

Cross-in-Hand Church of England Primary School

Sheepsetting Lane, Cross-in-Hand, Heathfield, TN21 0XG

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics because teaching is good.
- Above-average proportions of pupils attained the higher levels at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014.
- The acting headteacher has ensured that staff morale remains high during a period of change.
- The acting headteacher is well supported by governors, the acting deputy headteacher and other members of staff. The quality of teaching is improving and pupils are making faster progress as a result.
- Most parents express confidence in the school's leadership and would recommend the school to another parent.
- Teachers' good quality marking ensures that pupils are clear about what they are doing well and how they can improve their work.
- Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting pupils' learning.
- Children make good progress in the early years. Warm relationships mean that children are happy and settled.
- The school has a positive and welcoming atmosphere. Classrooms are attractive and stimulating places for pupils to learn.
- Most pupils behave well and are proud of their school. They say that they feel safe. Relationships are good.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well to support disadvantaged pupils' learning. As a result, this group achieved as well as other pupils nationally in 2014.
- Governors know the school well. They have an accurate and realistic view of the school's strengths and are committed to securing further improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not use questioning fully to challenge and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Tasks are not always adjusted well enough when pupils find the work too difficult.
- Provision in the early years outdoor area does not promote learning as well as that in the classroom.
- Not all subject leaders play a full part in the school's development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or part lessons, including six lessons observed jointly with the acting headteacher or acting deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, parents and pupils. Discussions were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 93 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as several e-mails. In addition, they spoke with individual parents during the school day and considered the views of parents expressed informally at the end of the school day. Inspectors also took account of 40 staff questionnaire responses.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of policies and documents. These included the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records, and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as in lessons. They also listened to a number of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carol Vant	Additional Inspector
Judith Olivier	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in two Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- There is currently an acting headteacher in post.
- The school has a breakfast club which was included in this inspection. There is also a private nursery on the school site, which is inspected separately.
- The early years outdoor area is shared with the private on-site nursery.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use questioning fully to challenge and deepen pupils' understanding during lessons
 - the quality of provision in the early years outdoor area is as good as that in the classroom
 - tasks are consistently adjusted well enough to ensure that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress.
- Strengthen leadership by ensuring that all subject leaders play an equal part in the school's development.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher ensures that recent improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are sustained. His leadership ensures that the school continues to improve, despite a number of changes in leadership since the previous inspection.
- Teachers, leaders and teaching assistants are keen to play their part in the school's development and staff morale is high.
- Staff successfully reinforce good manners throughout the school. Relationships are very positive and pupils are courteous and respectful. Their good behaviour contributes to the school's positive atmosphere.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors expressed confidence in the school's leadership. Most appreciate the school's open and welcoming approach and say that leaders and teachers take their concerns seriously. Almost all parents who completed Parent View feel that their children are happy in school.
- The acting headteacher provides effective leadership of teaching. He has strengthened checks on the quality of teaching and has an accurate view of teaching and learning across the school. Training for staff supports the school's priorities for improvement, as well as contributing to individual teachers' professional development needs.
- Teachers and leaders meet more regularly than before to discuss pupils' progress. This means they are able to spot pupils at risk of falling behind more quickly and provide extra help where needed.
- There are variations in the role played by subject leaders in supporting the school's development. While some play a full and effective part, others' roles are less well developed. This means that, while they have an accurate view of pupils' achievement in their subject areas, they are less clear about aspects of teaching in need of development.
- Leaders effectively promote equal opportunities for all pupils. For example, pupil premium funding is used well to target pupils' individual needs so that these pupils achieve as well as other pupils nationally. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
- Effective teaching successfully equips pupils for life in modern Britain and ensures that learning is relevant and enjoyable. For example, a day focusing on British historic events helped pupils to understand how British customs and values have developed over time. Events, such as a re-enactment in Year 6 of a court case, deepen pupils' understanding of right and wrong and the British justice system.
- Subjects and topics are taught in an interesting way, and trips and visits enthuse pupils about their learning.
- Pupils learn about a range of different world religions so that they develop understanding and respect for different faiths and beliefs. Pupils' excellent behaviour during assemblies contributes to the quiet and reflective atmosphere. Pupils listen attentively and sing enthusiastically and tunefully.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements. Suitability checks are rigorously maintained and leaders follow appropriate safeguarding procedures when recruiting new members of staff.
- The local authority provides light touch support for the school according to its changing needs.
- The use of the primary physical education and sport premium is carefully planned to ensure that pupils benefit fully. Reports on its use are comprehensive and clearly indicate improvements in the teaching of physical education and in pupils' participation and achievement. For example, swimming lessons meant that every pupil achieved a swimming qualification last year. Effective staff training in the teaching of gymnastics means that teachers have a better understanding of how to teach key skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides effective support and challenge for school leaders. Governors' roles have developed substantially since the previous inspection. For example, the governors now work alongside school leaders to discuss aspects of the school's work which need further improvement. This means that they have a more accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs than previously, and are better informed to ask questions and challenge leaders. The governing body uses a range of information to check the school's performance in relation to others nationally. Governors complete regular checks on safeguarding arrangements so that statutory requirements are met.
 - Governors have strengthened links with parents in order to be more visible and accessible. For example, they regularly attend parents' evenings. They have recently produced a newsletter which provides parents with information about who the governors are and their role in the school.
 - Governors are linked to specific year groups and regularly visit lessons. As a result, they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. Governors know how leaders check teachers' performance and

