

# Little Hallingbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wrights Green Lane, Little Hallingbury, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7RE

## Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant leadership changes. Improvements have not yet been sustained and pupils make inconsistent progress across year groups and subjects.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics, particularly in lower key stage 2.
- The quality of the curriculum varies and at times is too narrow. Middle leaders have not had sufficient opportunity and training to monitor their subjects. As a result, provision in subjects such as science is not as good as it should be.
- Teachers do not use assessment information as well as they could to plan learning that deepens and extends pupils' curiosity and skills.
- The most able pupils are not given enough opportunities to excel in mathematics. This is because they are too often provided with activities that limit the progress they can make.
- Adults' expectations of the most able children in early years have not been high enough. Consequently, these children do not make as much progress as they are capable of from their starting points, particularly in number.
- The early years outdoor environment requires improvement. Children are not provided with a range of interesting activities to develop their physical, social and collaborative skills.
- The school website is not up to date. It does not provide enough information for parents to know what their children are learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is now improving. The executive headteacher has implemented a systematic approach to school improvement.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained. Pupils say that they feel safe and most parents agree. Pupils are well cared for.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are respectful and courteous. They attend school regularly.
- Pupils achieve well in reading and writing. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher standard in reading and writing in key stage 1 was significantly above the national average.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - swiftly improving the quality of teaching in mathematics so that pupils make accelerated progress
  - providing a wide range of opportunities for the most able pupils to use and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills in mathematics, so that greater proportions make better progress in their learning
  - equipping teachers with the strategies and training to be able to plan and implement interesting and effective learning opportunities for the pupils in their class
  - making sure that teachers consistently use the assessment information to plan learning that stimulates thinking and reasoning in a wide range of subjects, especially science.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - providing middle leaders with the necessary training to effectively monitor their subject areas and ensure high-quality provision across the curriculum
  - making sure that the information available to parents about what their children are learning is up to date and meets statutory requirements on the website
  - governors ensuring that the website is up to date with statutory information.
- Improve early years by:
  - making sure that the outdoor area is well designed and used effectively, so that children have the opportunity to develop their physical and collaborative skills
  - providing swifter opportunities for the most able children to show their capabilities, so that more children exceed expectations, especially in number.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the senior leadership structure of the school. Recently, the school has formally federated with another local school and they share a single governing body and an executive headteacher. The school also has a deputy headteacher who leads the school when the executive headteacher is not at Little Hallingbury. The school has the leadership capacity to improve at pace.
- The executive headteacher has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses at the school and has made effective changes to ensure that the school meets current safeguarding legislation. A large number of parents commented to inspectors that the changes made around safeguarding were necessary and welcome.
- A significant minority of parents consider that communication has not been effective in letting them know what their children are learning. The executive headteacher has already acknowledged this issue. She has credible plans firmly in place to improve the quality and frequency of communication in order to involve parents in their children's learning, especially in the early years class.
- Subject leaders have previously not had sufficient training or opportunity to monitor their areas of responsibility. As a result, they have had limited impact in leading their subjects and have not been effective in raising the standard of learning in subjects such as French, geography and science swiftly enough.
- The school website does not comply with the statutory expectations of what must be published regarding the curriculum. The school's curriculum 'topic webs' are not rigorous enough to ensure that all subjects are covered well. The current approach to the curriculum does not provide enough opportunity for pupils to develop their skill of enquiry, particularly in science and in some of the creative subjects, such as music.
- The executive headteacher is passionate and clear in her desire for every pupil to receive the very best experience at school. 'Learning happily and securely' is at the heart of her vision and values. Since taking up her position, the executive headteacher has gained the respect of the long-serving members of staff. Staff are quick to acknowledge the impact of her work and say that the school is improving. Many parents who spoke to inspectors agree with this view. Inspectors also agree.
- Leaders' monitoring of pupils' progress has improved. It is now rigorous and more steadily accurate. The executive headteacher holds regular meetings with teachers to discuss the progress that pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers in each year group are increasingly more accountable for the progress that the pupils in their class make.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided for well. Individual support is targeted effectively. Consequently, these pupils have equal opportunities across the curriculum and often make exceptional progress from their starting points.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound. For example, in one

