

# Acton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lambert Drive, Acton, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 0US

## Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school's senior leaders and the governing body have ensured that the school has improved and is now good.
- Pupils are making increasingly good progress, resulting in the most recent attainment for reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 being above the national average.
- Pupils' attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling is lower than the national average.
- Phonics teaching is good; pupils use their understanding of letters and sounds effectively in their reading.
- Pupils given additional support are supported well and make good progress.
- The school has developed rigorous systems that enable teachers to assess pupil progress accurately and track their development.
- Teachers do not address the gaps in pupils' learning effectively enough before expecting them to move on to complete more complex work.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They are kind to each other.
- In the early years, children make good progress. This is because the adults know the children well and use this information to plan appropriately. Leadership in the early years is good.
- Teaching throughout the school is good because of effective leadership, particularly from subject leaders who ensure that teachers' knowledge is secure.
- School attendance is above average. The overwhelming majority of children enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils' behaviour in school is good. They generally behave well in lessons and understand the school's high expectations of them.
- Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work in English and mathematics. Presentation is not so good in other subjects.
- Links to the local church and the school's strong set of values ensure that the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

## Full report

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

- Improve outcomes for all pupils in grammar, punctuation and spelling by developing a consistent approach to teaching this aspect of the curriculum.
- Continue to improve outcomes in writing by:
  - providing good opportunities for writing throughout the curriculum so that pupils can develop and practise their skills frequently across subjects and genres
  - ensuring that teachers consistently apply the same standards and expectations to secure good presentation in all written work.
- Continue to use and refine the effective assessment and progress tracking systems to make sure that teachers:
  - set work at the right level for all pupils
  - identify gaps in the learning of individuals and offer appropriate and timely intervention.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, her deputy and the school's governors have been single-minded in pursuing an improvement strategy following the previous inspection. They have been successful. All staff share the headteacher's high expectations and, as a result, have worked hard to secure the improvements that were necessary.
- The headteacher, supported by governors and the local authority, has had to make difficult staffing decisions to ensure that provision for all children is as good as it can be. This has resulted in some short-term disruption to the teaching arrangements for one particular year group in the school.
- The school's senior leadership team has readily accepted the challenge and support provided by the local authority. The school and the local authority have worked together to develop an effective system for gathering and analysing information about pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher, as the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), works well with the inclusion manager to provide caring, well-considered and supportive provision for the pupils who have additional needs. One parent commented that her child has 'blossomed' in school and attributed this to the resources and support that the school provides. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- The school's assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The school is ambitious for this group of pupils and is confident that their progress and attainment this year will be considerably higher than average for all pupils.
- Pupil premium money is spent effectively to ensure good-quality in-school support as well as to fund activities outside school.
- Leaders evaluate the quality of teaching and learning accurately to help them check how well the school is doing. This process enables school leaders to identify areas for improvement, which are then used to set targets to help teachers improve. Teachers and support staff value the opportunities they are given to develop professionally and understand how this has helped to improve outcomes for pupils.
- The school's curriculum is wide-ranging. Pupils follow a carefully mapped series of subjects, including whole-class trumpet and cornet lessons in upper key stage 2, and French as a modern foreign language. Pupils learn about world religions. For example, in a peace-themed key stage 2 assembly, the focus was on Buddhism. Pupils were given the opportunity to think and reflect, which deepened their understanding of different cultures and faiths. The school is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils enjoy physical activity. The school uses the sports premium grant to promote healthy lifestyles and to encourage pupils to take part in inter-school sporting activities. The grant has also been used to employ additional coaches who offer professional

development opportunities to staff and additional curriculum activities to pupils.

