

# Codicote Church of England Primary School

Meadow Way, Codicote, Hitchin, SG4 8YL

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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.

- The majority of teaching is outstanding and never less than good. Lessons are imaginative and interesting and teachers are skilled at matching work to pupils' abilities.
- Pupils thrive in the Nursery and Reception classes and get off to a good start in their learning.
- Pupils typically reach well above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Standards in mathematics are exceptionally high.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often provide helpful feedback but pupils are not always given enough opportunities to act on the advice their teacher gives them.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave extremely well. Their positive attitudes and high levels of engagement in their learning are significant factors in the excellent progress they make in lessons.
- Pupils feel safe at the school and demonstrate a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves and others from harm.
- The excellent systems used by the school to support individual pupils, whatever their needs, mean that pupils of all ages make rapid gains in their learning and achieve very well.
- The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Their learning is enriched by the many opportunities to learn outside, take part in trips and meet visitors.
- The school provides an impressive range of lunchtime and after-school activities for pupils including a wide range of sports clubs, the choir and the eco team.
- The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has created an extremely strong team of staff who work very well together. This has directly contributed to the high quality teaching and excellent progress that the pupils make.
- Governors are very well informed about the work of the school and hold leaders to account very effectively.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. 14 lessons were observed, including three seen together with the headteacher. In addition, short classroom visits were made to observe pupils at work. Inspectors observed the headteacher reporting back to teachers on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievements in lessons. They also attended two assemblies and observed behaviour during break times.
- Inspectors had discussions with the Chair of Governors and three other governors, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, teachers and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including the school's tracking of pupils' progress, documents relating to safeguarding and special educational needs and case studies of individual pupils. In addition, inspectors looked at the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and reports from the local authority improvement partner.
- A wide range of pupils' work was reviewed across different subjects, and inspectors heard pupils reading.
- Inspectors took account of the 34 questionnaires completed by staff and the 59 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and met informally with a number of parents at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Frances Le Pla, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Flesher

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The school serves the local community of Codicote but in some years, there are considerable numbers of pupils attending who live outside the catchment area.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding to support particular groups of pupils, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is a member of the Hitchin Schools Partnership and meets regularly with its partner schools.
- The headteacher is an accredited 'Learning Partner' and supports other headteachers who are new to the role.
- The school has received the Eco Schools Green Flag Award.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that marking is of a consistently high quality across all subjects and gives pupils regular opportunities to respond to the advice their teachers give them.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress across the school. Although there are variations from year to year, children enter the Nursery with broadly typical skills for their age. They reach very high standards in reading writing and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Children make outstanding progress in the Nursery and reception classes and enter Key Stage 1 having made strong gains in all areas of learning. Last year they reached especially high levels in their communication skills, physical development and personal social and emotional development.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach above-average standards in reading and writing and even higher standards in mathematics. In 2013, there was a slight dip in overall attainment in the Year 2 tests. This year group had started at the school with much lower standards than usual and their results represented very good progress across Years 1 and 2. The results of the Year 1 national reading check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) were well above average in 2013.
- Pupils read with confidence and enjoy what they read. They have many opportunities to read to their teachers and each other and by the end of Key Stage 2, they are reading at a very high standard. They are articulate and pupils of all ages are happy to discuss their ideas with each other and share them with their teachers.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils consistently reach very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all pupils reached the expected levels for their age group which is well above the national average. Nearly half of all pupils gained higher levels in each of reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are particularly high in mathematics and in 2012 and 2013 an impressive number of pupils reached the new Level 6 standard.
- Pupils do very well whatever their level of ability, including the more-able pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational need make as much progress as comparable pupils nationally. This is because teachers plan for their learning precisely and the school makes sure their specific needs are met. As a result the proportion that makes or exceeds expected levels of progress in reading, writing and mathematics is high.
- There were not enough pupils supported by the pupil premium in 2013 to comment on their attainment without identifying them, but over time this group of pupils frequently makes outstanding progress. The funding is spent on additional staff to support individual pupils according to their specific needs, specialised resources and professional advice as needed. In addition, it helps to support attendance on school trips so that pupils have full access to all school activities.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The majority of teaching is outstanding. Teaching is never less than good. The school has created an environment where pupils love to learn and cannot wait to come to school. Teachers know the pupils very well, ensure their learning is important to them and constantly strive to do their best for them. As a result, pupils make very good progress over time.

