

Colne Engaine Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Green Farm Road, Colne Engaine, Colchester, CO6 2HA

Inspection dates

25 February–20 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although achievement is improving, following a period when pupils in Key Stage 2 made less progress than they should, pupils are not yet making good progress across all year groups.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's performance do not take sufficient account of pupils' achievement over time.
- Leaders' checks on teaching have led to recent improvements. However, some inconsistencies remain, so that pupils are not yet achieving well in all classes.
- Expectations for pupils' progress are not consistently high enough to ensure that all pupils, including some who are disadvantaged, make good progress.
- The work provided to pupils, including the most-able, is not always challenging enough.
- Teachers' marking, does not give pupils in all year groups clear enough guidance that shows them what they need to do to improve their work.
- The progress of groups of pupils is not always analysed so that any underperformance is spotted early and action taken quickly to provide support.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that funding to support disadvantaged pupils has a consistently positive impact on their achievement

The school has the following strengths

- The school supports pupils' well-being and nurtures their spiritual and moral development effectively.
- Pupils' conduct is good. They have positive attitudes to learning, feel safe and are kept safe.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception and are well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils are tolerant of others and understand the rule of law and democracy.
- Pupils make good progress in learning phonics (letters and sounds). The progress made in reading by Year 6 pupils improved a lot in 2014. Progress made by Year 6 pupils in spelling, punctuation, grammar and mathematics has improved this year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. This included learning in literacy, mathematics, history, science and during teacher-led and child-initiated activities in the early years. Four visits to lessons were conducted with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work in lessons and separately with the headteacher and the literacy and numeracy leader. She listened to pupils reading and held discussions with pupils in formal meetings and at informal times of the day. She observed pupils at break and lunch times, as well as in assembly.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, subject and phase leaders as well as those responsible for special educational needs and child protection.
- Meetings were held with representatives from the local authority and the governing body.
- The 43 responses from parents to the online Parent View survey, as well as comments made to the inspector by parents during the inspection, were considered. The school's own parent survey was also scrutinised and staff responses to a questionnaire were analysed.
- The inspector also looked at a range of documentation. This included information relating to the attainment and progress of pupils in each year group, other groups and individual pupils across the school; information relating to leaders' checks on teaching and the management of staff performance; school development plans; a school self-evaluation summary; and information provided on the school's website.
- Records of pupils' behaviour and safeguarding information, including accident logs, were also considered.
- An additional inspector visited the school on 20 March 2015 to collect further evidence.

Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Parker

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children attend the early years provision on a full-time basis. These include a very small number of Year 1 pupils. Pupils in the rest of the school are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are White British. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. None speak English as an additional language.
- A well below-average proportion of pupils is supported through pupil premium funding (additional money provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children).
- An above-average percentage of pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. Most of these pupils have emotional or social difficulties, or moderate learning difficulties.
- Two new teachers have joined the school in the last year. One of these has taken on a leadership role this academic year as literacy and numeracy leader.
- The school works with a large number of primary and secondary schools in the Colne Valley Consortium.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that rates of progress for all groups of pupils accelerate, by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently set work, across subjects and for homework, at the right level of difficulty so that pupils of different ability, including the most-able, are always well supported and challenged
 - teachers' marking consistently provides pupils with clear comments about how to improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - expectations for progress, set by leaders in improvement plans, rise across the school
 - all leaders have a clear and up-to-date view of the progress made by groups of pupils, so that trends and patterns are spotted early and actions taken quickly to support any groups who are doing less well than others
 - leaders' evaluations of school performance focus on pupils' learning over time and the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - more effective approaches are used to measure the impact of support provided to disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although leaders have had some success in improving the quality of teaching and increasing the rate of pupils' progress, inconsistencies remain. They have not yet ensured that pupils, regardless of their backgrounds and abilities, make good progress. Expectations for progress, including those for disadvantaged pupils, some of whom have additional learning needs, are not always high enough.
- Leaders have tackled past underperformance but recent actions to improve teaching have not yet resulted in pupils making good progress across all subjects and year groups. This is because the helpful guidance they provide to teachers is not always put into practice or followed up robustly.
- Funding used to support disadvantaged pupils has not led to them making consistently good progress in writing. The methods used to measure the impact of the support provided to these pupils are not sharp enough for leaders and governors to evaluate how effective their decisions have been.
- Leaders' evaluations of school performance are overgenerous because they do not take enough account of learning over time or the progress made by different groups of pupils, including the most-able.
- Leaders check the progress made by individuals, and some groups of pupils in Year 6, through progress review meetings which are now held every half term. However, the progress of all groups is not examined in the same detail, in all year groups, to identify trends and patterns that may indicate action is needed. As a result, some of those who could make faster progress are not challenged to do so.
- Although leaders want all pupils to do well, they do not ensure equality of opportunity because some pupils are not helped enough to make good progress. They do, however, foster good relationships between pupils. Pupils interact happily together and are confident that any form of discrimination is not tolerated at the school, because leaders have created a culture in which good behaviour is expected.
- The local authority has provided some helpful support to the school which has developed the skills of subject and other leaders and improved some teaching. However, the support provided has not ensured that leaders' evaluations of teaching are consistently accurate. Leaders' evaluations of teaching have not taken enough account of the work in pupils' books and their learning over time.
- The leader for both literacy and numeracy is new to the role. She is involved in checks on teaching and has conducted staff training. These have led to some improvements in teaching, but have not had time to show their full impact on pupils' achievement.
- Good partnership work with other schools in the Colne Valley Consortium has helped subject and other leaders, including the early years leader, to develop their skills. Links with local secondary schools have also positively supported pupils' next steps in education.
- Leaders demonstrate clear capacity for improvement because, in 2014, the progress made by Year 6 pupils in reading was much better than that of their predecessors. Year 1 pupils' performance in phonics has improved over the past two years. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to make better progress than Year 6 pupils last year in mathematics, and in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The primary physical education and sport premium has been used effectively to provide coaching for pupils, to develop the skills of staff and to put on lunchtime and after-school sports clubs. This expenditure has had a positive impact on pupils, with increased rates of participation in clubs.
- Pupils learn a broad and balanced range of subjects built around themes, which most pupils said they found interesting and fun. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well through lessons, assemblies, the choir and other enrichment activities. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well through art and learning about other countries. The school's values, which include empathy and respect, engender the British values of tolerance, democracy and an understanding of the importance of

