

The Churchill School

Haven Drive, Hawkinge, Folkestone, Kent, CT18 7RH

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses. It is not good because:

- Over recent years the rates of progress for almost all groups of pupils have been too slow in reading, writing and mathematics because teachers' expectations have not been high enough.
- The attainment of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium has been too low, and gaps between those pupils and the rest have widened because checks on progress have not been rigorous enough.
- Teaching over time has not been good enough to make sure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Recent improvements in teaching are now beginning to have an impact on rates of progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because teachers do not use information on what children already know and can do to plan activities which meet individual needs.
- Behaviour requires improvement because in lessons where teaching is not good, pupils become distracted and there is occasionally some low-level disruption which affects progress and learning.
- Governors know that until fairly recently they did not carry out their statutory functions effectively because they did not challenge school leaders on aspects of pupils' performance, including the attainment of those eligible for the pupil premium.

The school has the following strengths:

- The new senior leadership team has an accurate view of what needs to improve and measures put in place are already resulting in improvements in teaching and in faster rates of progress for groups of pupils.
- Teachers are being helped to improve their practice and are increasingly held to account for the achievement of pupils in their classes. Pupils are supported well to achieve their targets.
- Parents and carers, staff and governors are highly positive about the work of the new leadership team and are committed to working together to address areas for improvement.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well across the school and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons or part lessons. The majority of these were carried out with senior leaders.
- Inspectors attended assemblies, listened to pupils reading, looked carefully at their work in lessons and work pupils had completed over time in their books. The inspection team observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and around the school and met with several groups of pupils to listen to their views about the school.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, six members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers through the 42 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and also through informal meetings on the playground. Inspectors also noted the responses to the 31 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspection team reviewed documents relating to attendance, child protection, safeguarding and behaviour, information about pupils' academic performance, information relating to the governing body, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, documents relating to checks on the quality of teachers' performance and links to salary progression.

Inspection team

Sue Quirk, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Roger Fenwick	Additional Inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the two assistant headteachers took up their posts in September 2013.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action are similar to the national average, as are the proportions supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for children looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families, is lower than the national average.
- Approximately one tenth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds; a small proportion of these are from Nepalese backgrounds whose families are serving in the Brigade of Gurkhas.
- 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?

