

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Halstead

Beridge Road, Halstead, Essex CO9 1JH

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have worked hard to ensure that outcomes for pupils are good. The school still faces a number of challenges and the school team is united in addressing these.
- Many leaders are new to their posts, including all current senior leaders. However, they have high aspirations and expectations that permeate all that the school does. The acting headteacher has accurately highlighted and prioritised areas for improvement.
- Despite the disappointing Year 6 results in 2017, pupils' outcomes in key stages 1 and 2 have largely been above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for the last three years. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards is still an area which the school needs to improve.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Some practice is excellent. Pupils currently in the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.
- Subject leaders, many of whom are new to their roles, are developing. Some are further on in their leadership and use of assessment information and the tracking of pupils' outcomes. Senior leaders are astute at finding individuals' strengths to increase capacity in the school, and are beginning to delegate responsibilities accordingly.
- Teaching and leadership of the early years are strong. Children who have only just joined the school full time settle quickly and are already confident to play independently and with their new friends. Parents are very pleased with the partnership that has developed well over a period of time.
- Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They take pride in their work and are very proud of their achievements. They are polite and courteous and show each other care and respect. Their behaviour is exemplary and reflects the school's positive ethos.
- Parents are effusive in their praise for the school. They said that their children are happy and safe and thrive at Holy Trinity, where the provision for pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual well-being is strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - the most able pupils are consistently provided with work that challenges them to achieve as well as they can
 - the excellent practice that exists is shared more widely across the school.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders use assessment information incisively to ensure that emerging priorities are tackled quickly and they can see the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes
 - subject leaders fully understand the part they play in raising pupils' achievement in the subjects for which they are responsible.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, governors, staff and pupils share a strong sense of purpose and ambition. Over time, the headteacher has driven improvements with determination. Leaders currently in place continue to have high expectations. As a result of good teaching and learning, the vast majority of pupils are making good progress across the curriculum.
- Current leaders work extremely well together to create a team that is committed to continuous improvement. Although many school leaders are new in their roles, they have quickly identified the areas that need to be developed. There is great momentum and not a hint of shying away from the challenges that the school faces. One member of staff's response to the Ofsted survey was, 'I feel involved in decisions. Leaders are very approachable. I am very proud to work at this school.'
- The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher accurately evaluate teaching and provide good developmental feedback. Where needs are identified, leaders arrange training for individuals to ensure that their practice is as good as it can be. As a result, teachers use a range of effective strategies to engage and challenge pupils.
- A number of subject leaders have not had the time to familiarise themselves with the subject for which they are responsible. However, there are excellent role models in the school. The acting headteacher has already planned, for example, to pair the leaders of computing and physical education (PE). The acting deputy headteacher, who is an experienced leader, is taking on the role of English subject leader. She has a clear understanding of her responsibilities, as does the leader of science. The expertise of these individuals strengthens the capacity of other leaders to develop apace.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils' academic achievement and personal development are supported extremely well through well-structured, cross-curricular themes that capture pupils' imagination. Pupils particularly enjoy the numerous trips that the school arranges, even those that are just outside of the classroom. For example, pupils excitedly told inspectors about their trip to the Forest School to collect all sorts of leaves, berries and wood to make natural dyes. They could not wait to see the colours that these items would make and to decorate their clay jewellery.
- Progress in English and mathematics is not at the expense of other subjects. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' thinking skills, knowledge and understanding across subjects. Pupils were reading Beowulf as part of their history work on Saxons, and a local visit to an historical site was planned for later in the week. Computing and PE are both taught by specialists. Pupils' skills in these subjects are generally above those expected for their age. Music also features strongly in the school. It is impressive to hear that pupils as young as those in key stage 1 read music and arrange variations of music that they listen to. Their singing is absolutely beautiful.
- Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values. In assemblies, pupils are taught tolerance through discussion about different faiths that they may well encounter in the community. They gain a strong sense of democracy from the various positions that pupils are voted into. Pupils are listened to and really feel that they improve the school. For example, the school council was instrumental in rallying the

support of local businesses and the community to raise money for solar panels for the school roof. They did so in record time, raising some £11,000 with the help of a multitude of people. The commitment of the local community is unquestionable. Volunteers come into the school regularly to support learning in such areas as the garden where the school grows its own vegetables and flowers.

