Churchgate C of E VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115170
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311864
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Anna Coyle

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jenny Turner
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Turnbull
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Hobbs Cross Road Harlow Essex CM17 0LB
Telephone number	01279 866 059
Fax number	01279 866 063

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Churchgate Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the local community in Old Harlow and is slightly smaller than most other primary schools. Most pupils are White British. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is typical for their age. The proportion of pupils who find learning difficult is lower than that in other schools, although this varies significantly from year to year and a high proportion have statements for their special educational needs. A large number of pupils join or leave the school other than at the normal times of the academic year. The school has achieved the Investors in People award, the Healthy Schools award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which has a strong Christian ethos. Parents speak highly of the education their children receive and praise the welcoming, caring environment commenting, 'Each child is valued as an individual in a very caring school.' They particularly like the fact that the staff are approachable and the headteacher is always available in the playground at the start of the school day.

Pupils make good progress and achieve well from Reception to Year 6. They attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Standards currently match national expectations in Year 2 and are above average in Year 6 in all three subjects. Pupils also do well in physical education (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT) and attain good standards in these areas.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding; they have positive attitudes and excellent behaviour. They enjoy learning and do their best to meet the teachers' high expectations. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy coming to school. Their personal and cultural development and well-being are good. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy. They develop a good sense of responsibility, carrying out many jobs to contribute to the community, such as participating in the school council and 'vox pop' sessions, where they can have their say in school matters. Staff provide good care, support and guidance so that children do well. Excellent pastoral care means that pupils are well looked after and cherished in a friendly, positive environment.

Good teaching helps the pupils to make effective progress. Lessons are well organised and children have a good grounding in basic skills. Teachers manage classes well and ensure that pupils find learning interesting. However, teaching is very occasionally unsatisfactory when lesson planning is not focused enough on the skills individual pupils are expected to learn and the use of assessment information is inconsistent. Marking does not always give pupils enough advice on how to improve their work. Nevertheless, teachers are calm and caring, and teaching assistants make a positive contribution to helping pupils with learning difficulties. The curriculum provides a good range of experiences and plenty of after-school activities, including a wide range of clubs and sporting activities.

The school has improved since it was last inspected in 2003. The provision for the most able pupils has been developed and the provision for science is a continuing area of focus. The headteacher oversees the provision effectively and the governors provide good support. Senior leaders help to make sure that the school is managed smoothly and efficiently, and the subject leaders fulfil their responsibilities. This gives the school good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and achieve well because they have good opportunities to develop their skills in the Reception class. Adults are calm and caring. They manage the children well and help them to learn in a positive learning environment. Parents are appreciative of the ease with which their children settle into the well-managed provision. As a result, nearly all children reach the standards expected nationally in the six areas of learning by the end of the Reception year, and a significant minority exceeds them. This is because the quality of teaching and the curriculum are good and so pupils become confident enough to enjoy organised activities as

well as making their own choices. The small outdoor area is used well, although it is limited in size. Staff keep a close eye on how well children are doing and ensure that they develop the appropriate skills to help them when they move into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that all lesson plans say clearly what skills pupils are to learn and how the work is to be matched to their individual needs.
- Use the systems for assessing and marking pupils' work more effectively so that pupils have clear targets to help them learn and helpful advice on how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The results of the national tests show that standards have fluctuated considerably over the last few years, varying from below average to above average at both key stages. In 2007, standards were above average at the end of Key Stage 2, but below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Currently, pupils make good progress overall and achieve well. Standards have risen dramatically in reading and are above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. Pupils are reaching the expected standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, mathematics and science. Staff have managed high numbers of pupils entering and leaving the school at different times well, so that they settle quickly and make good progress from their varied starting points. In some year groups, the school frequently has high numbers of pupils who have learning difficulties but they make good progress and achieve well. All pupils do particularly well in PE and ICT and attain good standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show good respect and tolerance towards the needs of others and are willing to take on responsibilities. Their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils demonstrate a clear set of values and beliefs and fully embrace the Christian values and ethos promoted by the school. Excellent behaviour and positive attitudes make a good contribution to their success in learning. Pupils are developing a strong commitment to healthy and responsible lifestyles through the school's specific emphasis on personal, social, health and citizenship education and sporting activities. Pupils' contribution to the school community is good. They fulfil their roles effectively as school councillors and playtime leaders. They work cooperatively and are keen to learn from each other. Good levels of attendance and punctuality show that pupils are acquiring these important life skills. The strengths in pupils' personal development and well-being, combined with good achievements in basic skills, equip them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort. They make good use of interactive whiteboards and laptop computers to motivate pupils to learn and to help them to understand what is required during lessons. As a result, levels of enjoyment are often good and learning proceeds at a good pace. Teaching is particularly lively when pupils are actively

engaged in practical activities, such as learning to sing in Spanish. Teaching is very occasionally unsatisfactory when the planning does not specify clearly enough what skills pupils are expected to learn and teachers do not set out precisely how work is to be tailored for pupils of different abilities. This leads to a slow pace in learning and, consequently, pupils' interest wanes. Nevertheless, most lessons hold the pupils' attention and make sure that they progress well. Marking is variable and is good in some classes. In others, marking does not always give children enough clear advice on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum has benefited from the recent focus on reading and ICT, which is helping pupils to make good progress in these areas. The staff provide good opportunities for pupils to achieve well through targeted intervention and support groups for all learners, including those with learning difficulties. The curriculum is extended by good opportunities for pupils to learn a modern foreign language (Spanish) and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities, including football, gymnastics, netball and basketball. Provision for PE has improved through links with the local secondary school, and pupils enjoy the chance to participate frequently in swimming lessons during the summer months. Older pupils are enthusiastic about visits to local places of interest and residential trips, which help to extend their learning and understanding of the wider world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults know the pupils well and good provision is made to support their well-being. This is reflected in their good personal development and positive attitudes to learning. Pastoral care is excellent. Newcomers' needs are met well and they make good progress personally and academically. Clear procedures for safeguarding and child protection mean that pupils are safe whilst they are at school. The arrangements for assessing pupils' work and setting targets are not used rigorously by all teachers to track pupils' progress over time and to set appropriate targets for class and year groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Effective leadership and management of the school are based firmly on the school's strong Christian ethos and its good links with parents and the local community. The welcoming environment does much to make all who enter feel valued and appreciated. The headteacher and the deputy work effectively to promote a good quality of education for the pupils and they provide clear direction for all staff. Subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning and evaluate performance accurately, but there are inconsistencies in the way that the new assessment procedures are used by staff. The governors support the school well and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously. Their expertise is used effectively to benefit pupils' learning.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	**School Overall**

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards[1] reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

[1] Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Churchgate CofE VA Primary School, Harlow, CM17 0LB

You may remember we came to see you at your school recently. Thank you for making us feel so welcome during our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing you talk about your work and your school. Here are a few things we found out.

- You go to a good school where you do well and make good progress.
- The teaching is good.
- Adults care about you and look after you very well.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you have positive attitudes to learning.
- You have many things to do after school and many of you really like to take part in sports activities and swimming, which help to keep you fit.
- Many of you help by doing jobs around the school and the school council has lots of ideas for improving things.

The headteacher, staff and governors all work together well. We think that they should go on improving the school by making sure that all lessons are planned clearly so that you know what your teachers want each of you to learn. They should also check your progress regularly and encourage you to try harder by giving you more advice when they mark your work. You can help by listening to the things they tell you and continuing to work hard.

We hope that you go on enjoying school.

Dr Anna Coyle Lead inspector