use this information to make decisions about salary progression. They know what steps leaders have taken in the past to support any weaker teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils are enthusiastic learners, completing their work to the best of their ability. They care about the quality of their work, which is usually neat and tidy. Pupils listen carefully to their classmates' views in lessons, while also offering their own ideas. Pupils' behaviour is excellent during assemblies and breakfast club.
- Pupils get on well with each other and work together constructively. One pupil told inspectors, 'We're all best friends – we're one big family.' Most parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire feel that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils enjoy breaktimes and play responsibly and safely. Pupils are courteous and respectful to adults. They look very smart in their school uniform. They move around the school sensibly and respond quickly to adults' instructions.
- Attendance is consistently in line with the national average. Leaders work successfully with parents to ensure that pupils attend well.
- Leaders have introduced a behaviour management scheme which is improving individual pupils' behaviour substantially.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because a few pupils find it difficult to behave well during lessons. Leaders, parents and pupils confirm that this is the case and that, occasionally, this detracts from the quality of learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Almost all parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire consider their children to be safe in school. Pupils say that they feel safe and that 'teachers are really kind'.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying and are clear about telling an adult if they have a worry. They know, for example, to 'flag it, block it, report it' if they receive any messages which cause them concern when using the internet. They are confident that bullying is not an issue in the school.
- Pupils understand how they can help to keep themselves safe. For example, they are well informed about internet safety because they are given regular reminders and updates. They know that gates and doors are secured during the school day to keep them safe and that visitors should be wearing a visitors' badge. Pupils use equipment sensibly and safely during break times.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching ensures that pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations have increased over the past year and pupils are making better progress as a result, particularly during Key Stage 1.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were very clear about what they have learnt and said that teachers' marking helped them to make further improvements.
- Reading skills are taught consistently across the school, including phonics (the sounds letters make). Pupils read often, both at home and in school, and their reading books are regularly changed. As a result, they read a broad range of texts and develop personal preferences.
- Pupils practise handwriting skills daily so that they develop a fluid and even style. This contributes well to the appearance of pupils' work and to their ability to write at length.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning very well. For example, in Year 2 mathematics lesson, a teaching assistant helped a pupil to choose and use a strategy to solve a number problem. This helped him to develop a key skill and to gain confidence in mathematics.
- A specialist teacher effectively supports those disadvantaged pupils who need extra help in mathematics. She works closely with class teachers to support learning in the classroom and to check that pupils are making better progress as a result.
- Teachers usually set work which is challenging and stimulating for pupils of all abilities. For example,

pupils in Year 5 offered some thoughtful suggestions about Jesus and Judas at the Last Supper during a religious education lesson. However, in some cases, teachers' questions do not extend pupils' thinking fully enough, and this is reflected in the quality of their work.