- New leadership of special educational needs is developing. The leader has already made considerable changes to practice since taking over the leadership of this area. For example, she has introduced 'one plans' for pupils, which are regularly reviewed to check on progress. Daily reading and peer partner reading has had a good impact on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils, as have the sessions with an in-school counsellor. The organisation of teaching assistants has also been revised so that it is much more targeted to individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent wisely. Those pupils currently in the school make similar, good progress to that of their classmates. The difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is diminishing.
- Effective use of additional funding for PE and sport has resulted in increased participation in a wider range of activities. Pupils proudly talked about the various trophies that their school has won in local competitions. Teachers' skills are improving as they observe the practice of specialists. This will ensure the sustainability of good-quality PE teaching in the coming years.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn to care about others in school, for example by means of the 'kindness wall'. One pupil wrote, 'Thank you to all my friends for helping me out and keeping me company.' Reflection is a regular feature of assemblies and classwork. Pupils are taught about different cultures and religions and that they should be tolerant of others' views. The school raises money for a variety of charities. For example, pupils collected food for a local food bank and learned about who would receive the food.
- The local authority is effectively supporting the school during this time of some flux. The school has applied for emergency funding from the local Teaching School Alliance to deliver a programme of continued support, which will target development of leaders at all levels.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is effective. Experienced governors and governors who are relatively new to the school use their expertise to benefit pupils and school leaders well.
- Governors have had many challenges to deal with over a considerable number of years. They have wisely sought guidance and support from external professionals, which has ensured that information they share with the school and its community is accurate. Although challenges outside of the school's control continue, governors are adept at exploring all avenues to ensure that the school continues on its drive to further improve.
- Governors regularly receive information from leaders in the school. During this time of

transition for so many leaders, governors have been very clear that their ambition and expectations remain high. Leaders reflect that same vision.

- Training, liaison with leaders and regular visits to the school ensure that governors have a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for development. They are tenacious in their desire to capture the school's successes and tackle the areas that still need to improve, whatever it takes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and are followed rigorously. Leaders and governors have established a very positive culture that promotes the importance of safety and the well-being of all pupils. All staff are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face.
- The single central record of checks on staff and visitors is up to date and compliant. Well-organised and rigorous checks are carried out on new members of staff. Governors and leaders adhere well to safer recruitment practices to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children.
- Staff receive regular training relating to safeguarding. Governors and leaders regularly check on the effectiveness of their procedures to keep children safe. Training on the 'Prevent' duty has been delivered in the school.
- Pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Posters reminding pupils about safety are very visible in the school. TABECAT is a well-known prompt for pupils and is referred to regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. They receive good support from some well-informed subject leaders, which has strengthened teaching in, for example, science, music, PE and computing.
- Pupils are enthusiastic to learn in lessons and eagerly respond to their teachers or talk with their partners to share ideas. This is because teachers plan and deliver an interesting curriculum, which is based on good teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. For example, in Years 3 and 4 lessons, pupils were writing the beginning of their fairy tales. Very effective modelling by teachers in both classes ensured a very good response from pupils. 'You're starting to reel me in with that hook!' said a teacher to one pupil who proudly read out, 'Once there was an evil spirit who lived underneath the earth's core.' In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils happily said, 'We will work it out!' even though the work was challenging.
- Teachers know their pupils well and provide work that mostly matches the needs of the pupils. Pupils are provided with different levels of challenge, secure in the knowledge that if the level they have selected is not challenging enough, teachers will move them to the next.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

are supported well by teaching assistants. As a result, they make good progress from their varying starting points. They are guided in their learning while being encouraged to be independent. Pupils said that they know that their teaching assistants will help them and that they will be successful in their learning.

