

Kersey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cherry Hill, Kersey, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 6EG

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2019

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| 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 | Outstanding |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. As a result, progress for pupils currently in the school is not good across the board. The quality of education provided has declined since the previous inspection.
- Despite leaders' efforts, a small number of pupils are absent too frequently.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Pupils' work varies in both quality and presentation between subjects and classes.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well to plan activities that are appropriately challenging. Therefore, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not use leaders' chosen teaching and assessment methods consistently. Consequently, teachers are not having the maximum impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- In the past, pupils, including the most able, have not made the progress that they should have in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Currently, pupils are making good progress in mathematics, but progress in writing is more variable.
- In early years, adults do not plan activities carefully enough to challenge children and to make best use of opportunities to assess children's learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school. They understand what needs to be done and are securing some improvements.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Most pupils gain the skills needed for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Most pupils make good progress in reading from their different starting points. Where teaching is effective, pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils get on well with others, are considerate and reflect the school's caring ethos.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that all pupils make good progress in a range of subjects and in all year groups, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects
 - use assessment information to plan learning in all subjects that meets the needs of pupils from their various starting points, including the most able.
- Improve pupils' outcomes, by ensuring that more pupils, particularly the most able:
 - make the progress needed to attain the higher standards in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2
 - show more care in their handwriting and how they present their work.
- Improve the early years provision, by making sure that all adults use activities effectively to support and assess children's learning, so that children make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- Improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who are absent too frequently, so that their attendance is least in line with the national average.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by ensuring that leaders check that teachers follow agreed procedures consistently and that actions are having the intended impact.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher took up post in September 2016, alongside the head of school. She has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by staff and governors. All adults in the school work with a common purpose and understand the priorities for improvement.
- Responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and comments made to the inspector, show that almost all parents and carers are supportive of the school and its leaders. A number of parents commented positively about the good communication between home and school. Those parents who spoke to the inspector said that staff are always available to discuss any concerns or queries that parents have.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school. They identified the reasons for the decline in outcomes in writing and mathematics in key stage 2 and have acted promptly as a result. Some changes are already having an impact on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in mathematics. However, some recent actions are not yet fully established, mainly due to changes in staffing and staff absence. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are the main reason that the school requires improvement.
- The executive headteacher has a comprehensive understanding of the challenges that a small school creates. She has established a partnership with the other school where she is headteacher that enables teachers to share ideas, and provides development opportunities for staff, including for teachers new to the profession. Staff value these opportunities and can give examples of how they have changed what they do. The partnership is contributing to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.
- The local authority monitors the work of the school and its leaders regularly. This monitoring has increased in frequency following the 2018 key stage 2 outcomes. A standards and excellence officer provides helpful support and challenge to school leaders. Leaders have used this support wisely to contribute to planning actions and priorities for improvement and when evaluating the impact of the actions. The local authority has also checked on the progress of newly qualified teachers and provided appropriate support and development opportunities.
- Leaders make regular checks on the work of teachers. Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of individuals. Teachers and teaching assistants are positive about the training and development that they receive to improve their practice. They say that the school is a strong community where they can ask others for help and support. Leaders ensure that, when needed, teachers have appropriate support and actions to improve their practice. Although it is not yet good, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving.
- Leaders make sure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well provided for. Pupils can explain why it is important to learn about the beliefs and cultures of others. In personal, social and health (PSH) education, pupils learn about topics such as racism, friendship, making choices and well-being in ways that are appropriate for their age. The impact of this learning is evident in pupils' good

behaviour, the respect and consideration they show to others, and the confidence that they develop.

