

# Orsett Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115171
<b>Local Authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	338525
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Amanda Bray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Masson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 April 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The majority of the time was spent looking at learning and 14 lessons were observed. All seven teachers were observed at least once. Meetings were held with the school council, two governors and many of the school staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of policies, minutes of meetings, local authority reports, examples of pupils' work and 76 parental questionnaires as well as those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- what the school is doing to halt an apparent decline in standards and improve the achievement of pupils in both key stages, especially of boys overall and of girls in mathematics
- what the school is doing to support the most able pupils and increase the proportion of higher levels attained in both key stages
- what the school is doing to raise the quality of teaching and learning so that more pupils make good progress
- how well teachers use the assessment of pupils' progress in lessons and over time to plan sufficiently challenging work
- how well the leadership at all levels is providing the school with the capacity to improve.

## Information about the school

This is an average sized school. The majority of the pupils are from a White British background with a small number from other minority ethnic groups, especially of African descent. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average but high in some year groups.

The school has had several changes of headteacher and other senior posts since the last inspection. The interim headteacher was appointed in October 2009. Orsett Primary has a Healthy Schools award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

The school has been through a very turbulent period with a number of changes to the leadership. This included an unsuccessful period as part of a federation with another local school. Throughout this period, teachers and other staff, as well as parents, have had some concerns about the future of the school. Standards dipped and some pupils underachieved, especially those who were capable of attaining high levels.

The governing body acted decisively, with support from the local authority, to address the perceived weaknesses in leadership. An interim headteacher has been in post for some time and has already made a number of very positive changes to the school. The governing body have put a succession plan in place to ensure that, when a permanent headteacher is appointed, the handover is smooth. The senior staff have been delegated more responsibility and they are using this well to raise standards, track pupils' progress and address any weaknesses that remain. For example, a new tracking system has made it easier to see which pupils are making less than the expected progress each term. The progress of the pupils is discussed at regular meetings with class teachers and efforts made to halt any decline in their learning. A particular strength evident among the current leadership team is their willingness to look for support and advice from beyond the school. This has not always been the case in the past and the school has missed opportunities to bring in expert advice and to visit other good practice in other local schools. This is opening up professional development opportunities for all staff and is already supporting school improvement in many ways.

Many of these new initiatives have only recently been put in place and the school has yet to see their full benefit. This is why the overall picture of the school, and its capacity to improve, remains satisfactory. Even so, the school's latest self-evaluation is accurate and provides a sound basis for raising standards. The number of improvements made and the rigorous focus on raising standards has already resulted in better outcomes. The dip in standards in Year 2 in 2009 has been reversed and extra support put in place for the current Year 3. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making similar progress to their peers. The Year 6 pupils, who have made satisfactory progress for a number of years without achieving their full potential, are now being better challenged and expectations have been raised. More opportunities to solve problems and develop thinking skills are in place. Standards in writing and mathematics, although satisfactory, are a focus in the school's improvement planning. Attendance is consistently above average. Pupils feel safe at school and they have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles.

One reason for the improvements evident in the school is that more of the teaching and learning is good, although it remains satisfactory overall. The school has not done

enough in the past to spread the good practice that can be found within the staff team. Although there is better assessment and tracking of data, and teachers have a clearer idea of the success of their teaching, pupils are not all clear about how well they are doing and what their next steps should be. Teachers have strong and positive relationships with pupils, as do pupils with each other. This helps their good and, at times, excellent behaviour in lessons. Partly this is the result of the good care, guidance and support evident throughout the observations made during the inspection, and in pupils' and parents' questionnaires. Child protection and other safeguarding arrangements are sound and pupils say they have adults they trust and could turn to in need. A group of teaching assistants have trained in a nurture scheme and are now providing excellent support for a small group of pupils during lunchtime. This practice is very effective in helping those pupils' personal and social skills, which in turn supports their learning, especially in the afternoon. This practice is being used as an exemplar for other schools to visit and observe.

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

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics by
  - consolidating recent improvements to the curriculum
  - providing further training for teachers.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that more is consistently good or better by
  - spreading the existing good practice
  - using assessment to help pupils better understand the next steps in their learning.
- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in both key stages by ensuring expectations are high enough and lessons provide sufficient challenge.
- Improve the leadership at all levels by
  - embedding the use of assessment data to more accurately track pupils' progress
  - making more use of support from external sources.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>3</b>
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From lesson observations and pupils' books, it is evident that current standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with those expected. This represents satisfactory progress overall as has been the case in recent years. For this reason, pupils' achievement and enjoyment are satisfactory. However, changes to the curriculum, especially in writing and problem-solving in mathematics, are already having a positive impact on pupils' work. The higher expectations now in place were reflected

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by more able pupils' enjoyment in the challenges they were given in a mathematics lesson.

Children start school with levels of knowledge and understanding broadly in line with those expected. They make satisfactory progress overall, although it is better in those classes where the teaching is strongest. Recent work on assessment has given teachers a better understanding of the levels pupils are at and of the progress they are making compared to the national picture. This has highlighted where there has been past underperformance and has led to concerted action to raise standards. The levels of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology have meant that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the move to secondary education and life after school. In some year groups, girls do better than boys, especially in writing. In 2009, girls did very poorly in mathematics in Year 6. Inspectors looked carefully at whether any gender differences remain but found that boys and girls are currently making broadly similar progress. Currently as many girls as boys are in the top groups for mathematics.