- Improve the proportion of consistently good and better teaching to accelerate rates of progress for all groups across the school by:
 - reducing the occasional low-level disruption by ensuring all teaching engages pupils and captures their interest
 - ensuring that planning takes more account of the abilities of higher-attaining pupils so that they are appropriately stretched during whole-class introductions
 - checking the understanding of different groups of pupils through more precisely targeted questions
 - reducing the variability in phonics teaching (the linking of sounds and letters) so that younger pupils are more confident to tackle unfamiliar words when reading.
- Improve rates of progress across the school by ensuring that all teachers use the school's new assessment information to identify precisely what pupils already know and can do and use that information to plan and deliver lessons that consistently meet the needs of different groups.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage to accelerate rates of progress by:
 - ensuring teachers have a clearer understanding of children's skills and abilities when the children start school by putting more robust on-entry assessment systems in place
 - providing more opportunities for children to be actively engaged in meaningful activities which will extend their learning
 - reducing the amount of time children are unengaged and not learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that all teachers consistently plan work which meets the needs of individuals and groups.
- Undertake an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Over the last two years, the progress of almost all groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics has been too slow, because teachers' expectations of what they could and should achieve have not been high enough. There has not yet been enough time for recent improvements to the quality of teaching to have had a sustained impact on pupils' progress.
- Assessments of children's skills and abilities when children start school are not rigorous enough, so teachers do not have sufficient information to plan appropriate activities which meet the needs of different groups of children. Although Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results were similar to national levels in 2013, groups of children, such as those eligible for the pupil premium, did not achieve as well as others.
- Over recent years, gaps between the attainment of those pupils eligible for pupil premium and those not eligible have been widening. In the end of Key Stage 2 test results in summer 2013, those pupils were, on average, six terms behind in reading, four terms behind in writing and seven terms behind in mathematics. Across the school there are gaps in attainment for these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Over the last six months, the school has given much more targeted support to eligible pupils, including access to an early morning club, where pupils are given additional help with their reading, writing and mathematics as well as their emotional well-being. There are early signs that gaps are beginning to narrow, especially in reading.
- Over the last three years, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs made too little progress because not enough was expected of them. Equality of opportunity for these pupils and other groups was not promoted well enough. Since September they are making more rapid progress because teachers have a clearer understanding of what they know and can do and their progress is more regularly checked.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including the small proportion of Nepalese pupils, generally make progress that is in line with expectations and more rapid progress than their classmates because they receive additional support that is closely matched to their needs.
- A group of pupils who were struggling with phonics (the linking of letter sounds and names) has benefited from a Saturday morning club for families and also from an early morning Owls Club where they have additional help.
- Senior leaders have worked hard to improve standards in reading in the school and achievement in reading is improving at a faster rate than in writing or mathematics. Initiatives such as 'assertive mentoring', where teachers regularly meet with each child to discuss progress against their targets and report back to parents and carers, are contributing to improved rates of progress, but these initiatives are too recent to demonstrate sustained improvements.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Over time, teaching has not been good enough to ensure all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers have not used assessment information well enough to identify precisely what pupils already know and can do. They neglected to use the information to plan and deliver lessons to consistently meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- There were wide variations in the quality of teaching seen during the inspection and only half of teaching seen was good or better. Where teaching was judged to require improvement, pupils sometimes did not have enough time to practise the new skills they had learned. In whole-class introductions, higher-attaining pupils often sat through the same explanations as the rest of the class rather than tackle a challenge more suited to their abilities.
- Teaching is strongest in Years 5 and 6 where inspectors saw higher-attaining pupils wrestling with a challenge of finding the size of angles in various objects and shapes. Teachers used skilful, targeted questioning to check pupils' understanding. However, this is not yet consistently in place across the school.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is weak because teachers do not use assessment data effectively to plan activities that are appropriate for all groups. Children have too few opportunities to participate in meaningful, active learning experiences because the routines of the day are not well planned and children spend too long sitting still.
- The teaching of phonics is variable. There are some weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge which slow the pace at which some pupils can master the ability to confidently and accurately blend sounds together. However, the teaching of reading is now generally strong throughout the school and is strengthened by book weeks, 'mystery storytellers' and regular reading sessions where texts are closely matched to children's reading abilities.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and mathematical skills across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 drew graphs in their science books to compare how long it took for iced water and boiling water to reach room temperature and pupils in Year 1 enjoyed writing about their visit to a local pet shop.
- Recently there have been marked improvements in teaching which are beginning to have an impact on rates of progress, because teachers' performance is regularly checked and teachers are receiving clear, accurate feedback on what they do well and what they need to improve.
- Marking in books is detailed and helpful and pupils are becoming increasingly skilled at evaluating their own work. Teaching assistants are generally deployed well to support the learning of groups of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because in lessons, where teaching is not good, there is some low-level disruption which affects progress and learning.
- Pupils feel safe in school and say there is always an adult available who will listen to their concerns. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- A minority of parents and carers feel that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. Inspectors followed this up carefully and asked a number of groups of children for their views. They said that bullying rarely happens and that when it does it is dealt with well. Scrutiny of the school's records on behaviour indicated that the school deals with any bullying incidents quickly and appropriately. Pupils know about the dangers of different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying.
- Pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds get on well together because the school successfully fosters positive relationships and tackles discrimination. Pupils behave sensibly when they move around the school; they are polite and friendly to adults and each other.
- Attendance is high and has risen because there are effective systems in place to ensure families understand the importance of regular attendance.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, in the past, leaders and managers have placed too little emphasis on checking that the quality of teaching is good enough to ensure all groups of pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Recent initiatives implemented by the new senior leadership team have not been in place long enough to demonstrate a sustained impact on achievement.
- Leaders and managers recognise that there is an urgent need to improve rates of progress across the school especially in writing and mathematics. They are now regularly checking the quality of teaching through lesson observations, scrutinising pupils' books and talking to pupils about their work. As a result, they now have a more accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. There are weaknesses in the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage because leaders do not regularly check that teachers' planning builds on what children already know and can do.

- Teachers receive clear information about what they do well and what needs to improve. As a result, teaching is improving across the school and pupils' books show clear evidence of progress since the beginning of the school year.
- The new senior leadership team is well supported by staff and parents and carers; 100% of responses to staff questionnaires agreed that leaders are doing all they can to improve teaching. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher are working effectively together, demonstrating drive and vision for improvements based on an accurate assessment of the school's underperformance in recent years. Middle leaders are clear on their roles and responsibilities and are supporting senior leaders effectively.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their physical well-being effectively. Pupils have many opportunities to reflect on beliefs and values and to appreciate art, music, literature and nature. They have a keen sense of fairness and they regularly discuss moral and ethical issues. They play and learn well together and have a good understanding of cultures and backgrounds which differ from their own. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not give children enough opportunities for active engagement in learning.
- The school is using the new school sports funding well to improve the subject knowledge of teachers and ensure that, when the funding ceases, there will be a legacy of expertise which will have a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being.
- The school demonstrates capacity for improvement through improvements in attendance, accurate evaluation of the school's performance and realistic plans to address weaknesses. Marking in books is detailed and helpful. Along with effective partnership with parents and carers in supporting pupils to reach their targets, this is beginning to result in improved achievement for all groups of pupils, especially in reading. The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and physical well-being is strong.
- In the past, the local authority has not challenged the school sufficiently to improve pupils' achievement, but is now providing more focused support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a wide range of relevant skills and expertise. They accept that, until very recently, they had an overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness and have not held the school to account for significant underachievement. One governor said, 'We now know the quality of teaching is not as good as we thought it was.' The governors have recently undertaken a range of training to improve their skills in interpreting school data and have a much better understanding of the school's performance compared to all schools nationally and of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They have begun to check that appraisal systems for teachers' performance are robust and will not automatically reward teachers by moving them up the pay scale unless they have met ambitious targets. Governors generally manage the school's finances well and keep a close eye on spending, but have not checked that pupil premium funding is being used well enough to improve the attainment of eligible pupils. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities in safeguarding pupils.

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	133367
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	427301

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David McKivett
Headteacher	Phil Chantler
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 December 2010
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