

Eastchurch Church of England Primary School

Warden Road, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 4EJ

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Achievement by the end of Year 6 has improved since the previous inspection, particularly in writing. Many groups of pupils, including boys and white British pupils, made above average progress. School records show good progress by pupils in other year groups.
- Pupils express pride in their school and their behaviour is good. They treat adults and each other with courtesy and respect.
- Leadership has been galvanised by the close partnership between the two heads of school. They set precise expectations for good teaching and offer concentrated support for staff to improve their methods.
- In the early years, children are given a strong start because the provision is stimulating. Most children reach a good level of development.
- There is strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. British cultural values are celebrated and the active school council prepares pupils well for life in a democratic country.
- The school works hard to keep pupils safe and this has a good impact on pupils from both sites. They say that they feel secure and parents express high levels of confidence that their children are looked after carefully.
- Governors and leaders have reorganised their working methods since the previous inspection and focus their actions more effectively on improving pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is good because expectations are made very clear to pupils. Frequent checks and guidance help pupils to improve their work and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Rates of progress in mathematics are not as strong as in reading and writing. This is because opportunities for mathematical reasoning are not widely developed.
- Mathematical skills are not applied across a wide range of subjects such as geography and science.
- Subject leaders, some very new to their role, have not yet evaluated their impact when training for the new curriculum. They have not helped individual teachers to apply what they have learned to improve their planning and subject knowledge.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 18 teachers. Two sessions were observed jointly with the heads of school. A head of school also joined an inspector on a further visit to a series of lessons to check pupils' writing. Two subject leaders joined inspectors in checking pupils' workbooks.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, and subject leaders. A discussion took place between an inspector and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' activities during break and lunchtimes as well as at two assemblies and a breakfast club.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils reading and discussed their choices of books.
- The inspectors took account of the 55 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as listening to views during informal discussions with parents. The views of staff were taken into account through meetings and the 58 responses to the staff survey.
- The school's own attainment and progress records for the previous and current academic years were analysed, in addition to published information on pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors examined records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including security checks on staff. They also looked at behaviour logs and attendance records.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Joyce Lydford	Additional inspector
Sue Quirk	Additional inspector
Nourreddin Khassal	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Eastchurch Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school and is situated on two sites. All Saints in Eastchurch is about three miles away from the recently built St Clement.
- Early years provision consists of a Nursery and two full-time Reception classes in All Saints and a further full-time Reception class at St Clement. The Nursery runs separate morning and afternoon sessions.
- The vast majority of pupils in the school are of White British heritage. There are small proportions with other backgrounds, such as Other White and White and Black Caribbean heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and no pupils are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support through the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The substantive executive headteacher has been on sick leave since September 2014 and the school is currently run by the two heads of school. They have had the part-time support since January 2015 firstly of an advisory headteacher and currently of the headteacher of Joy Lane Primary School, Whitstable. This headteacher holds a role in the local authority as a Kent Leader in Education and is now acting executive headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding and pupils make accelerated progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - planning activities that cover data handling and shape, space and measure in sufficient depth, and including in subjects other than mathematics
 - devising tasks and questions that deepen pupils' understanding by applying their mathematical skills to a range of problems that require them to explain their reasoning.
- Make sure subject leaders train their colleagues effectively, and evaluate the impact of the training, so that all teachers have a deeper understanding of the new curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management in the school are good because the heads of school have worked together remarkably well this academic year. Consequently they have, in a relatively short time, brought about notable improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. A typical comment from staff is that 'The heads of school have done an amazing job in the absence of the executive headteacher.'
- This partnership of leaders has encouraged staff at all levels to strive for more rapid progress among their pupils. Established teachers who responded to the staff survey are very satisfied with the professional development activities guided by the senior leaders on, for example, improved marking. Newly qualified teachers who met the inspectors commended the effective balance between formal and informal support that they had received this year. They believe that the weekly meetings with their mentor and frequent guidance from the senior leaders have greatly helped their development of good classroom routines.
- In 2014, progress for all pupils by the end of Year 6 was in line with national trends in reading and mathematics and many groups made significantly above average progress in writing. This shows the positive impact made since the previous inspection of revised English and mathematics policies.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils by the end of Year 6, because the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers are narrowing.
- Safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and staff training in this respect is regular and thorough. Policies are applied consistently across both sites so that pupils are safe and cared for very well. Leaders promote equal opportunities for all pupils and do not tolerate any discrimination.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school by making frequent visits to support and confirm the school leaders' judgements of teaching and learning. In addition, the authority has been active in supporting the heads of school by recruiting an interim and a part-time executive headteacher from the Kent leaders of education. The school has benefitted from funding provided for school leaders to participate in training offered by the Kent Association of Heads. The local authority has also been represented at termly meetings with leaders and governors to check the impact of school actions on progress.
- The heads of school make frequent and meticulous observations of pupils' learning and classroom activities. They changed the criteria for their lesson observations this year so that they are now able to give detailed and tailored guidance to teachers for further improvements. In this way, the quality of teaching in the school continues to improve. Middle leaders are making effective checks upon the progress seen in pupils' books in their respective areas. They work as a team across both sites and this is helping to improve pupils' work at a consistent rate.
- Robust systems have been implemented to make sure that only those teachers who meet their targets move up the salary scale. The heads of school do not shirk difficult conversations if these are necessary to secure improved teaching.
- Some middle leaders are very new to their roles and have quickly developed consistent practices for checking pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility. Their activities have also included training all staff in the use of phonics (the sounds letters make) and planning for mastery in mathematics. However, middle leaders recognise that they do not yet hold teachers sufficiently to account for applying these new skills to improve classroom practices. Plans are in hand to involve middle leaders more in evaluating teaching.
- Since the previous inspection, a new, consistent and detailed system has been introduced for pupils to respond to teachers' marking. It helps most pupils to have a clearer understanding of how to improve their work. This is because targets are precise and pupils have some responsibility for checking their own progress in lessons.
- The government's sports funding has been used well to provide termly training for all teachers to improve their skills in teaching physical education (P.E). The PE coordinators on both sites continue this support and pupils' achievement has improved. Participation in competitions and tournaments has increased and some of the funds have been used to supplement the transport costs involved. Enthusiasm for sports clubs is evident in the increased range of activities offered in response to pupils' requests. A visit by an Olympic pentathlete has also whetted pupils' appetite for sports such as fencing.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils develop spiritual understanding from their religious education programme; reflection is encouraged in the spiritual garden and prayer boxes in each classroom. Prayers are part of the daily routine with blessings at the end of the day. Moral development is fostered by projects such as the 'Litter Angels', participation in the Island Run for charity and song-writing events with a 'beat the bully' theme.

