

Matching Green Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Little Laver Road, Matching Green, Harlow, CM17 0QB

Inspection dates 6 – 7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils across all year groups and all subjects are making good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good in the school and some of it is outstanding.
- Teaching is well planned and pupils respond well to learning that is practical and active.
- Leaders at all levels, supported by governors, have increased rates of progress for pupils and improved teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are valuable links with other communities in the local area and also with communities globally.
- Members of the school community – staff, pupils, the governing body and parents – all work well together. They make an effective team that has successfully brought about improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as fast as that in reading or writing.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding, especially in mathematics.
- Work in lessons is not always matched closely enough to the wide range of pupils' abilities in each class
- Leaders do not always help teachers to share and model best practice, both within their own school and beyond.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, four of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 6 read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, a representative from the local authority and school staff, including senior leaders and subject leaders. A meeting was also held with four members of the governing body, including the Chair.
- School documents were looked at, including: safeguarding arrangements, information on pupils' achievement and school improvement plans.
- The inspector took account of the views of 31 parents through the Parent View website. The views of staff were also looked at through 13 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Peter Lacey-Hastings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Matching Green Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is smaller than the average primary school.
- No pupils are learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. This is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those from families in the armed services.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase rates of progress further, especially in mathematics, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunity to use and apply their learning to real-life situations
- Improve teaching so that more of it is outstanding, by leaders and managers making sure that there is:
 - sharing and modelling of the best teaching within the school and giving teachers the opportunity to observe best practice in other schools
 - provision of more training opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching further
 - a consistent match between the work set and pupils' different abilities and that pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves more.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of pupils from all social and ethnic backgrounds is good. Rates of progress and levels of attainment have improved for pupils currently in the school. In the past, achievement at Key Stage 2 has been similar to other pupils nationally. However, pupils in all year groups and across all subjects are now making good progress.
- Children join the school with skills and capabilities that vary because of the few entrants each year, but are usually below those typical for their age group. Their skills in reading when they start in the Reception Year are generally lower than those in other areas of learning. They make good progress in all areas so that by the time they finish in the Reception Year their attainment is in line with national averages.
- Children in the Reception Year make quicker progress in their personal, social and emotional skills, and in communication and literacy. Their levels of attainment and rates of progress are not as good in mathematics.
- Pupils begin Key Stage 1 with average skills and capabilities. They continue to make good progress and perform well in their reading check at the end of Year 1. In these assessments, pupils' results are above the national average.
- Attainment, overall, at the end of Key Stage 1 has been above average for two of the last three years, and current pupils attain well. Attainment in reading and writing is higher than attainment in mathematics. Pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematical skills in real-life situations is not always as good as their application of literacy skills.
- Achievement overall at Key Stage 2 is good. Pupils make good progress from their starting points at the beginning of the key stage. In the past, attainment at Key Stage 2 has been similar to other pupils nationally and rates of progress were in line with those of other pupils. However, pupils now make quicker rates of progress, especially in English.
- Pupils make good progress across all subjects. Pupils' progress is quicker in reading than it is in writing. Progress in mathematics is good but slower than in English.
- Pupils are able to link letters with sounds in order to read known and unfamiliar words. They also use other skills such as picture clues and self-correcting so they read more accurately.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. Like other pupils, they also make better progress in English, especially in writing, than in mathematics.
- Pupils who are eligible for the additional funding through the pupil premium achieve well. They attain similar standards to those of other pupils in the school. In 2012, the few Year 6 pupils involved attained standards above those of other pupils in English but below in mathematics. However, their progress is usually better in mathematics than that of other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching overall is good, and some of it is outstanding. Practical and active learning is seen in all classrooms and this common approach means that pupils are engaged and motivated to learn. Interesting activities are well planned and increase pupils' interest. For example, Year 2 and Year 3 pupils were seen planning a television interview on how to trap a giant.
- Pupils have time to practise key skills of literacy and numeracy because teachers introduce lessons and explain tasks quickly and effectively. As a result, pupils are able to make good progress from regular use of these skills.
- Some teaching of mathematics is good and learning is made active and interesting. The practical application of learning to situations in real life helps pupils understand the purpose of the subject. For example, in a lesson on perimeter, pupils planned how to make fencing in a zoo. However, in other lessons, not all pupils have work that gives them opportunities to use and apply what they have learnt. In these situations, progress in mathematics is less secure.
- Work is generally well matched to pupils' abilities. However, sometimes, teaching does not always meet the wide range of abilities in classes. For example, when pupils are given opportunity to work independently and reach their own conclusions on the work set, they are not always encouraged to challenge themselves further. For example, in mathematics, pupils were asked to work with numbers they had made up themselves, but some pupils chose numbers that were too easy for them.
- Pupils know how well they have achieved and what they need to do to improve because adults check their progress during lessons. This is done using effective questioning that helps pupils to search for their own solutions to difficulties they have found.
