

St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Sand Street, Soham, Ely, CB7 5AA

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Progress is not consistently good and some teaching requires improvement.
- Attainment, although improving, remains below national standards in reading and writing.
- Pupils have too few opportunities or time to write at length and apply their literacy skills.
- Pupils have too few opportunities for independent reading, of both fiction and non-fiction books, to consolidate their phonic knowledge (linking letters with the sounds they make) or deepen their interest in other subjects.
- The accuracy of teacher assessments is variable and the information gained is not used precisely enough to enable disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to achieve as well as they should.
- The quality of pupils' presentation is variable, especially for younger pupils, and teachers are not consistent in their expectations of what constitutes 'best' work.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher sets a very inclusive tone within the school community leading to a harmonious, productive learning environment.
- The effective senior leadership team, through rigorous monitoring of performance, has ensured that the majority of teaching is now good.
- Provision and children's achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now good.
- The school manages new pupils joining school well, many of whom have special educational needs, ensuring they have suitable support quickly.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons, are consistently polite and respectful towards each other and cooperate well in lessons.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and feel very safe.
- Pupils' progress through the school is regularly assessed. Those falling behind are identified quickly by senior leaders and given extra help which is beginning to close the gap in their achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons of which three were joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement and raising attainment plans; self-evaluation information; the school's data for tracking pupils' progress; pupils' work in books; governing body minutes; headteacher reports to the governing body; classroom displays; policies and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors observed a whole-school assembly.
- The inspectors had meetings with the headteacher, school leaders, two groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Twelve pupils read to the inspectors.
- The inspector took into account the 77 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in reaching the final judgements on the school. They also considered 47 comments from staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire.

Inspection team

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| June Woolhouse, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Jacqueline Pentlow | Additional Inspector |
| John Greevy | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British with a small proportion from minority ethnic heritages. A few speak English as an additional language. 12 nationalities are represented in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils entitled to free school meals or for those whose parents or carers are serving in the armed forces.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage part-time in the Nursery year and full-time in the Reception class at the start of the academic year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is currently organised into two classes per year group from Year 2 to Year 6. There are three Year 1 classes.
- An 'Extended Schools' unit operates on the site which is part of the Children's Centre located at Weatheralls Primary School in Soham. This is subject to a separate inspection.
- More than half the teaching staff has joined the school in the past three years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the next school year ensure that most teaching is good and more is outstanding by:
 - planning enough time into reading sessions to enable pupils to practise their skills for a sustained length of time using high quality fiction and non-fiction texts
 - planning writing lessons that give pupils time to write extended pieces to increase fluency and consolidate their knowledge of language structures, spelling patterns and relevant word meanings
 - ensure that information gained from all pupils' on-going assessments is used more precisely in the planning and teaching of reading and writing
 - model the school's outstanding practice for teachers whose skills need further improvement
 - reinforce younger pupils' understanding of the sounds letters make and how they appear in print by reading suitably relevant and interesting texts on a daily basis.
- Raise achievement in reading and writing by:
 - improving the quality of phonics teaching so that all relevant pupils see and hear letter names and sounds in a context that includes words, sentences and texts
 - requiring teachers who need further professional development in the teaching of English to attend in-service training
 - improving the climate for regular reading sessions in all classrooms
 - training teaching assistants to resist intervening too often in learning activities so that pupils will develop independence and a higher degree of self-sufficiency
 - increasing parental support for their children's reading and writing development.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not yet good because steady progress in reading and writing does not always happen from one year to the next leaving a legacy of under-achievement as pupils move up the age range.
- Pupils do not engage in reading for pleasure or for extended periods on a regular basis or always practise at home with parental support.
- In 2012 attainment at the end of Key stage 1 was average in reading, writing and mathematics and an improvement on the previous two years. The current teacher assessments show that pupils make most progress in mathematics. Written work is often untidy and the amount pupils write is limited, a legacy from mediocre provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the last inspection.
- Year 6 pupils' achievement is improving steadily in mathematics and attainment is above the national average. Pupils make less progress in reading and writing and attainment is just below national averages. Fewer than expected more-able pupils achieve the higher levels in writing and a small number of pupils with special educational needs do not achieve as well as similar pupils, nationally.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium are making limited progress at present but will benefit from the extra support of learning mentors in the new academic year following detailed assessments of their progress made on a termly basis since the beginning of this year. Half are on the Special Educational Needs register. The gap between their attainment and other pupils in reading and writing is wider than that in mathematics but is beginning to close. In 2012 these pupils were eight terms behind their classmates in English and five terms behind them in mathematics.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery class because they engage in interesting, purposeful and varied activities, inside and out-of-doors, that are well-planned to promote their learning and development through play.
- Children continue to make good progress in the Reception classes because they access similar well-planned activities that embrace all the learning goals. The majority reach the expected levels of achievement by the end of the Reception year and are ready for learning in Year 1. The gap between children in the lowest bands of achievement has closed significantly in the past two years.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Where teaching requires improvement the lessons were slow in pace. Also, teachers lacked subject knowledge or classroom management skills to enable independent activities to increase pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills effectively. For example, pupils sat for too long listening to the teacher giving answers to mathematical problems without outlining steps to solve them or time to review their own errors. Many lost interest although continued to behave well.
- In some classes teaching assistants are not sufficiently well-trained to maximise pupils' progress. Sometimes they provide too much support which prevents pupils from developing the independent skills necessary to organise their own learning. They are not always aware of the

difference between pupils who benefit from a positive, nurturing attitude and those who should be encouraged to manage things for themselves. A significant proportion of teaching assistants has already started to improve their professional qualifications through further study.