- Behaviour management in all classes is very effective. Teachers have consistently high expectations, which are well known to pupils. As a result, there is rarely a need to allude to rewards and sanctions. Pupils just get on with their learning. Occasionally, when learning is less engaging, particularly for the most able pupils, they can become a little restless. This is, however, rare.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning very effectively to elicit interesting answers, so that pupils have to think hard about what they are learning. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils learning about a number line were questioned about whether it was important to make the spacing between numbers equal. Pupils know that there are various prompts on the classroom walls or, in some cases, ceilings, to help them with their learning. Many pupils seek out the prompts on various posters, such as RUCSAC, which reminds them about what they should do when tackling a problem.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they are making good progress from their various starting points in writing and mathematics, and in subjects like history and science. However, the most able pupils are not consistently challenged in their learning. Inspectors spoke to many pupils who were keen to move on more quickly and find it 'too easy' at times, especially in mathematics. Teachers use the school's feedback and marking policy well to move pupils on in their learning. As a result, pupils are becoming more adept at identifying how to improve further.
- Staff have nurtured positive attitudes to learning. Pupils work confidently and are happy to learn from their mistakes. 'Mistakes help us to get better,' said one pupil.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy coming to their 'spectacular, special, exciting' school. They are extremely proud of their own achievements and those of the school. They said that they find the 'golden time' reward and 'wow' awards really motivating.
- The relationships between pupils and adults and among pupils are very strong. Pupils are extremely polite and respectful, holding doors open for people and saying, 'You're welcome' in response to thanks.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they like the credits that they can earn. Pupils are becoming increasingly reflective. They know the Holy Trinity code well and can say which aspects they personally want to get better at. 'I know I need to improve my listening,' said one pupil, while another said that he finds 'working hard difficult'.
- Older pupils take on their responsibilities with a real sense of pride. Other pupils know that they can go to the peer mentors or play leaders and that Year 6 pupils will 'help

children who are sad or alone on the playground’.

- Because of the importance that the school places on safety, pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. For example, when using the computer, they know not to give their password or any personal details to anyone.
- Pupils know that bullying is, as one said, ‘when someone is being horrible quite a lot and is not seen by the teachers’. They also know the different types of bullying and are clear that there is no bullying at Holy Trinity. ‘If someone is racist, that would go to fast-track, easily to fast-track!’ said one boy emphatically. Pupils know the consequences of their actions because the school makes the rules very clear. Furthermore, leaders actively celebrate pupils’ attributes. For example, comments about pupils’ kindness are displayed in full view of all visitors on the headteacher’s ‘board of kindness’.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent said about her daughter, ‘Although a naturally shy child, her confidence in her own knowledge, ideas and thoughts [is] flourishing with every step of her education at Holy Trinity.’ This is but one example among many.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- In lessons, pupils listen attentively to each other and to adults. There is a purposeful and busy feel to the school, yet the environment is strikingly calm and orderly.
- Pupils said that there are few incidents of poor behaviour because they know the consequences of their actions. When pupils are moving around the school or in the playground, behaviour is equally positive whether an adult is present or not.
- Leaders have done much to ensure that pupils know the importance of learning. As a result, pupils’ attitudes to learning are very well developed. They know what they need to get better at and, as one pupil said, ‘I think it’s pretty much everything because there is always room for improvement.’ Such a phrase accurately reflects the whole-school ethos.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. As one pupil said, ‘No other school would be better for me personally.’ Attendance rates are in line with the national average for the majority of pupils. Pupils receive attendance awards, which are reported in the school’s newsletter. The school rigorously follows up absence and lateness, working with the appropriate external agencies to support families to improve their children’s attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the previous inspection, pupils’ results in key stage 2 have risen in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2016, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieved above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Provisional results for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 were not as positive as the school had anticipated, particularly in reading and for the most able pupils. However, the

reasons for this are many and unlikely to recur.