- Using their detailed knowledge of pupils, leaders have used funding efficiently to support the learning and personal development of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Despite the limitations of the small physical size of the school site, leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding wisely. Specialist coaches run lunchtime clubs and activities. Teachers have had development opportunities so that they are confident in teaching PE. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to participate in activities such as dodgeball and football and the use of funds to purchase equipment to use in their PE lessons.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum that provides pupils with knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their learning in art, French, design and technology, and science. Leaders have made sure that a wide variety of trips, clubs and visiting speakers add to pupils' learning experience.
- Leaders of mathematics and English are effective in their work. The mathematics leader identified that pupils did not develop their reasoning skills enough and rectified this. This has had a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly in key stage 2, where current pupils are making good progress.
- The subject leader for English has recently taken on this responsibility. She has quickly and accurately identified what needs to be done to improve outcomes in writing in key stage 2. She has taken appropriate actions and is checking to see if they are improving pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Although there are early signs of improvement, these actions have not had time to have the same impact on pupils' progress as changes made to mathematics teaching.
- Leaders have introduced a new assessment system, which includes assessing and monitoring progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. This is in its early stages of development and has not become established. It is not used consistently to support teachers to plan activities that maximise pupils' progress.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely. High and improved attendance is rewarded. Leaders work closely with the education and welfare officer and families to improve attendance. As a result, attendance has regularly been above the national average. However, despite leaders' hard work to ensure that pupils and parents understand the link between regular attendance and achievement, a small number of pupils are absent too often.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school and its context. They play an active role in setting the long-term direction of the school and priorities for improvement. Governors provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support to the school's leaders.
- Governors carry out checks on the work of the school diligently. They have sought external reviews of the school's work to help them plan what they do and check that

they are focusing on the right areas. Governors make sure that leaders use resources and additional funding efficiently.

- Governors reflect on their own work. They have carried out an audit of their skills and made sure that they recruit new governors who bring skills and knowledge that complement those of other governors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View agreed that this is the case.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe from harm in age-appropriate ways in their PSH education lessons. Assemblies, including from external speakers, add to this learning. Pupils showed a good understanding of e-safety. They spoke confidently about how they learn what to do to stay safe when working online.
- Leaders make thorough checks to make sure that adults are suitable to work in school. Governors check regularly that the record of these checks is accurately maintained. Policies relating to child protection and safeguarding are regularly updated so that they reflect the latest guidance and requirements.
- Staff are fully aware of their role in keeping pupils safe from harm. Leaders provide training and frequent updates to make sure that all adults working in the school can recognise the signs and risks of harm. Adults are confident in referring any concerns that they have and know that these will be acted upon.
- The executive headteacher maintains accurate records of concerns and the actions taken. Referrals to external agencies, when necessary, are made promptly. This ensures that pupils and families receive the help that they need as quickly as possible.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There are examples of effective and improving teaching in the school. However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. This means that pupils currently in the school do not make consistently strong progress from year to year and in the full range of subjects.
- Some teachers do not have the same high expectations as others of what pupils can achieve or standards of presentation. This leads some pupils making errors in mathematics due to poor presentation of their work. Others have handwriting that deteriorates over time or varies in quality between subjects. This makes it hard to revisit and understand previous work and hinders pupils' progress.
- Some teachers do not make good use of assessment information to give pupils work that provides the right level of support and challenge. This means that activities, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics, do not routinely help all pupils, including the most able, to make the progress of which they are capable. This is because activities limit what pupils can do, or do not challenge them to deepen their

understanding.

- Leaders have identified what they see as 'non-negotiables' in their chosen approach to assessment and marking. However, these features are not yet fully established in teachers' practice or are used inconsistently. They have not had the maximum impact on bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils learn how to write for different purposes and audiences and use appropriate grammar and punctuation. Pupils usually have opportunities to use and practise their writing skills in other subjects and, particularly, in topic work. The quality of the content and structure of their writing is typically similar to that in their English books, though the quality of handwriting can vary. However, teachers are not consistent in helping pupils, including the most able pupils, to improve the standard of their writing. Consequently, pupils' progress in writing varies across the school.
- The increased focus on developing pupils' mathematical reasoning is improving pupils' achievement in mathematics, particularly in key stage 2. Here, pupils are making good progress. Pupils confidently use their mathematical skills in science.
- Teachers usually work closely with additional adults to ensure that they provide helpful support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. This helps these pupils to make improved progress in their learning and supports their personal development.
- The teaching of reading is effective and helps most pupils to make strong progress. Pupils read confidently and with understanding and fluency that reflect their levels of attainment. Teachers effectively promote and encourage pupils' enjoyment of reading for pleasure. Pupils spoken to over the course of the inspection said that they enjoy reading and do so regularly.
- Pupils learn how to use their knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words. They also use these skills appropriately to support their spelling.
- Teachers promote positive relationships successfully. They use established routines that promote pupils' readiness to learn. Classrooms have an ethos and expectation where pupils cooperate with others, support one another and show respect for their classmates and adults.
- Where teaching is effective, teachers plan work that is precisely matched to pupils' abilities and they check pupils' understanding carefully. Pupils respond to their teacher's guidance and act on it to improve the quality of their work. They make strong progress as a result.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, polite and considerate. They show respect to one another and adults. This creates a real sense of belonging and care in this small and friendly school. Pupils of different ages play and socialise with one another amicably. The school's