- Rich cultural and social opportunities are offered to pupils. The dockyard restoration project and popular Green Club develop social consciousness in the local environment. Parents for whom English is an additional language share stories from their home countries with pupils. This widens pupils' understanding of different values and beliefs. There are penfriend projects to deepen appreciation of children's lives in other countries and different parts of Britain. Continuity of the school's traditions was reinforced when a former pupil, who had written to the Queen in 1994 to ask her to open the Eastchurch extension, was invited to open the new building on St Clement's site.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. For example, magistrates are invited to give talks to Year 6 on our legal system and representatives of different religions introduce pupils to the range of faiths in our country. Celebrations such as the village Easter Bonnet parade and the Victory in Europe (VE) day assembly and party instil pride in British history.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is currently being restructured in response to an external review that the governors themselves have commissioned. This has improved governors' understanding of the school's quality of teaching and standards of achievement since the previous inspection. They are implementing local authority and diocesan training to ask more challenging questions than in the past, particularly about pupils' performance.
 - Governors have improved their understanding of reports presented by the heads of school. They make organised visits to the school to check the progress towards targets in the school improvement plan.
 - They manage the budget carefully to support the improvement plan and also make scrupulous checks to ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
 - The governing body has developed a more accurate understanding of how Eastchurch pupils perform compared with national standards. This is because governors discuss the Ofsted Data Dashboard and they are now being trained to use additional published information.
 - The governing body examines how pupil premium funds are spent and satisfies itself that the intended groups are being supported. The regular and analytical reports from school leaders are helping them to develop a clearer picture of the impact of the expenditure on pupils' performance.
 - Governors understand the link between pupils' progress and the salary increases of their teachers. A committee is kept informed about the support given to improve teaching and the impact of this support on any underperformance that may have arisen.
 - British values of democracy and tolerance are actively promoted. Governors have welcomed speakers from diverse faiths into assemblies. For example, the imam who is chaplain to the local prison has visited the school. Members of the governing body work to prevent extremism through their code of conduct for visitors and volunteers. Those who also serve in local government are considering ways in which pupils can become more informed about local democracy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils work constructively with adults and each other in lessons and around the school. For example, pupils comfort one another if they are upset. Behaviour is good rather than outstanding because pupils' attention can wander. This happens on the few occasions when activities do not engage pupils or help them to move on after finishing a task.
- Pupils are helpful towards others and the rewards system is appreciated. They like the fact that acts of kindness are encouraged and celebrated in assemblies with ribbons on the kindness wreath. Pupils are proud that they were involved in selecting the symbols and values that are celebrated in their garden of reflection.
- Pupils clearly understand the school values of being ambitious, responsible, enthusiastic, self-motivated, and caring, and cite numerous examples of when they put them into practice. Inspectors were told of the many ways in which pupils went out of their way to welcome and include new or distressed classmates.
- Pupils are caring. For example, they do not interrupt classmates and they look out for those who need assistance. These values help to ensure good conduct around the school because the pupils want to live up to the school's values.
- Pupils have great faith that they will be treated fairly in this school. If there is a problem, in or outside school, 'it will be sorted out by teachers,' The 'nest' on each site is valued by pupils as somewhere to go if emotional or practical support is needed. They know that they can raise concerns through their democratically elected council. The only complaint brought to the inspectors' attention was that pupils want Eastchurch to go on to Years 7 and 8 so that they do not have to leave.