## **Governance of the school**

- A review of the school's governance in June 2016 has resulted in the governing body becoming more effective and purposeful. Governors are now more skilled at their roles. Their aspirations for the school are higher, as is their confidence in challenging leaders.
- The chair of governors has fully supported the headteacher in her drive to improve the school and believes that the quality of information they receive is now much better. It is sharper and easier to understand, which helps them to track pupils' progress better and ask appropriately challenging questions. For example, after a recent presentation from the school's assessment manager, governors were able to accurately identify the levels that different groups of pupils were working at and ask about the progress that they would need to make to reach the level expected of them.
- Governors have a good understanding of the day-to-day running of the school and the roles of all the school staff. They realise the importance of effective support staff, and have reviewed pay structures accordingly. Governors are well informed about performance management arrangements for teaching staff, and these systems are managed rigorously and consistently.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record of staff, volunteers and contractors meets statutory requirements and is checked by a governor regularly. Documentation shows that procedures for safer recruitment and staff training are applied thoroughly and consistently.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding policies are followed rigorously; for example, when signing in, visitors to the school are told that they may not bring mobile phones onto the premises.
- The school works well with other agencies to keep its pupils safe. It has held e-safety workshops with parents and has sought help from the local police community support officer. Vulnerable pupils are well supported by the school.
- Any concerns are carefully monitored in weekly meetings between the headteacher and inclusion manager and appropriate action is taken.
- Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- A large majority of parents agree that their child is safe in school.

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

**Good**

- Phonics teaching is good. The additional adults in the classes support learning well and are deployed to support individuals and small groups. Pupils are challenged to use their

phonics knowledge to understand new words. For example, when looking at a book about textures and after feeling the page, a pupil in Reception was asked to use his understanding of phonics to successfully read the word 'bumpy'.

- In Year 2, the teacher takes the opportunity to develop grammatical understanding alongside phonics teaching.
- The school can accurately identify the learning needs of its pupils because its assessment systems are accurate. Consequently, most lessons are planned at the appropriate level.
- The teaching of mathematics in upper key stage 2 is effective. After initial input by the teacher, pupils choose the level of difficulty that they are subsequently going to practise. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have a good understanding of the system, pitch their challenge appropriately and make good progress as a result. Elsewhere in key stage 2, pupils do not have enough support to make good use of the time they spend on task.
- As a result of the training provided for learning support staff, the teaching for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged is good. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and demonstrate a clear insight into the needs of those in their care and accurately record their progress.
- Pupils' reading is improving, because of changes in the way that it is taught. The local authority jointly funded the implementation of a reading programme, which is being used from Year 2 to Year 6. Pupils were observed reading complex texts, which they were clearly enjoying, with good accuracy and real pleasure.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers manage behaviour in lessons well, and attitudes to learning are positive. Occasionally, pupils' interest wanes when they are not given suitably challenging work.
- Music teaching in key stage 2 is strong; pupils were fully engaged in and enthusiastic about their trumpet lesson. They were able to use and understand appropriate vocabulary and practised valve positions with good technique and control. As a result of their enthusiasm and positive attitudes, their playing demonstrated good learning in the lesson and strong progress over time.
- Where writing is taught most effectively, pupils have clear success criteria to measure their progress against, and teachers are able to assess with accuracy and give constructive feedback. However, opportunities for writing are limited, and the school is not yet taking sufficient advantage of its rich curriculum to ensure that pupils write with the same rigour in subjects other than English.
- Pupils in some classes benefit from the school's approach to teaching handwriting. Pupils in Year 2 are learning the basic joins in preparation for developing a joined script. Older pupils are given licence to use a pen.