assembly, pupils willingly joined in the singing of Christian songs and older pupils wrote and led a prayer. Pupils learn about a variety of different cultures and religions. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and show respect to adults and tolerance towards each other. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders and governors know what to do to move the school forward. They have increased the capacity for school improvement and make good use of the expertise of an external consultant who regularly visits to monitor the improvements made.
- The executive headteacher has made sure that there are effective procedures in place for the performance management of teachers. Staff say that this has not always been the case previously. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the past has not been rigorous enough in ensuring rapid and sustained progress. Weak practices remain. Now, teachers are provided with regular training and support to improve the quality of provision. This is making a difference and the quality of teaching and learning is improving rapidly in some classes.
- Leaders use additional sports funding well. Pupils were quick to inform inspectors that they receive 'a good deal of sport' and particularly enjoy the standard of coaching they receive. The additional funds are used effectively to develop pupils' skills and abilities in a range of sports.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governance structure of the federation was introduced in September 2016 and is ably led by an experienced chair of governors. Governors receive information from the executive headteacher. Through planned visits, they are starting to check the accuracy of the information they receive.
- All governors understand their responsibilities for safeguarding the pupils within the school. They have received suitable training in child protection and comply with recent legislation to have police checks.
- As the management structure is new, governors are not, as yet, fully involved in the process of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, they already have a strong understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. Minutes of meetings demonstrate that governors ask challenging questions and hold the executive headteacher to account for the quality of education provided.
- The local authority has established an interim board to hold school leaders to account for the progress that pupils make in mathematics. This is because pupils did not make enough progress in mathematics over key stage 2 in 2016. The school did not reach the government's floor standards for attainment and progress overall.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Since the executive headteacher has started at the school, she has achieved much to ensure that safeguarding of pupils is given the highest priority. Rightly, she has ensured that current government expectations of safety, policies and procedures are

firmly in place. As a result, pupils are safe and well cared for.

- Statutory child protection training is in place. All staff and governors have benefited from recent training and are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities. Records are well kept and concerns followed through with other agencies so that the best outcomes for pupils are achieved.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Pupils are aware of the dangers of the internet and the impact of cyber bullying. Pupils know to inform an adult if they are concerned.
- Bullying at the school is not tolerated. Pupils understand what they need to do and are confident that adults will listen to their views. Some parents commented, using the free text service, that they believed that bullying was not effectively dealt with. Inspectors could not find evidence to support that view.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching in mathematics varies, both across year groups and within classes. This is because pupils often have to listen to explanations that are too easy or too hard. Too often, pupils are provided with worksheets that limit the progress that the most able pupils are able to make. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities and resources for the most able pupils to use and apply their skills in a range of different ways.
- Teachers have not previously received enough training so that their subject knowledge and understanding can meet the higher demands of the mathematics curriculum. Consequently, pupils currently in school are not making strong progress in mathematics, due to the lower expectations and lack of activities that meet their needs precisely enough.
- In subjects such as science, the most able and the lower-attaining pupils are often provided with the same worksheets. As a result, these pupils have little opportunity to practise their skills or develop their fascination for the subject. For example, in Year 2 science books, activities showed little evidence of developing scientific knowledge and skills through completing scientific experiments or observations.
- When the teacher's subject knowledge is strong and expectations for learning are clear, pupils settle quickly and produce work of a high standard. For example, in Year 3, the most able pupils were using their knowledge of the Ancient Greeks to write a non-chronological report. They used specific vocabulary well and produced writing that was above that expected for their age.
- Additional adults who work with individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities skilfully support these pupils so that they make strong progress in their learning. However, in some classes, additional adults are not always deployed as well as they could be. This results in them having a less-than-effective impact on pupils' learning.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English. However, at times, pupils write and use their literacy skills rather than learn enough

subject-specific skills.

- Teachers organise trips to enhance the learning. Pupils speak positively about their experiences and, for example, how a trip helped them understand how people lived in Roman times.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have created a supportive and safe environment for pupils to learn in. As a result, in the majority of classes, pupils are confident and articulate. They discuss their learning with enthusiasm and maturity.
- Most pupils speak positively about their school. Many express their opinions fluently and with mature consideration. One pupil said, 'I love everything about the school', while another commented on 'how well school trips help us learn even more'.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for. School leaders ensure that pupils are well supported, both personally and academically. As a result, they are confident individuals who enjoy their learning and participate well in lessons.
- Pupils are able to talk maturely about respecting other people and their differences. Pupils recognise that they can learn from pupils with different faiths and cultures and are able to discuss how this occurs in school. Pupils spoken with were reflective and expressed their opinions sensitively. One pupil echoed the sentiment of others when he said 'I would not change a thing'.

### Behaviour

- Pupils conduct themselves very well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils attend school regularly and are generally punctual to school. The school has firm systems and procedures in place to work with families where attendance is less than expected or where a pupil is regularly absent.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils were observed enjoying each other's company in the dining hall at lunchtimes. Good humour and chatter were highly evident. All pupils, including the youngest children, demonstrate confidence and appropriate social skills during these less-structured times of the day.
- At breaktimes, pupils enter and leave the school building in a safe manner and play well together on the playground. Some pupils told inspectors that they would like more equipment and games at playtimes in winter, when they are on the playground rather than the field.
- Pupils are polite and respectful towards adults and engage confidently in conversation about their learning. Pupils enter assembly calmly and hold doors open for adults and their peers.