- Pupils believe their behaviour is well managed by teachers because, in the words of one pupil, 'every lesson, they make it fun if they can... but when it's serious work time, we get down to it.'
- Staff who responded to the staff survey all agree that behaviour is managed well, as do the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire.
- Pupils take pride in their school and attractive grounds which they keep litter-free. They speak appreciatively of the range of extra-curricular activities offered in Enrichment Week. Those who attend breakfast club are improving their punctuality to school. It also offers an opportunity to discuss their homework. Pupils were seen enthusiastically suggesting further improvements to the home-made dioramas that they had brought in that morning.
- Attendance rates are improving because a high profile is given to recognising classes with 100 per cent attendance, such as non-uniform days for the top class at each site. A member of staff has been engaged to follow up absence rigorously with parents. The school is working hard to secure improvements among the families that have found regular attendance difficult in the past. Leaders are acutely aware that further improvements in this respect are a priority.
- Behaviour management is effective because there have been no exclusions.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Movement around the school and to and from the playgrounds are calm. Pupils believe that they are well supervised at break and lunchtimes and the system of 'boundary benches' ensures safe conduct on the fields. Year 5 pupils are recruited to act as 'friendly face' monitors for the Key Stage 1 play areas.
- Pupils have a strong awareness of personal safety, especially when using the internet, as this is explained clearly. Pupils' understanding of cyber safety is assisted by the magazines sent out to, and workshops run for, parents. In addition, they are well informed about local hazards such as the dangers from tidal or marshland changes.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying and maintain that incidents are very rare. All the pupils to whom inspectors spoke said that they knew at least one adult in whom they could confide any concerns. This was summed up by one pupil as follows, 'It doesn't matter who you are, and every teacher in the school helps you and keeps you safe.'
- The parents who responded to Parent View are overwhelmingly happy that their children are safe in school and that the school provides a safe and caring environment.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils are known and valued as individuals by all adults and their convivial interactions with pupils foster a happy and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils are consequently uninhibited about asking for help and attempting answers during lessons.
- Teaching assistants work in teams with the teachers to make sure that effective encouragement is given to any pupils who need additional assistance to complete tasks.
- Reading is promoted well across all year groups. Leaders have organised new texts housed in stimulating book corners in classrooms. Consequently, progress in reading has improved. This is particularly so in Key Stage 2, where it now matches the strong progress seen last year in writing. There are frequent checks on younger pupils' skills in reading. Additional help is organised to ensure that all reach the national expectations for their age. The impact of this is seen in the marked improvement in the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Older pupils are able to infer answers to open questions from books and can use indexes or glossaries to search for additional information.
- Teachers plan a good range of stimulating contexts for writing that engage the pupils across different subjects. There is an emphasis on using varied sentence structures and a wide range of appropriate vocabulary in, for example, their science reports. Planned activities are usually pitched at the right level of challenge for most pupils to help them make good progress. For instance, the most able pupils who spoke to inspectors appreciated the additional or harder questions that they were given because 'the working walls support you to do well...and you [are given the time] to express yourself... using your imagination.' As a result, more pupils are achieving the highest levels of which they are capable.
- Pupils' work in English, mathematics and topic books is marked regularly and subject leaders, as well as heads of school, check that marking is consistent with the school policy. Senior leaders set improvement targets for any teachers whose advice to pupils is not detailed enough to be helpful. The accuracy of teachers' assessments in English is moderated every term. Pupils' levels of attainment are made very clear

to them. Leaders are very aware that their next step is to check that all pupils are responding precisely to their teachers' guidance to make even better progress.