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils talked about how they enjoy coming to school; they said that they are happy and that school is brilliant, exciting, enjoyable and fun. They readily commented that they enjoy their learning. 'All the classes are really good. The teachers are really nice and teach you well,' commented one pupil.
- Pupils feel safe in school and said that bullying is rare. Pupils understand forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying, and, particularly in the case of e-safety, they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils are confident that if they have any problems their teachers will help to solve them.
- Older pupils are happy to accept additional responsibilities. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were selling remembrance poppies and wristbands to others during playtime. They did this with kindness and patience and helped younger pupils to make the right choices about the money that they had brought. On a visit to church, Year 6 pupils accompanied Reception children to help keep them safe on the walk.
- Pupils move through the school in a calm and orderly manner. On the way to a whole-school assembly, they sing a welcoming song together as older pupils hold doors open along the route, always replying, 'You're welcome,' to the thanks they receive.
- The school's motto, 'Be kind, take pride and enjoy', is a sentiment that the whole community shares and can be seen in practice daily. At a recent workshop with musicians, the pupils worked on composing a song called, 'Be Kind, Take Pride'. They now sing it at the end of assemblies with pleasure and sincerity.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school has an agreed policy to manage behaviour, which is used consistently across the school. Pupils recognise this and understand it to be fair.
- The school promotes positive attitudes to learning and, in the majority of lessons, children are calm and purposeful. However, there are occasional instances of low-level disruption when pupils are not sufficiently engaged in their learning.
- Attendance is now above average and last year was particularly strong for disadvantaged pupils. Good attendance is rewarded. Pupils understand the importance of coming to school and enjoy doing so. The school's practice of meeting and greeting pupils at the school gate in the morning ensures that the day starts positively and safely and ensures punctuality.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Since the previous inspection, outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 have improved considerably. In 2017, pupils made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and the percentage of pupils who achieved at the expected standard in all three areas was above average.
- The proportions of pupils achieving at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 were in line with the national average in 2017. This represents good progress from Reception for this cohort of children.
- Outcomes in phonics since the previous inspection have been high. This is because phonics teaching is well planned and effective. Pupils are able to use their good phonics knowledge to help them read well.
- The school's tracking data shows that currently all groups of pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged, are making good progress from their starting points. This is because of recent improvements in teaching, which are having a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- The 2016 and 2017 outcomes for pupils in grammar, punctuation and spelling were not yet good and did not reflect the progress made elsewhere in the curriculum. The school's leaders are aware that this is an important area of development.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Provision in the early years is much improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development has risen from below to above the national average. This is a consequence of the good leadership and teaching in the early years.
- The requirements of the curriculum are clearly understood by the early years leader, who is active in moderating the assessments provided for the pre-school group. The early years team has a good understanding of the children's starting points and ensures that their plans are well tailored to meet their needs.
- Children in the Reception class are well supported by the adults who work there. Adult questioning and talk are good and have the effect of deepening pupils' understanding. In one task in which pupils were asked to make a house for Teddy, the teaching assistant developed an in-depth conversation about the need for a door, whereas the children preferred a ladder to help Teddy get through a gap in the roof.
- Children work cooperatively and with perseverance. Their social skills were evident when they were taking great care with model making, discussing the task as they worked on it together.
- Children had visited the local church the day before the inspection and were using what they had learned to consider objects seen in the church and recognise the shapes involved. This activity led to good cross-curricular learning and is an example of the

quality of planning in the early years.

- Safeguarding in the early years is effective; the learning environment is carefully maintained with a good balance of resources indoors and out. Children are appropriately supervised when they are learning, and supporting adults maintain a good balance between observation and intervention.
- The quality of information that parents receive is good. As well as a regular early years newsletter, the school uses an online tracking and recording system to provide progress information for parents. The majority of parents engage with this, and the early years team monitors its use, encouraging all parents to contribute to the overall assessment of their child's progress. A large majority of parents attended a recent phonics awareness workshop.



## School details

Unique reference number	124686
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10036261

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Mr Adrian Brett
Headteacher	Miss Julie O'Neill
Telephone number	01787 377089
Website	<a href="http://www.acton.suffolk.sch.uk">www.acton.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@acton.suffolk.sch.uk">admin@acton.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3– 4 November 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Acton CofE VC Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school has no statements of SEN or pupils with education, health and care plans, and the percentage of pupils requiring SEN support is less than the national average.
- The school had been defined as coasting by the regional schools commissioner in 2016.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment in reading, writing and mathematics for Year 6 pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class, often with a member of the school's leadership team. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' books and their work on display around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils in assemblies and the playground.
- Inspectors talked to children both formally and informally about their perceptions of school and listened to them read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the chair of governors and three other governors, a representative from the local authority, support staff and teachers.
- Inspectors met parents and took into account the information provided by parents on Parent View as well as the school's own surveys. They also viewed the staff's responses to the Ofsted questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website and prepared for the inspection by looking at a range of documents including previous reports, performance information, policies, development plans and correspondence.

## Inspection team

James Richards, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paula Masters

Ofsted Inspector

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