- Pupils at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 achieved well after a dip in 2015. The proportion of pupils who achieved greater depth, an area that the school was asked to improve at the previous inspection, increased in reading, writing and mathematics. Provisional results for 2017 are equally good and a particularly impressive proportion of pupils achieved well above the national average at greater depth in reading.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the national average in the phonics screening check is at or above average and has been for the last three years. Pupils read well and make sensible guesses at tricky words. They enjoy reading, particularly taking part in the 'reading gladiators' competition with other local schools. As a consequence of such activities, pupils read widely and often.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress. This is because the additional government funding is used to provide very effective support.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates, including those who are more able. The school's own assessment information shows that their attainment is broadly in line with that achieved by their peers in reading and mathematics, although it sometimes lags behind in writing.
- Although many teachers provide opportunities to challenge the most able pupils in lessons, this is not yet consistent in classes across the school. Sometimes work is too easy. Sometimes teachers do not move pupils on quickly enough in their learning.
- The school's own assessment information, work in pupils' books and learning observations show that the vast majority of pupils are on track to achieve well in subjects including English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders ensure that the teaching of the youngest children at Holy Trinity is of a high quality. They have worked hard to improve and provide a wide range of activities and opportunities that capture the children's imagination. The environment and curriculum stimulate and excite children and allow them to make good progress.
- Children enter the school with skills that are often below those typical for their age. However, the well-organised team of adults knows the children well and quickly builds on individual children's starting points and interests. As a result, the vast majority of children make strong progress during their time in the Reception class.
- Despite having been in school full time for only two days at the time of the inspection, children were settled and happily playing both independently and with each other. Leaders said that this is the result of the work they have done with local pre-schools to ensure that children are ready for school.
- Leaders track children's progress carefully so that they can effectively plan activities and support that ensure that children achieve the best they can. Following the previous inspection, leaders took decisive action to revise the provision for boys, particularly in relation to writing. For example, writing activities are regularly provided for outside the

classroom, and include writing activities with the sports coach. The impact of such action is evident in the achievement of boys in 2017, which was much more in line with that of girls.

- Teachers and adults model phonics well. They make activities interesting and fun to ensure that children are supported in their learning, for example, using the 'magic box', which contains pictures that children match to letters or sounds. Effective support from teaching assistants ensures that all children have the opportunity to apply their phonic knowledge with enthusiasm.
- Children are encouraged to be independent learners as soon as they start school. Adults effectively model areas of learning, and children follow their good example. The range of activities is extensive. Children sustain their interest and do not flit from one activity to another, because adults sensitively intervene and support them.
- Leaders and staff place great importance on developing effective relationships not just with pre-schools, but also with parents. Children's achievements at home are displayed on the wall for example. Parents are very pleased with the information they receive and are using the new online logging of children's achievements enthusiastically. They appreciate the way their children are well supported as they enter the Reception class and when they move into key stage 1. As one parent said, 'All children are treated as individuals. My child could have been upset or worried, but she wasn't.'
- Safeguarding practices in the Reception class are effective in ensuring that all children are safe, and are shown how to keep themselves safe at school. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	115066
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10031545

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Esme Pickford
Headteacher	Jonathan Smith
Telephone number	01787 472096
Website	www.holytrinityhalstead.com/
Email address	admin@holytrinityhalstead.com
Date of previous inspection	3-4 July 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Holy Trinity is an average-size primary school with some mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average, as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The headteacher is currently absent from school. The newly appointed deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher since the end of the summer term. A consultant headteacher continues to support the leadership of the school during this

period of turbulence.

- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum set by the government.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and other leaders in the school, including the special educational needs coordinator, early years leader and leaders of English and mathematics. The lead inspector also held meetings with a group of randomly selected pupils, three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair, and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority and with the consultant headteacher.
- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors observed 18 lessons, or parts of lessons, some jointly with school leaders.
- Together with leaders, inspectors looked in detail at a range of pupils' books and work in different subjects. Inspectors heard some pupils read and spoke with pupils throughout the inspection about their learning, including two pupils who took an inspector on a guided tour of the school.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's checks on the suitability of adults to work with children, and other documentation regarding safer recruitment of staff. Leaders made available the school's own self-evaluation document, pupils' assessment information, development plans, minutes of governing body meetings and documentation regarding child protection.
- The lead inspector took into consideration the responses of 20 staff members to the Ofsted survey, and the views of 53 parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, or by text message.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Carter-Tufnell	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Kissane	Ofsted Inspector
Henry Weir	Ofsted Inspector

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