- The quality of teaching in the majority of lessons seen in the inspection was good and reflected the improvements that have taken place over the past two years. The impact on pupils' achievements is beginning to show, especially in mathematics but is taking longer to have an effect in reading and writing.
- The quality of marking in most classes is now consistent and linked to what pupils are learning and whether or not they have achieved well enough. It is at an early stage of implementation and in most cases informs pupils of what they must do next to improve. Some teachers do not check that pupils have corrected their work, especially in writing, or are given time to make their corrections.
- A small number of outstanding lessons included the features that promote effective learning and faster progress. In an excellent literacy session pupils linked their learning to previous work, discussed what they were going to achieve and the checks they would make during the lesson. They contributed to an example of good quality writing composed with and recorded by the teacher and rehearsed their own story ideas with a partner. Subsequent work showed the impact of high quality teaching.
- Teaching continues to improve because it is closely and accurately assessed by senior leaders. All teachers are implementing the features of good-quality planning that aims to address the needs of all pupils. Resources are well-organised and good use is made of interactive white boards to set out clearly what pupils will learn. Pupils' progress is accelerating but remains inconsistent across classes affected by changes of teachers and a need for more training in a minority of cases.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, behaviour is managed well and adults provide good models of appropriate behaviour and attitudes to their pupils. Consequently, pupils are keen to learn and when they are actively involved cooperate well with each other and enjoy their learning. These features contribute well to their personal development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, around school and on the playground. Pupils are respectful towards each other and cooperate well in group activities. They enjoy school because that is the intention of all adults who promote positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel very safe in school because they are taught effectively in well-designed personal and social educational programmes. These are reinforced in assemblies as part of promoting their general well-being.
- Pupils show a good understanding of all forms of bullying and explain that it is tackled immediately by staff on the rare occasions it happens. Diversity is promoted well and the school is rightly proud of the inclusive way its twelve nationalities co-exist together.
- The school environment is a very safe and attractive place to learn and play. All aspects of safeguarding meet requirements and pupils receive a good level of care from adults.
- Attendance has improved and is broadly average. Strenuous efforts are made to improve the

attendance of those who are persistently absent and the school works well with local agencies, with increasing success.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, very well-supported by the two assistant headteachers, has accurately identified the school's weaknesses in teaching and learning. Together they have systematically addressed each one demonstrating their capacity to improve the school further. The issues of the last inspection have been remedied successfully with pleasing improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, understanding cultural diversity and increased achievement in mathematics.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and ensures that children make good progress.
- The school's self-evaluation of provision is accurate and recent judgements on teaching and learning matched those of inspectors. New teachers, appointed recently, are increasing the number who are now consistently good.
- The senior leadership team analyses in detail how well pupils are learning each term. The progress of pupils in each year group is judged accurately against national standards. Records indicate clearly which groups are not making sufficient progress and additional support is organised for them. Expected progress in each year group is not yet consistent but there are indications that gaps are closing, more in mathematics than English at present.
- The school's self-evaluation has already identified provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as an area for improvement because some pupils are making less than expected progress compared with national expectations. In addition, the significant increase in pupils joining the school mid-year who are disabled or have special educational needs are receiving good personal and emotional support in preparation for learning how to read and write.
- The wide and balanced curriculum and enrichment provision are good. Sporting and cultural activities such as residential trips, links to the Fitzwilliam Museum and visitors to school are appreciated by pupils but as yet the planned improvements in literacy have yet to make the required impact on progress.
- The school's harmonious learning environment, underpinned by its Christian values, is testament to the senior leadership's awareness of the individual needs of an increasing number of vulnerable pupils they nurture and prepare for academic learning. The good progress pupils are making does not translate into attainment levels at this early stage but challenging academic targets have been set for the coming year.
- Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination in the school and are aware that the variations in progress between groups need to be reduced to ensure equality of opportunities.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to give individual support to improve learning in reading, writing and mathematics. It also provides enrichment opportunities through visits and attendance at clubs which contribute well to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The management of performance is robust and unrelenting as all teachers are required to explain the performance of their pupils in terms of progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Salary progression is not automatic and professional development opportunities are identified to assure the improvements in teaching needed to accelerate pupil progress.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses which they check out for themselves through regular visits. They ask probing questions about pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and monitor performance on a regular basis. The headteacher provides good, accurate information to this end and governors have a good understanding of how to use data to monitor school performance. They rigorously manage the performance of the headteacher and staff ensuring that pay awards are linked to pupils' progress. The school budget, including any additional funding, is scrupulously monitored and spent for the benefit of all pupils. Governors attach a high priority to keeping all pupils safe and safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements well.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 110828 |
| Local authority | Cambridgeshire |
| Inspection number | 424606 |

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

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| 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 | 482 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Patrick Manley |
| Headteacher | Richard Liddington |
| Date of previous school inspection | 29 April 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01353 720345 |
| Fax number | 01353 624585 |
| Email address | head@st-andrews-pri.cambs.sch.uk |

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