- Occasionally, a few pupils make slower progress during lessons because they find the work too difficult. While teachers are usually quick to notice when this is the case, they do not always adjust the tasks set fully enough to ensure pupils' success.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 6. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently much higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning by the end of Year 6.
- Until recently, pupils made more rapid progress during early years and Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. This was because expectations of pupils' progress were not high enough in all year groups. Leaders have now fully addressed this inconsistency, so that teachers have a clear understanding of the progress expected of pupils across the school. Increased expectations mean that pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are making faster progress than previously in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A whole-school focus on developing pupils' writing skills last year successfully raised attainment at both key stages. In 2014, attainment was average at the end of Year 2 and much higher than average by the end of Year 6, including the proportion attaining the higher levels. The work in pupils' books indicates that pupils continue to make good progress in writing.
- In 2014, attainment in mathematics was well above average at the end of Year 6. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has been more variable over the past few years and dipped to below average in 2014. Leaders have increased the use of practical apparatus to strengthen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils are making more rapid progress as a result and they tackle mathematical problems with increasing confidence, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Reading skills are taught effectively. Attainment in reading increased at both key stages in 2014 and was much higher than the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. By Year 6, pupils are knowledgeable about books and authors and demonstrate a mature understanding of a wide range of texts. Pupils enjoy reading. One pupil said, 'I like to get lost in a book.'
- The results of the Year 1 phonic check doubled in 2014, and were well above the national average. Pupils routinely use their phonics knowledge to help them to read if they get stuck.
- The most-able pupils make good progress from their starting points. In 2014, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics increased substantially to above average levels.
- Last year, raised expectations in Key Stage 1 led to an increase in the proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of Year 2 in 2014. Improvements have been sustained this year, with pupils of all abilities making faster progress in Key Stage 1 and more pupils on track to attain these levels in 2015.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants provide focused support which meets pupils' needs well. They ensure that pupils of differing abilities are well included during lessons and make the same rapid progress as their classmates.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school achieves well. In 2014, the gap between this group's attainment and other pupils nationally closed. They attained in line with national averages in writing and mathematics and about four months ahead of other pupils nationally in reading. This group's attainment was in line with their classmates in school in reading and about six months behind in writing and mathematics.
- Small differences in the quality of teaching lead to slight variations in the progress pupils make as they move through different year groups. Pupils produce mature and perceptive contributions during lessons when teachers' questions challenge them to think deeply and when teachers adapt tasks quickly for pupils who are stuck. However, this is not always the case, so that sometimes pupils make slower progress.

The early years provision**is good**

- The early years leader is knowledgeable and effective. She has an accurate view of the strengths in early years and of aspects in need of further development. Parents are pleased with the way their children have settled into the Reception Year. They say they feel welcomed in school and that they are given regular updates about children's progress.
- Classroom areas are attractive, stimulating and well organised. Children's art work is full of character and reflects their growing awareness of the world around them. For example, their empathy for animals is illustrated by good quality work about pets and their everyday needs.
- Well-planned activities, such as the classroom 'shoe shop', capture children's interest very well, so that the children are keen to be involved and achieve well. Teaching is good. Adults use questioning well to encourage children to explore and practise basic skills, so that they make good progress. For example, during the inspection, children in the 'shoe shop' busily compared shoe sizes and worked out how much money they needed to pay for their purchases.
- Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning during the early years. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year was much higher than the national average in 2014. As a result, they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Children get on well with each other and behave well. Adults respect children's views and listen carefully to what they have to say, so that they feel safe and valued.
- Relationships between children in the early years and older pupils are good. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 said how much they had enjoyed reading books with the younger children on World Book Day, a treat clearly appreciated by children in the Reception class.
- Activities in the outdoor area do not promote learning as well as those provided in the classroom. Leaders have already identified this aspect of provision for further development. For example, the fence has recently been replaced so that children can use the outdoor area safely and staff are working more closely with the private nursery to ensure this area is used more effectively.

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	114496
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	449367

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carollyn Stanbridge
Headteacher	Andrew Best (acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
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