- Marking in books also gives pupils accurate feedback and lets them know how they can improve their work. Pupils also have opportunities to respond to marking so they can show the teacher that they are making progress.
- Other adults are used well. They also challenge pupils by effective questioning, including questions that call for imagination and initiative in answering and help pupils' independent learning. This approach encourages pupils to explore and persevere with their own solutions.
- Overall the teaching of reading is good. Pupils are taught to link letters with sounds and use this knowledge as a key way of reading words they have not met before. For some younger pupils, the level of reading does not always challenge them enough and they spend too long on a particular level.
- Teaching of reading to older pupils is good. Pupils can say which kind of books they like to read and why they choose them. They have a good awareness of how authors check their own work and how books are edited. They also know that writers use different words and different ways of making a book interesting.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour and safety are outstanding and strengths of the school. The standard of pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is always very high. Behaviour is consistently directed into learning during lessons and pupils are enthusiastic learners.
- Around the school, pupils are courteous and polite to each other and to adults. Pupils move around the school in an orderly way and older pupils set a very good example to others. For example, play leaders are excellent examples to other pupils and enjoy their role in helping younger ones to play.
- Pupils like the reward systems, such as: ringing the school bell, 'Star of the Week', table points and 'Golden Time'. These are applied across the school and promote pupils' outstanding behaviour. Pupils themselves can see how actions taken by staff help them to behave well.
- All parents think that behaviour is good and that pupils are kept safe. Staff and pupils share the same views. These views are fully endorsed by evidence found during the inspection, such as lesson observations and playground observation.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying, such as racism and bullying based on people's appearance. They know that emails can be used to bully and that they need to be careful when reading and sending emails. Internet safety is further promoted by displays that help pupils to understand possible dangers of being online.
- Pupils say there is no bullying at the school. They feel safe and younger pupils say they are not worried at all by older pupils. The school helps pupils understand bullying by taking part in a national anti-bullying week. As one pupil said, 'We never get bullying here.'
- The few pupils who join the school from other schools say they feel welcome and settle well because of the way staff deal with them and how other pupils behave towards them.
- Pupils, themselves, say they feel very safe. They know actions are taken to keep them safe and why rules must be applied for safety purposes. For example, they understand the reasons for yellow signs that say when a floor is wet.
- Attendance is high and pupils are punctual in coming to school. Pupils say they like coming to school because of the way staff manage their behaviour and make lessons interesting. Members of the governing body are involved in giving out awards for high attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels know the school well and have carried out actions that have brought about increased rates of progress for pupils. Leaders are properly ambitious for the school to become outstanding. Self-evaluation is accurate and has resulted in a clear set of actions that have led to improvements in the quality of teaching.
 - Teachers' performance targets are linked to pupils' achievement and teachers' pay progression. The current national standards expected of teachers and training opportunities are also used to help teachers improve. For example, training has been used to address areas that have needed improvement such as teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and teaching in mathematics.
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- Teaching is monitored regularly and judgements about the quality of teaching are accurate. Where leaders judge teaching to be less than good, actions are taken quickly to support and challenge teachers so they can improve. Further observations are then used to check that planned improvements have been successful. However, teachers do not have enough opportunities to observe and share good practice in teaching within the school or with other schools. They receive training on particular subjects, but training opportunities are limited in helping them to improve their own general teaching skills.
 - Leaders work well together in order to bring about improvements. For example, information on pupils' progress and on the quality of teaching is used to plan improvements and training opportunities for all staff. All staff are convinced that the school is well led and managed.
 - Partnerships have also helped to improve the school. For example, the local authority has helped the school by making accurate evaluation of its performance, which is fully supported by inspection evidence.
 - The subjects taught provide a range of different learning opportunities. These include activities in lessons and outside of lesson time. For example, there are after-school clubs for sports activities and pupils have opportunities to learn a musical instrument. However, the content of what pupils learn in mathematics does not always help them to apply mathematical skills well enough.
 - Subjects are often taught through themes, which help to engage and motivate pupils. They say they like this way of learning. As one pupil said, 'It makes us want to learn.' For example, in one lesson, work in mathematics on directions was linked to traditional stories.
 - Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development are very good. For example, there are local links, such as with a school for pupils of Chinese origin in a nearby town, and global links, such as visit by a tribal chief from Ghana.
 - Safeguarding requirements are met, such as checks on adults working with pupils, gate security and site safety.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is committed to the school and ambitious for it to make further improvements. It knows the school well and is active and visible around the school. It holds the headteacher to account through regular meetings and setting performance targets for the headteacher that link to pupils' progress and pay progression. It is able to do this because it now has more knowledge and a better understanding of how to judge school effectiveness from the available data on pupils' performance. For example, governors know how much the pupil premium is and why it is spent on actions such as mentoring, one-to-one interventions for mathematics and English, and small-group work. The governing body monitors the use of the pupil premium through its committees. The governing body also carries out a self-evaluation of its own effectiveness and this has led to improvements, such as links it has within the community.
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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	115126
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	401494

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	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Banks
Headteacher	Sarah Keefe
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2009
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