pupils who were clearly struggling with their work on fractions were not given the support they needed to help them develop their understanding of what they were learning.
- The quality of feedback to pupils has improved in the current year, but remains variable. Good practice is not shared widely. Marking of work does not always pick up on errors, resulting in them sometimes being repeated.
- Although the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good, pupils' books shows that its quality has improved over the last year and particularly in the last term. Some teachers, especially in key stage 2, are becoming more skilled at adapting work so that it is more closely matched to need. However, this is not yet consistently strong in all classes.
- There are strengths to teaching across the school. Teachers get on well with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour. School behaviour policies are applied consistently and praise is used well to motivate pupils to work hard.
- Pupils make slightly better progress in reading than in writing because the teaching of phonics (knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make) is good. Skills and knowledge are introduced systematically. Pupils improve their understanding quickly and are able to reinforce this by reading frequently to adults. All staff, including teaching assistants, have been well trained in teaching phonics, and do so effectively.
- Additional support from teaching assistants has a good effect on pupils' learning. In the current academic year, there has been an increased use of support outside lessons for disadvantaged pupils or groups who are struggling with their work. This work is well matched to need and is helping to compensate quickly for previous underachievement.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- The strengths identified at the previous inspection have been maintained, and the school has built upon them considerably in the last year. For example, pupils enjoy the greater responsibility which the school now gives them. They appreciate the school learning council, which manages a budget and has helped to improve outdoor play resources. Pupils appreciate that their views are valued and that they are able to contribute thoughtfully to school improvement by talking to leaders or governors.
- Pupils are happy at school and are keen to do well. They have positive attitudes towards learning and understand why working hard is important. However, they do not always take enough pride in their work. Consequently, work is not always presented neatly, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils and parents confirm that pupils are cared for well in school. Pupils say that they feel safe. Teachers are conscientious in teaching pupils about how to avoid danger outside school. For example, they are very clear about the potential risks of the very busy road that many need to cross to go home.

- Pupils confirm that there is practically no bullying of any sort. They are confident about speaking to staff about any concerns they might have. Pupils understand how to use the internet safely and what to do if they encounter cyber bullying.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Parents and pupils almost unanimously think that behaviour in the school is typically good or better. Pupils feel that it has improved this year because the headteacher has made expectations clearer. They like that they are now rewarded for good behaviour and feel that this is applied fairly by all staff.
- Pupils conduct themselves well when moving around school. They are polite and courteous and talk confidently to visitors. They are kind and caring and are especially welcoming to new arrivals. As one pupil reported, 'It was nerve-wracking on my first day at school but I was given a buddy and quickly made friends.'
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They respond quickly to instructions but sometimes lose interest in their work and become inattentive when the teaching does not fully engage them.
- Attendance has improved in the current year and is now broadly average. The vast majority of pupils attend regularly and arrive at school on time. Leaders work closely with outside agencies and families to improve the attendance of the very small number of pupils who are persistently absent.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **are require improvement**

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because their progress is not yet consistently good. There remain pockets of underachievement, especially in Years 5 and 6. These year groups have been most affected by staff turnover. This was reflected in last year's test results in Year 6, when attainment was below average overall. The current Year 6 are working at similar levels in writing and mathematics.
- Since her appointment, the new headteacher has focused relentlessly on improving teaching and this is helping to improve pupils' progress. However, it remains uneven. Less-able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability do not always make enough progress because work is not always matched well enough to needs. Recent improvements in provision, especially the quality of support in small groups outside lessons, mean that this is less evident than in the past, but there are still occasions when their skills improve too slowly.
- The most-able pupils also make variable progress. They are not always challenged well enough to improve their skills quickly. As a result, across the school, including in early years provision, very few pupils are working at the higher levels for their age.
- Some aspects of outcomes for pupils' achievement are good and there is an improving picture across the school as the impact of recent initiatives begins to bite. Pupils' current work books shows that progress is picking up because there is more good teaching now than at the start of the year.
- The gap between the attainment of the small number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group and that of others in the school and nationally is closing more rapidly than in the past. These pupils are now receiving well-tailored support outside lessons and, although relatively recent, this is already having a good effect on their progress.
- Pupils' progress is slightly stronger in reading than in writing and mathematics. Pupils have a good knowledge of phonics, with almost all reaching the expected level in national screenings by the end of Year 2 in 2015. Pupils, including those who find reading more difficult, use their phonics skills confidently to break down words and to help them read.

### **Early years provision**

### **is good**

- Improvements in early years provision have been well led and managed. The class teacher responded well to the challenges set at the start of the academic year by the new headteacher. With good support from the local authority, provision has improved quickly since then.
- Good teaching in the early years means that all children, including those who have special educational needs or disability as well as the very small number of disadvantaged children, are making good progress in the current year. Consequently, most children are on track to reach a good level of development by the end of the year. They are being well prepared for life in Year 1, both socially and academically.

- Adults work together well to provide children with a rich and varied curriculum. The outdoor area is used well to support learning. Adults give children good support while exploring their own ideas when working outside. For example, children improved their knowledge of words such 'heavy' and 'light' while trying to work out how to move a potato down guttering using just water. The teaching assistant asked probing questions which focused well on children's mathematical development.
- The teacher plans work that is often linked to a central theme such as superheroes. This helps to make learning purposeful and engaging and motivates children to try hard. Children become confident and self-assured learners. They persevere with tasks, help each other when needed and behave well. They are happy at school and feel safe because they are well looked after. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are thorough. There are no breaches of welfare arrangements.
- Teaching generally takes good account of the needs of children, although there are occasions when there is not enough challenge for the most able. Adults do not always respond quickly enough to move learning on when the most-able have grasped a concept and are ready for the next steps in their learning.
- There are good systems for assessing children's prior learning. Ongoing progress is detailed well in learning journals which paint a clear picture of children's learning over time. Next steps are identified and acted upon.
- Parents are very positive about early years provision, typically making comments such as, 'My child is getting a great start to their education.' There has been some good work this year to engage even more fully with parents. There is good attendance at regular drop-in sessions where the teacher meets with parents to talk about how they can help their children at home. Parents are very positive about this and the way that the class teacher goes the 'extra mile' to meet with parents who cannot get to the drop-in session.
- Leaders monitor provision thoroughly. They have recognised that more could be done to improve provision for the most able. A start has been made to dealing with this by arranging opportunities to see how this is managed in other settings.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115105
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10011822

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	96
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Katie Wilson
<b>Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge</b>	Rebecca More
<b>Telephone number</b>	01376 514509
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rivenhallprimary.co.uk">www.rivenhallprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@rivenhall.essex.sch.uk">admin@rivenhall.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7–8 May 2014

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school with four classes.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to give extra support to looked after children, pupils known to qualify for free school meals or from service families.
- Since the previous inspection there has been an almost complete change in teaching staff, as well as several different headteachers. The current headteacher took up post in September 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in 11 lessons, most of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made some short visits to observe learning at other times.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspector took account of the views of 62 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector also talked to parents and carers at the end of the school day.
- The inspector heard pupils read and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; the school development plan; records relating to behaviour and attendance; safeguarding information and health and safety documentation.
- The inspector analysed 14 questionnaires from staff.

## Inspection team

Mike Capper, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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