

Dedham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Parsons Field, Dedham, Colchester, CO7 6BZ

Inspection dates 20–21 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding leadership and management and excellent relationships underpin the school's success. Leadership from the headteacher is resolute and determined. Teaching and pupils' achievement have improved considerably since the last inspection. The uncompromising vision of a school at the heart of its community and the mission to 'nurture a lifelong love of learning' are met very effectively.
- Teaching is outstanding. Lessons are highly motivating because teachers link subjects together very effectively to make learning relevant. Within the innovative curriculum, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- All parents and carers who responded in Parent View agree that their children are happy, safe and taught well in school. All would recommend the school to others.
- Pupils make rapid and sustained progress from generally average starting points. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, attainment is at a much higher level than found nationally. For example, in mathematics, pupils are a year and a term ahead of pupils nationally.
- Almost all disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. A very small number make good rather than outstanding progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Enthusiasm and perseverance are key features of pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Their excellent social skills, good manners and respect for others prepare them very well for their futures.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons as well as individuals and groups of pupils working with teaching assistants. Short sessions of the teaching of letter sounds were also observed. Inspectors also joined the school's celebration assembly.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' past and current work and heard some pupils in Years 1, 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body as well as a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Safeguarding documentation, tracking of pupils' progress data, school evaluation and development planning were scrutinised.
- The views of 61 parents and carers who completed the online Parent View questionnaire were noted.

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school serving the local community. It has seven classes. A third of the pupils live out of the school's catchment area.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a change of over half the teaching staff and the appointment of a deputy headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average.
- There is a below-average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils who have complex learning difficulties make rapid progress from their starting points by:
 - providing prompt and effective assessment of their learning difficulties
 - making detailed plans for appropriate support and work based on that assessment.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been consistently high. Pupils attain levels that are at least a year above those expected of their age group. The proportions of pupils making and exceeding the nationally expected two National Curriculum levels progress far exceed national figures.
- Pupils learn exceptionally well. They make rapid progress, especially in learning basic reading, writing and mathematical skills. These skills, coupled with their highly proficient information and communication technology (ICT) skills, are developed systematically as they move through the school.
- Pupils apply these skills to great effect in innovative ways. For example, the headteacher loans each class £25 for setting up an enterprise to generate funds. Pupils prepare a business plan, advertising literature and keep accounts. Scrutiny of photographs and accounts indicate well-organised and very profitable ventures where pupils use their skills to good effect.
- Most children start in Reception with personal, social and emotional development more advanced than that typically found for their age. In areas of communication, literacy and numeracy their skills are less developed than is typical for the age group.
- Excellent links between home and school help children settle happily and quickly into school. They make a rapid start to learning letter sounds which help them read and write. A wide range of purposeful activities help them make a rapid start to developing their basic number skills.
- Achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is outstanding. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils within the school.
- Almost all disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress. The exception is a very small number of pupils who have complex difficulties in learning. These pupils make good rather than outstanding progress because their learning difficulties are not assessed promptly. Consequently, it takes too long to include specialist advice and recommendations in their special work plans.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and talking about the books they read. At Year 6, attainment in reading is high and at Year 2, above average. The strong links with parents are clearly evident in the amount of reading pupils undertake at home. Pupils who find reading difficult have very secure strategies which they use well for working out how to read unfamiliar words.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is never less than consistently good with much that is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils very well and constantly check on their understanding during lessons. Relationships are excellent so pupils are confident to ask for clarification or help if needed.
- In Reception, teaching is outstanding. Children are provided with an excellent range of exciting opportunities to explore and discover for themselves. The outstanding teaching of letter sounds is leading to rapid progress in reading and spelling. For example, in their

second week at school nearly half the children know several letter sounds and can recognise them at the start of words such as 'snake', 'pin' and 'tiger'.