- Pupils recognise that unkindness and silly behaviour can be upsetting. They know what constitutes bullying and say that adults deal with any rare incidents appropriately and well.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, most pupils have continued to achieve well by the end of Year 6 in reading and writing. This is because pupils are diligent and practise their skills in lessons, even when worksheets are restrictive and the activities uninteresting. In-school information demonstrates that pupils make most progress in upper key stage 2, but some have too much ground to catch up after not making rapid enough progress in lower key stage 2.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the national standard and the higher standard in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. The progress that the pupils made was significantly below the progress expected nationally for pupils of their age.
- Inspection evidence shows that improvements are still slow in ensuring that more pupils make at least expected progress from their starting points. This is because of the weaknesses in teaching. Pupils' work in their exercise books shows that, in some classes, pupils do not have an opportunity to develop their mathematical reasoning skills well enough and at appropriate levels.
- Pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics varies across year groups. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in science was below the national average. Adults do not consistently expect the same high standards in subjects such as history, geography and science. The most able pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply subject-specific skills in a range of different ways so that they can excel. When they do have the opportunity, they relish the challenge.
- The small numbers of disadvantaged pupils, those looked after and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities generally achieve well in their learning. This is because leaders ensure that skilful support is provided for pupils who require it. Consequently, individuals make strong progress from their starting points in English and mathematics. Numbers are too small to report on the end of key stage outcomes without identifying pupils.
- Historically, pupils have achieved significantly above national expectations by the end of key stage 1. In 2016, under the new national measures, the proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in reading and writing and those who were working at greater depth was above that found nationally. In mathematics, significantly fewer pupils reached the higher standard and this did not represent good progress for the most able pupils.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils who read to the inspectors did so with confidence and skill. Pupils achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check, due to



the systematic approach in lessons. Adults are precise and ensure that pupils build on their understanding of the sounds letters make and have opportunities to practise their skills.

- Pupils are highly articulate and have very strong speaking and listening skills. They use their experience and broad range of vocabulary well in their writing. In some classes, teachers ensure that pupils' understanding and use of correct grammar and punctuation are the norm. Pupils' books demonstrate that they rise to the higher expectations and make better and quicker progress in their writing as a result.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- At the previous inspection, school leaders and governors were asked to improve the effectiveness and use of the outdoor area. This still remains a priority for the school. The outdoor space is a less-inviting area in which to learn. Children are not provided with enough interesting and stimulating resources that encourage their physical development and social skills in the outside learning areas.
- Most children start school with individual skills and abilities that are at least typical for their age. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development in 2016 was above that found nationally. Generally, children are very well prepared for Year 1 in reading and writing, but less so in number. The majority of children make the expected progress.
- There have been a number of unavoidable staff changes over this year, which has caused some anxiety for parents. Inspection evidence supports the view that children are happy, settled and adapting well to staff changes. Children know the routines and are well cared for.
- In early years, the school is benefiting from being part of a federation. Leaders from the federated school support Little Hallingbury to ensure that assessments are accurate and learning is well planned. In 2016, teachers' assessments of the children's work were moderated by the local authority and found to be accurate.
- The new teachers have already started to provide exciting and stimulating activities for the children. During the inspection, children were learning about pirates. Some children were keen to show how well they could count the coins which were part of the pirates' treasure. One most-able child was particularly adept and knew that  $4 + 4 + 4 = 12$  and could share these coins out easily with his friends.
- Children enjoy developing their reading and writing skills and 'get off to a good start'. In their writing books, most children can already write their names and form their letters correctly. In learning to read, they are confident with their early sounds and use them with increasing skill.



## School details

Unique reference number	115182
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10023502

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susie Dutton
Executive Headteacher	Sonia Strickland
Telephone number	01279 723 382
Website	<a href="http://www.littlehallingburyschool.co.uk/">www.littlehallingburyschool.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@littlehallingbury.essex.sch.uk">admin@littlehallingbury.essex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	29 February–1 March 2012

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website. In particular, it does not report on the curriculum content for each year group and each subject, the use and impact of the pupil premium money received and a special needs report.
- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for pupil premium funding is significantly below that found nationally.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.

- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is in line with national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- The school did not meet the government's current national floor standards for 2016, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and over a range of subjects. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, governors and groups of pupils. An inspector also spoke with the following people in separate telephone discussions: an external consultant who supports the school and parents who contacted the school.
- Inspectors analysed and evaluated a range of documentation which included information about pupils' attendance, medical records, achievement and behaviour records, school self-evaluation, school improvement planning, safeguarding, the curriculum, governor meetings and the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors considered the views of 48 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 36 free text comments. Parents' views were also informally sought on the playground over the course of the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the views of 36 pupils and 14 staff who responded to their online surveys.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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