the rule of law. Pupils are, therefore, prepared well for life in modern Britain.

- The school effectively supports pupils' well-being. The school's arrangements for ensuring pupils are kept safe are well thought out and meet statutory requirements. Parents are positive about their experiences with the school. They comment favourably on the approachability of staff and the care shown to their children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have some idea about the quality of teaching and achievement in the school but their evaluations of the school's performance are overgenerous. While they ask questions about pupils' achievement and about pupil premium funding, they have not ensured that this funding is making as much difference as it could to disadvantaged pupils.
 - Governors ensure that the correct protocols are followed in relation to the performance management of staff. They know how underperformance is tackled and are provided with information by the headteacher about how well staff have met targets and why they should progress up the salary scale.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and that staff are appropriately vetted and trained.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well. They are polite, courteous and friendly, as a result of the school's values, which promote tolerance, empathy and respect.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning, remaining focused in lessons, even when the quality of teaching is not strong or when the work they are given is too easy or too hard.
- Pupils collaborate well in lessons and interact happily at break and lunchtimes, even when they have to stay indoors because of wet weather. They respond to instructions quickly and assemble in an orderly way.
- Staff keep a close eye on pupils at break times and during the day, dealing with minor incidents as they occur. Logs of recurring incidents carried out by individual pupils are kept by the headteacher. In this way, leaders keep the behaviour of individual pupils under review. Records show that few pupils misbehave and that, when incidents occur, appropriate actions are taken.
- Pupils' attendance is average. There have been no permanent exclusions of pupils in recent years and the number of fixed-term exclusions has decreased this year.
- Pupils report that behaviour is typically good but that, occasionally, a small number of pupils do not follow school rules and call out in lessons.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding arrangements. Good levels of supervision, regular fire drills and careful logging of accidents all contribute to keeping pupils safe.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they understand how to keep safe; for example, when crossing the road and when using the internet. They feel confident that, if they were to have concerns, there are people in school they could talk to. Individual pupils talked about the teachers and the 'friendship bench' (a bench that pupils can use if they are looking for other pupils to play with at break time) as reasons why they felt safe.
- Pupils understand what that there are different kinds of bullying, such as verbal, physical, racist and

homophobic bullying. They report that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively by staff should it occur.