- Teachers set very high expectations for their pupils to work hard and persevere. They mark or discuss pupils' work with them so they know exactly what they have done well, and how they can improve. Pupils respect their teachers' views and try hard to follow their guidance.
- The school's curriculum is innovative. It meets the needs of pupils very effectively. New initiatives are exceptionally well researched in order to promote optimum progress in pupils' academic and personal growth. For example, the 'screen to page' initiative has had a good impact on raising pupils' attainment further in writing.
- Teachers' planning is based on detailed assessments of what pupils know and need to learn next. Consequently, lessons ensure that pupils reinforce and extend their range of well-developed skills through purposeful links between subjects. For example, in an English lesson, Year 5 pupils, as film directors, used ICT skills to choose appropriate images, then wrote scripts using a range of adjectives in order to direct the actors.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is never less than good. The reason it is not outstanding is that for a very small number of pupils, the work or support planned for them does not always lead to rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, which they value highly. They listen carefully to their teachers. As a result, they answer questions confidently, or offer sensible opinions. They work hard in lessons and take pride in completing their homework to a high standard.
 - Behaviour around the school is outstanding; it is a very harmonious community. Pupils are polite and friendly to those they know and are welcoming to visitors. Dinner times are very social occasions where older pupils help the younger ones and model good table manners.
 - Pupils develop strong values and a high level of respect for others. They know how to voice their opinions and provide reasoned arguments.
 - Pupils demonstrate high degrees of personal responsibility for their own learning. This responsibility was very evident in a Year 6 lesson where pupils began planning how to research and present their findings for a travel brochure about China.
 - Pupils are very proud of, and highly committed to, their school community. Many older pupils have a leadership role in the school, such as 'problem solvers' and house captains. They take these responsibilities seriously. All pupils have a strong voice in decisions relating to their learning and wellbeing through the school council.
 - Safety is taken seriously. Reception children did their own 'risk assessment' for hazards such as tripping and minor injuries from sharp twigs before setting off on their 'Autumn walk'. Older pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and are well aware of safety when using the internet.
 - Pupils are very aware of different types of bullying, such as what is meant by cyber or racist bullying. They are confident incidences of bullying are non-existent in their school and that, should they have concerns, any member of staff will help them.
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- Attendance is consistently well above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- There is no complacency in this successful school. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has maintained the high levels of achievement and pupils' personal development. She has driven improvement relentlessly; pupils' attainment has risen further and the curriculum has improved considerably.
 - Attention to detail and excellent management systems are at the heart of the school's success. The school tracks the progress of individual pupils rigorously. Senior leaders and teachers know exactly how well individuals and different groups of pupils are learning.
 - The headteacher holds teachers to account for the progress their pupils make and ensures they attend appropriate professional development opportunities. Senior teachers provide excellent role models in their own teaching, and support newly qualified and experienced staff very effectively. Consequently, all staff are confident, open to new ideas to improve the school's provision and work very effectively as a team.
 - The school ensures that pupils develop high levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The school is particularly successful in providing a wealth of opportunities for pupils to use their skills in cross-curricular work. Such opportunities provide pupils with confidence in problem solving where they have to persevere to arrive at the right outcome.
 - The innovative curriculum is a strength. Learning is relevant. The strong association with the church and community, good links between subjects, and numerous visits and visitors, provide rich opportunities for pupils' learning. Well-developed connections with their partner schools in Kenya and London, help pupils gain a clear understanding of similarities of aspiration as well as differences between their own lives and those of others. Very effective arrangements with the 'children's university' provide an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
 - The headteacher and governing body value parents as co-educators of their children. Parents are provided with a good deal of information about the work their children will be doing and how well they are making progress. All 61 responses from parents and carers on Parent View agreed that they would recommend the school to other parents and carers.
 - The school does not buy in support from the local authority. It chooses its own consultants to provide advice where needed.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - has a very clear picture of the school's strengths and areas to improve based on a detailed understanding of the school's budget, information from school leaders at all levels and their own analysis of pupils' attainment and progress
 - sets the headteacher measurable targets for improvement based on precise evaluation of pupils' achievement; governors hold her very much to account for meeting these targets
 - has a strong influence on prioritising school spending and ensures that the pupil premium funding is spent correctly
 - is very proud of the school, supports its work but is not afraid to challenge leaders.
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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	115076
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	403253

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Bailey
Headteacher	Heather Tetchner
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2007
Telephone number	01206 322242
Fax number	01206 322689
Email address	admin@dedham.essex.sch.uk

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