- Activities in mathematics are planned to improve pupils' progress in calculation. This has been effective for most groups of pupils. Additional sessions have been organised to stretch the ability of the most able pupils to discuss the reasoning behind their answers. However, leaders recognise that creating opportunities for all pupils to apply mathematics to solve problems and investigate data trends or shapes are areas for development.
- Questioning by all adults is strongest in early years. For example, teachers and teaching assistants frequently use children's own work to prompt questions about how to improve both spoken and written sentences. Leaders have made plans to improve questioning across the school by forming teams in which strong practitioners can work with teachers whose skills are not as well developed.
- The heads of school have introduced many focused checks on pupils' progress and use these as the basis for frequent discussions with class teachers. Consequently, strategies are rapidly devised for any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Middle leaders are becoming increasingly involved in evaluating the impact of this additional support upon pupils' progress

The achievement of pupils

is good

- In 2014, progress in writing for pupils at the end of Year 6 was well above that for pupils in previous years and significantly above the national average. The current progress of pupils in all year groups has improved upon that in previous years in both reading and mathematics. Rates of progress in reading have improved more markedly across the school than those in mathematics. However, pupils' attainment in mathematics last year was broadly in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Year 6 pupils' performance last year in the spelling, punctuation and grammar tests was well below the national average. Leaders established the reasons for this and have changed the approach to teaching these skills this year. Recent work seen by inspectors in pupils' books confirms that writing is increasingly accurate across a broad range of subjects.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to provide additional activities in reading, writing and mathematics, as well supporting social and sporting programmes that help their development. These pupils are catching up with their peers. In 2014, attainment of disadvantaged pupils was between six and eight months behind that of their classmates in mathematics, reading and writing respectively. However, when compared with pupils nationally, the gap was approximately six months. This year, the gap in Year 6 has narrowed so that the disadvantaged pupils are now only three months behind their peers in reading and less than four months behind in writing. Gaps have also narrowed over the course of this year in Key Stage 1 in writing and mathematics.
- The performance of the most able pupils in 2014 was in line with that of their peers nationally and in mathematics was slightly better than the national trend. Scrutiny of the books of the most able pupils currently in Key Stage 2 shows that this group are making strong progress in English. Discussions with these pupils reveal a pleasing thirst for even harder books and tasks that 'really push us.'
- The proportion of most able pupils in Key Stage 1 who are on track to attain Level 3 this year is greater than the proportion who were exceeding expectations in reading, writing and calculating when they entered Key Stage 1. This represents good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive increasingly well targeted support to make broadly the same progress as their classmates. This is particularly evident in reading because additional help is at the right level and very intensive. The school's commitment to equal opportunities is evident in the fact that pupils with English as an additional language achieve at least as well as, and sometimes better than, their peers.

The early years provision

is good

- Achievement in this phase is good because children enter Nursery, or Reception (in the case of St Clement), with levels of skills and understanding below those typical of three- and four-year-olds. Imaginative teaching that is based upon the children's interests helps them to make good progress so that by the end of the Reception Year, achievement for most children is broadly in line with the national average. Consequently, children are well prepared to move smoothly into Year 1.
- There is little difference between the achievement levels of different groups, with the disadvantaged children and boys achieving as well as, or slightly better than, national averages at the end of Reception in most areas of learning. Leaders recognise that there is a need to raise the profile of reading even

higher so that disadvantaged children make faster progress.

- Good progress is evident in writing with the beginnings of joined writing by the end of the Reception Year. Children’s plausible attempts at spelling show the positive impact of phonics teaching. Challenging tasks are set for the most able children.
- Teaching plans are meticulous and focused on the children’s interests so that they become thoroughly engrossed in the wide and imaginative range of activities designed for them. Their progress in both indoor and outdoor classrooms is recorded methodically, with all adults contributing to assessment. The children are encouraged to evaluate their own work through the use of smiling face stickers and ‘how did I do?’ questions.
- Behaviour is good because the activities are so inviting that children have fun working and playing cooperatively with each other. Safety is good on both sites, with extensive staff training in how to keep children safe and deal effectively with any minor mishaps that do occur. Occasional lapses in self control, though well handled by staff, indicate good rather than outstanding behaviour.
- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good because the team of leaders has a clear understanding of checks on learning and the quality of teaching. Programmes of learning engage children across a wide range of areas. Parents are invited to become actively involved in their children’s learning by visiting school to read with them or share special activity mornings.

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	118644
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	462403

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	520
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Ratchford
Headteacher	Pauline Shipley Executive Headteacher, Michelle Crowe, Head of School St Clement, Sarah Hunt, Head of School All Saints
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 May 2013
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