ethos contributes strongly to pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Pupils enjoy and relish the opportunity to have responsibility. The youngest pupils in the school spoke proudly about their roles as class monitors. Pupils who are members of the worship council contribute to leading assemblies. Members of the learning council contribute to decisions about, for example, which charities the school should support. These activities contribute strongly to developing pupils' understanding of decision making and fairness. Pupils develop a good understanding of the values needed for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of democracy and their role in the wider community through the work of the learning council and the eco committee.
- In religious education lessons, pupils learn about other cultures and religions. They know why it is important to respect the beliefs of others. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to think about how society has changed and reflect on their own views. An example of this was seen in key stage 2 topic work, where pupils learned about crime and punishment in Victorian times.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is and why it is unacceptable. They say that when bullying occurs, teachers deal with it quickly. All parents who spoke to the inspector, and almost all parents who responded to Parent View, agreed that this is the case.
- Leaders make sure that pupils have opportunities to pursue and develop their interests through a variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs. For example, pupils can participate in dodgeball, animation club and guitar lessons and take part in drama productions. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy and active lifestyles in PSH education lessons and participation in the '5-a-day' activities, where they take part in five minutes of physical activity.
- Pupils are proud of their school. However, due to teachers' varied expectations, they do not always show the same pride in their work in different subjects.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and at break- and lunchtime is excellent. This contributes to the calm and mutually supportive atmosphere that permeates the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. Almost all pupils focus on their learning and lessons flow smoothly because they follow the routines established by teachers. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' direction, so that little learning time is lost. Pupils say that their learning is rarely disturbed by the behaviour of others, and inspection evidence supports this view.
- Teachers, pupils and almost all parents agree that behaviour in the school is good and well managed. Pupils understand the school's behaviour and rewards system. They feel that teachers' fair application of this system contributes to the typically good behaviour

in and around the school.