- Teachers have very good relationships with their classes and this creates a happy and purposeful learning environment which contributes to their very positive attitudes to learning and well-developed social skills. In the Nursery and Reception classes, adults engage very effectively with the children, asking them questions to extend their learning. Lessons are well planned and children have access to a wide range of resources including the very stimulating outdoor learning areas to engage their interest.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high. Pupils try hard to reach their goals. Teachers ask searching questions very effectively to check that pupils understand what they are meant to do, and to help them reach deeper levels of understanding. Pupils are always engrossed in what they are doing. They are quite remarkable in consistently demonstrating very high levels of concentration and sustaining it throughout lessons in all age groups. In a Year 2 lesson, a group of pupils showed tremendous concentration when they wrote their sentences for their 'wanted poster' for the pirate Blackbeard.
- Teachers plan the learning very well and include interesting and engaging activities so that pupils have plenty of opportunities to work together in groups and find out things for themselves. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils worked very well in groups to carry out different practical activities investigating the properties of shapes such as pentagons and hexagons. When the groups shared what they had found out with the rest of the class, everyone made gains in their knowledge.
- Teachers know their subjects well and understand the varying needs of their pupils. As a result, tasks are well matched to these needs and teaching assistants are used very well to support learning and encourage positive attitudes in all classes. More-able pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from the additional challenge they receive in the extension lessons that their teachers provide and this helps them to work at a very high standard for their age.
- Pupils know the targets they are working on in their lessons. Their work is marked regularly and in English and mathematics they are given very helpful advice about what they have achieved and how to improve. In other subjects, marking is less detailed. Leaders recognise that the quality of marking could be even better if it was of the same high standard across all subjects and pupils were given more opportunities to act on the feedback their teachers have given them. Work is already underway to address this.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. They enjoy coming to school because it is a welcoming place where teachers care about them as individuals and their progress as learners. As a result attendance is very high.
- Pupils of all ages are highly motivated and very keen to learn. As a result they engage fully in lessons and in all the other opportunities offered by the school. Participation rates in the many additional activities run by the school such as sports teams are very high. Other pupils enjoy being part of the 'eco team' or singing in the choir.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes work and play well together and are well-mannered. They move around responsibly and take care for their own and each other's safety.
- Pupils and parents agree that the school keeps children safe. Pupils say that any incident of poor behaviour, including bullying is exceptionally rare and if it occurs, it is dealt with very quickly by staff. Pupils value their PSHE lessons because they help them learn about how to get on with each other and keep safe. They put this into practice on the playground where they behave very

sensibly and play very well together.

- Adults provide pupils with very good quality care. They work very well with those who are vulnerable or have social and emotional needs and the regular mentoring sessions they give pupils help to build their self-esteem.
- Pupils readily take on responsibilities. Older pupils check play equipment is tidied away at the end of break-times and help in the office at lunchtimes. The school council meets regularly with the headteacher and is actively involved in decision making about the purchase of resources for the school. For example, they suggested how money for playground equipment should be spent and made recommendations about new books for the library.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The inspirational headteacher leads by example. She is supported by very able governors, who also expect nothing but the best. All leaders are highly effective and they do everything they can at every level to provide the very best education for every pupil. Leaders continually review the way things are taught and incorporate any improvements that can be made to support the pursuit of this aim. She had developed a very strong team of staff who work very well together.
- The school's well-focused development plan, based on accurate evaluation of its performance, clearly identifies the right priorities the school needs to work on to continue to improve. For example there is work already taking place to ensure marking is always of a consistently high quality.
- The school is discerning in its use of setting targets for teachers to improve their work, carefully matching training and other opportunities to their needs and the priorities in the school development plan.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is particularly well promoted through the stimulating and rich curriculum which includes numerous opportunities for pupils to work outdoors, go on trips and have visitors to the school. For example, pupils in Year 3 recently enjoyed a visit to Windsor Castle as part of their topic on castles. In their class assembly, they proudly showed the rest of the school and their parents what they had learned including a vivid demonstration of tactics for attacking a castle.
- The school uses the additional sports funding appropriately and has appointed a 'sports apprentice' to help run the many school teams. In addition, through membership of the local school sports partnership, teachers have access to expertise so that they can improve their skills to deliver effective sports lessons.
- The school works extremely well with parents. All who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to another parent, and those spoken to by inspectors were very enthusiastic in their support for the school.
- Leaders and governors make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school successfully implements its aim of 'everyone shall know success' by making sure all pupils are fully included in all school activities. As a result, all pupils make excellent progress.
- The school makes a positive contribution to school improvement in the local area through its

work with the Hitchin Schools Partnership and this has led to a good range of opportunities for older pupils to prepare well for their move to secondary school. As a Learning Partner, the headteacher gives valuable support to other colleagues who are new to the role.

- The local authority rightly regards the school as requiring only 'light touch' support. It evaluates the school's performance through data analysis and, at the school's request, carried out joint monitoring activities with the headteacher to check the accuracy of judgements about the quality of teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is highly effective and governors are passionate about ensuring that pupils' achievement is outstanding. They provide the right amount of support and challenge for all leaders and have a very good understanding about the quality of teaching and the link between performance and pay. They know how well pupils are doing compared with all schools nationally. Governors visit the school regularly. 'Governors days' enable them to visit classes and learn first-hand about teaching and learning in the school. Each governor takes responsibility for monitoring a subject and working with the teacher in charge of it to evaluate strengths and areas for improvement. A governor often attends school council meetings. These activities mean that all governors are very well informed about the work of the school. They are fully involved in the decision making about how pupil premium and additional sports funding is used and carefully monitor its impact. Governors regularly review their skills and undertake training when they need to. The governors make sure that the school fully meets the current national requirements for safeguarding and child protection.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117392
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427243

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Williamson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Pollard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 June 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 820255
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