The staff are aware that some of the pupils are capable of better achievement, particularly the more able, and have begun work to raise standards further and to ensure that the progress made is better than satisfactory. Pupils are keen to make a contribution to the school and wider community, and the school council provides a good opportunity for the pupil voice to be heard. Pupils' moral and social understanding is strong and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The teaching and learning, which is satisfactory overall, is improving and a significant amount of good teaching was observed during the inspection. However, this not consistent enough and spread widely enough to ensure all pupils reach the standards of which they are capable. The best teaching is characterised by challenging questioning which focuses pupils' thinking and extends their understanding. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners, especially when the lessons interest them and demand high levels of concentration. Where teaching is satisfactory, it does not challenge pupils sufficiently. Teaching assistants provide good support for a range of pupils and enable teachers to focus on specific groups of either higher or lower attainers.

The curriculum is currently being reviewed after an audit of the provision for the most able pupils. The school has good provision for learning a modern foreign language. There is a good range of clubs, teams and educational visits which enrich and extend the basic curriculum well. However, the school is at an early stage of planning meaningful links between subjects.

The good care, guidance and support reflects the high levels of care provided for specific pupils, such as those who take part in the lunchtime personal and social activity. Pupils are adamant that they are well looked after especially if hurt or worried. The guidance given to pupils is often good thanks to the improved assessment procedures. Transition arrangements are good and the school provides a bright effective and welcoming learning environment.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Now that there is some stability in the leadership, with an experienced interim headteacher, the staff are seeing necessary improvements being made. The school is demonstrating a clear and strong ambition for improvement. It is the governing body

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which has provided recent stability and some strong leadership in dealing with issues in the past. They recognise that they have not been so closely involved in monitoring what is happening in school through their own regular visits. However, they have satisfactory systems in place for ensuring pupils' safety, including a good record of the necessary checks made on staff. The school's capacity to improve is evident in the recent introduction of tracking systems. These provide staff with a clearer view of how well the pupils are learning. Staff are also very positive about the opportunities now being developed to provide support and advice from outside the school. The headteacher and senior staff have begun routine monitoring of teaching and learning through a range of activities, including observing lessons. These have already resulted in support and advice being taken on board and clear improvements to practice.

The school has tried to maintain satisfactory communication and partnerships with parents during some turbulent times, with mixed results. Partnerships with a range of outside agencies have recently been effective in supporting school improvement. The school has good links with a school in France, and this forms part of its satisfactory work in promoting community cohesion. Overall, the school promotes satisfactory equality of opportunity as is evident in the way gender issues have been addressed. However, not enough is done to ensure the more able pupils achieve as well as they could.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Recent staffing changes, and alterations made to the latest early years curriculum, are showing positive signs of improvement but are not sufficiently embedded to ensure that



children make good progress. The outdoor area has a great deal of potential but is not used fully as a learning resource. From their broadly average levels of attainment on entry, the children make largely satisfactory progress. They often have good knowledge of numbers and counting but are slow to develop their calculation skills. Their skills in letters and sounds, and in developing early writing, are weaker. Teachers assess pupils' progress well using a range of observations and records of their participation in activities. Sound supervision ensures they are well cared for and looked after safely. The leadership of this key stage is sound, aware of what is needed to improve the provision further and capable of making the changes necessary.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## **Views of parents and carers**

The parents' responses to the questionnaires show that a significant number have concerns about the leadership and management in the school. The governing body are in the process of appointing a new substantive headteacher and the interim headteacher, together with other senior staff at the school, is leading the school well and building and developing some good practice rather than just 'minding the shop'. All of the parents who replied say the school keeps their children safe and a very large majority say their child enjoys school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Orsett Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 208 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	37	42	55	5	7	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	33	43	43	57	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	16	48	65	10	14	4	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	18	41	55	10	14	10	14
The teaching is good at this school	10	14	49	67	10	14	4	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	16	41	59	12	17	6	9
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	21	51	67	9	12	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	16	47	73	7	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	19	36	51	14	20	7	10
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	16	46	63	10	14	5	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	13	44	62	15	21	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	7	10	33	48	21	30	8	12
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	20	41	55	15	20	4	5

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



15 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orsett Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Grays, RM16 3JR

I am writing to thank you for your help when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting some of you, and especially the school council who were very positive about the school and their role. I also want to tell you what we think about your school. We know, because you told us, that you have had too many changes in the leadership of the school recently. However, this has now been addressed and the governors are busy appointing a permanent headteacher. You deserve some stability because throughout the changes you have carried on behaving very well. The school is helping you make satisfactory progress but we think you can do better. The school is good at keeping you safe and at teaching you about staying healthy. Your attendance is better than at most other schools. Well done!

We have asked the school to do four things to improve its work.

Help you get better at writing and mathematics.

Help your teachers learn new ways of helping you so they get even better at their job.

Help more of you reach the higher levels that we know you can.

Make sure the leadership is effective in improving the school and making it even better in the future.

Thanks you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Orsett and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector

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