- Attendance for the whole school has been above the national average for a number of years. The very large majority of pupils know that attendance at school is important and value leaders' recognition of good attendance. However, despite leaders' and teachers' best efforts, a small number of pupils are absent from school too frequently. These pupils' learning and progress are hindered by their lower levels of attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils currently in the school are not making consistently strong progress because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in classes and subjects is not yet good.
- In 2018, pupils, including the most able pupils, made below-average progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Progress in writing by the end of key stage 2, although average overall, was in the lowest 20% nationally for the most able pupils. Because of improved teaching, pupils now in key stage 2 are making good progress in mathematics. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that, although improving, teachers are not ensuring that the most able pupils are making the good progress needed to attain the higher standards in writing.
- Pupils' handwriting varies in quality. For too many pupils, letters are poorly formed and written work not presented well. This is because teachers' expectations are sometimes too low.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has typically been above the national average, reflecting pupils' achievement when they join Year 1. Currently, pupils are making uneven progress in these subjects from their different starting points because activities are not always well matched to their abilities or sufficiently challenging.
- Leaders have planned a curriculum that provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in the full range of subjects in the national curriculum. However, pupils' progress is variable because teachers do not always make use of assessment opportunities to provide appropriately challenging activities or use leaders' chosen approach to marking effectively.
- Teachers and additional adults know precisely what hampers the learning of the small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. They provide the help individual pupils need to overcome barriers to learning. Because of this, these pupils typically make improving and sometimes strong progress from their starting points, particularly in reading.
- Pupils achieve highly in the phonics screening check in Year 1. They use their phonic skills confidently to support their reading and spelling.
- Most pupils, including the most able pupils, make good progress in reading. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stage 2 has been above the national average for several years. In 2018, pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2, including for the most able pupils, was in the highest 20% nationally.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The executive headteacher has an accurate view of the effectiveness of the early years provision. She has identified that the high-quality provision identified at the previous inspection has not been sustained. This is due to inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment. Her plans and appropriate actions have not yet secured teaching that helps current children to make strong progress.
- Adults plan a range of activities using both the indoor and outdoor environment. They use activities to assess children's learning regularly. However, adults do not always make best use of these activities to gather information about children's learning. This is because they do not consider the range of evidence that an activity can provide to support assessment of different areas of learning.
- Adults do not routinely use information about what children can already do to plan activities that support learning to the full. Activities do not always provide appropriate levels of challenge for children's different starting points. This means that children currently in the Reception class are not making the maximum progress of which they are capable.
- Children usually join early years with skills and abilities that are at, or above, those typical for their age. Inspection evidence confirms that this is the case. Historically, almost all children reached a good level of development at the end of Reception and met the standards expected for their age in each of the early learning goals. This reflects that leaders ensure that all areas of learning are equally provided for by the curriculum.
- Adults' support for children's early phonic skills is effective. Children understand the links between phonics and writing, but adults do not always ensure that activities develop these fully.
- Children are confident in their learning environment and show curiosity about the world around them. This was seen during the inspection when, during a visit from a local vet, children asked sensible questions and made comparisons to the work of doctors. Adults promote children's independence well.
- Children's behaviour is good. They listen attentively to adults and concentrate on activities. Adults model how children should talk to one another. As a result, relationships between children and with adults are positive. Children play and work collaboratively.
- The early years is a safe and secure environment. Adults have had appropriate training in safeguarding and first aid. All welfare requirements are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 124705 |
| Local authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 10085478 |

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.

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| 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 | 66 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sarah Stirling |
| Headteacher | Elizabeth Donaldson |
| Telephone number | 01473 823397 |
| Website | www.kersey.suffolk.sch.uk |
| Email address | admin@kersey.suffolk.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 23–24 February 2012 |

Information about this school

- Kersey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium and the proportion of pupils with SEND are much smaller than is found in most primary schools.
- The school is in the Anglican Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The most recent section 48 inspection of the religious character of the school took place on 10 February 2017.
- The executive headteacher took up her post in September 2016. Since the previous inspection in 2012, there have been two changes in headteacher and a number of changes in staffing.

- The executive headteacher is also headteacher of Hintlesham and Chattisham Church of England Primary School. The two schools work in partnership with one another, including sharing good practice and development opportunities, including mentoring for newly qualified teachers at Kersey Primary. The school is also a member of the Hadleigh Pyramid, a group of nine schools that regularly collaborate with one another.
- The local authority provides support and challenge to the school leaders through regular visits from a standards and excellence officer.
- The school has a Reception class, a mixed-year key stage 1 class and two mixed-year key stage 2 classes.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector had concerns about the quality of education that the school was providing. The initial one-day inspection carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 converted to a full section 5 inspection carried out over two days.
- The inspector observed learning in all classes. These observations were carried out with the executive headteacher. The inspector observed an assembly, listened to a group of pupils read and held a discussion with a group of pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2. The inspector also spoke to pupils when visiting lessons and at less structured times, such as breaktime, to gain their views on the school.
- The inspector looked at a range of pupils' work in lessons, and a further selection of pupils' books was scrutinised with the executive headteacher. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and around the school, including at breaktimes and before school.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the subject leader for English, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, and with teachers and teaching assistants. The inspector also met with members of the governing body and held two telephone conversations with a local authority standards and excellence officer. The head of school was not in school during the inspection due to absence following an accident.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents and policies, including behaviour and attendance information, records of visits carried out by the local authority's officer, minutes of governing body meetings, and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Records of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans were also reviewed.
- The inspector took account of the 19 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and a telephone call made to Ofsted following the inspection. The inspector also met parents at the beginning of both days of the inspection to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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