- Leaders' work to protect pupils at risk from harm is good. Through strong partnership work with social services and other agencies, leaders identify pupils who are at risk and put measures in place to help them to stay safe.
- Parents who responded to the Parent View survey indicated that they believed that their children were safe and that behaviour at the school was good.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Leaders are working to improve the quality of teaching. However, it is not yet good because sometimes teachers do not set work at the right level of difficulty for pupils in class, for homework and across subjects. As a result, not enough pupils, including some of the most-able and some who are disadvantaged, make good progress.
- The recent introduction of what teachers call 'chilli pepper' challenges (which enable pupils to respond to work at different levels) in literacy and mathematics has not been used consistently well across classes and subjects. Because these challenges have only been in place for a short time, they have not had a full impact on pupils' learning.
- The results of teachers' recent focus on developing pupils' writing was evident in some pupils' work. While some pupils are making good improvements in their use of punctuation, the organisation of their writing and the ways in which they hold the reader's interest, others are not as successful.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with high-quality guidance when they mark their work. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are given guidance about how to improve their work, in keeping with the school's approach, but in Years 3 and 4 the teacher's comments are not as helpful. Little guidance is provided to pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics. As a result, pupils do not always know how they can improve their work across subjects.
- The work that pupils do in class is supplemented by homework, which includes reading, spelling and other work. A small number of parents who responded to Parent View indicated that they did not think that the homework their children received was always appropriate for their age. Inspection evidence indicates that, like other work set for pupils, homework is not always set at the right level of difficulty. In response to the school's own parent survey, leaders are working with parents to support home learning.
- The thematic approach adopted by teachers to literacy, mathematics and science learning means that pupils have good opportunities to practise and apply these skills across other subjects. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils used their understanding of how to measure accurately and how to follow instructions when they made bread to a recipe from Tudor times. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learnt about the science behind mummification before creating models of Egyptian mummies.
- Pupils' reading is supported well through daily reading sessions and through good-quality teaching of phonics. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and are successful readers. A mobile library visits the school every two weeks to supplement the books held in school. The literacy leader is currently updating the school library.
- Teachers are reflective and are keen to develop pupils' skills. Classrooms are well organised and pupils' work is celebrated through wall displays. Prompts and helpful aids to support pupils' learning are also displayed in classrooms.
- Teachers, other adults and pupils share productive working relationships built on mutual respect.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although there have been improvements in the rate of pupils' progress, notably in Year 6 this year, it is not consistently strong across all year groups. Scrutiny of pupils' exercise books demonstrates the variation in the quality of pupils' work and the progress that they are making across Key Stage 2.
- In 2013 and 2014, Year 6 pupils left the school having made less progress across Key Stage 2 than pupils nationally. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to make the progress expected of them because they have made better progress in Years 5 and 6 than they did in Years 3 and 4, which has helped them to catch up. For example, progress made by Year 6 pupils in mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar is faster this year.
- Children start in the Reception Year with skills that are broadly typical for their age in all aspects of learning. They make good progress in Reception and are well prepared for Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 1 standards are broadly average. Over the last few years standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have not been high enough. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to attain broadly average standards.
- Sometimes the most-able pupils are set work in lessons that is not demanding enough. As a result, the most-able pupils, for example in Years 3 and 4, do not always make enough progress. In Years 5 and 6, where pupils were challenged to explain the use of language in Tennyson's poem, *The Eagle*, they made good progress.
- The progress and attainment of the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school varies considerably. Some do not make fast enough progress, particularly in writing. The number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 last year was too small to report on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have not made enough progress in the past. The school's focus on improving the quality of teaching and questioning is increasing the rate of these pupils' progress. Current school data indicate that most of them are making good progress but that a small number are not. Some of the recent good work undertaken by leaders, to support these pupils, has not had time to have an impact on their achievement.
- An above-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2013 and 2014. Current data indicate that an average proportion of Year 1 pupils, when compared to 2014 figures, are expected to meet the standard this year.

The early years provision

is good

- Children get off to a good start in Reception. They leave with an above-average percentage having achieved a good level of development. When they join Year 1, they are well prepared for learning.
- The percentage of children exceeding the early learning goals at the end of Reception has improved. This year, a third of children are on track to leave above the level expected at the end of the Reception Year.
- Teaching is good, overall. The class teacher and other adults work collaboratively to support children's learning well. Children learn effectively indoors and outdoors. Children take part in a woodland project which helps them to develop confidence and manage risks.
- Children's skills develop well over time. For example, children grip and use pencils correctly, and those working at a higher level are able to write a sentence which is correctly punctuated. One of the most-able children spelt the words 'once' and 'knight' correctly when retelling a story. Occasionally, the most-able children are not provided with enough of a challenge.
- School progress information indicates that children make at least typical and often good progress in the early years. Work in children's learning journeys (records of work and assessments) shows that children

have good opportunities to develop skills across a range of areas, including literacy, shape, physical development, art and design and technology. Teacher assessments indicate that children learn about mathematics, and children's learning journeys include examples of simple addition sums correctly worked out.

- The teaching of phonics is good. Children are well supported in their learning and have good opportunities to apply their knowledge in sounding out instructions to the class or writing words on a tablet computer.
- Assessments are accurate as a result of good partnership work with parents, who report being well involved in their children's learning.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in this phase. She plans well for children's learning, based on a review of past achievement. Although the progress and skill levels of individual children are tracked carefully, the progress made by particular groups of children is not formally analysed until the end of the year. This means that trends and patterns may not be spotted or addressed quickly.
- Children said that they felt safe. They behave well, interacting happily. They talk about their learning. They spoke to the inspector about building shelters and boats linked to their pirate-themed work, as well as previous successes in learning to fly a kite. Children are kept safe by staff, who are appropriately trained.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115135
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	456040

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 of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Godfrey Evans
Headteacher	Julie Sarti
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2012
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