

Archbishop Courtenay Primary School

Eccleston Road, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6QN

Inspection dates

10–11 July 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Despite the determined work of leaders and teachers, pupils are not achieving as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Leaders have tackled poor teaching, and this has led to a number of staffing changes that have disrupted pupils' learning.
- Overall attendance is poor. Too many disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent. Leaders' work to tackle poor attendance is only just starting to have an impact.
- The teaching of early reading requires improvement. Too few pupils master phonics and learn to read by the end of Year 1.
- While the curriculum is generally broad and balanced, it does not develop pupils' skills and knowledge in a range of subjects sequentially. The curriculum has been narrowed as pupils prepare for national tests.
- Leaders' analysis of incidents of poor behaviour, bullying and exclusions is not sharp enough. Therefore, they cannot clearly show the improvements that have been made.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has been resilient in the face of tumultuous challenge. Working with the deputy headteacher and supported well by the trust, she has ensured that the school has made steady improvements.
- Pupils from many different backgrounds play and learn together harmoniously. Pupils are well cared for and behave well around the school and in lessons.
- Leaders' improvements have ensured that safeguarding is now effective, and children get a good start to their education in Reception.
- Leadership has been strengthened by the recent appointment of the executive headteacher. For example, he has helped hub leaders to improve their monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their teams.
- The trust has ensured that the school received suitable support to help make improvements. Local governors are holding leaders to account and monitoring improvements diligently.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it consistently helps pupils to make strong progress and raises overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - assessment information is used effectively to plan appropriate tasks for pupils
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and work is not repeated unnecessarily
 - pupils who fall behind are helped to catch up quickly.
- Improve the teaching of early reading by ensuring that:
 - all staff have the expectation that all pupils can and will learn to read
 - the same phonics programme is used by all adults throughout the school
 - pupils who are beginning to read have reading books matched to their phonic ability
 - pupils who fall behind in the phonics programme are helped to catch up quickly.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - reviewing the curriculum to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge sequentially in a wide range of subjects
 - providing governors and trustees with sharper analyses of patterns in attendance, behaviour and exclusions so that appropriate action can be taken to make improvements
 - strengthening the link between the spending of additional funding and the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Continue to work with families to improve attendance and robustly challenge those families where pupils are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- When Archbishop Courtenay Primary School was inspected in June 2017, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on four occasions. At the previous monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged to be taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.
- The headteacher has worked with great integrity to ensure that despite many challenges, especially in terms of staffing, the well-being, safety and care of pupils has been paramount. She has led the changes needed to ensure that safeguarding is now effective, and pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Improvements in teaching in Reception give a firm foundation to build upon.
- Leaders, including the deputy headteacher and hub leaders, have become increasingly effective at improving the quality of teaching and the outcomes for pupils. However, despite their hard work and best intentions, the reliance on supply teachers over the last year means that teaching is still inconsistent. As a result, pupils' attainment has not improved quickly enough at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The recent appointment of an experienced executive headteacher has strengthened leadership further and provided continuity in the next stage of the school's improvement. He has successfully ensured that the school is fully staffed with permanent qualified teachers from September 2019.
- Leaders now have an accurate self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, their analysis of some aspects of the school's work such as attendance, behaviour, exclusions and the spending of additional funding is not as sharp as it could be. Nonetheless, leaders know the main priorities for future development and are developing appropriate plans to address them.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Interesting cross-curriculum topics are used to promote pupils' writing skills through the school. In upper key stage 2, pupils are exposed to a wide range of classic and modern fiction that helps them to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Leaders have not thought about how different cross-curricular topics are ordered. Therefore, pupils are not developing their knowledge and skills in different subjects well enough. Older pupils reported that while they were preparing for national tests their curriculum consisted of mainly English and mathematics.
- Everyone is treated fairly at Archbishop Courtenay School. As one pupil said, 'We welcome anyone in this school.' Inspectors certainly observed that this was the case.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported very well. Leaders have strengthened the provision so that pupils with SEND can access school fully. As a result, the reliance on part-time timetables has reduced significantly.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the school. They believe the school keeps their children safe and looks after them well. Parents and carers feel well informed about the progress their children are making.

Governance of the school

- The multi-academy trust has taken effective action to support the school through a difficult period. A highly experienced school improvement partner has monitored the slow improvements being made. Additional support has been provided by other schools in the trust and ultimately a headteacher from another trust school has become the executive headteacher.
- Trustees and the chief executive officer (CEO) are committed to helping the school to continue to improve. For example, they have brokered support with phonics teaching from an English hub within the trust.
- Governors have continued to become more effective and reflective. They are now both challenging and supporting leaders. They have planned strategically for the future, sometimes having to make difficult decisions, such as closing the maintained Nursery this summer.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Systems and processes are fit for purpose. Leaders have successfully moved to an online system for record-keeping which is efficient and effective and enables information to be shared quickly and efficiently with other agencies when appropriate.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding are proactive in chasing up information and reporting concerns.
- Staff training is up to date. Staff receive regular updates that ensure that supply teachers are suitably trained, like all staff, in all aspects of safeguarding. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns.
- The single central record includes all of the required information. It is efficiently managed and up to date and checked regularly by the safeguarding governor.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inconsistent across the school. This is mainly due to numerous changes in teaching staff. This includes a significant minority of classes currently being taught by long-term supply teachers.
- Permanent teachers have benefited most from helpful professional development and training. In these classes, pupils learn well and make stronger progress. Teachers demonstrate and clarify tasks so that pupils know exactly what to do and what they are learning. Good questioning helps pupils make connections and remember and build on what they already know.
- Across the school, pupils want to learn, and listen to their teachers well. Organisation and transition are not always efficiently managed, so pupils are not making the progress they could. Sometimes pupils finish work and are not sure what to do next. On occasion, pupils demonstrate that they know a fair amount, but the organisation is such that they do not have the opportunity to record their knowledge.

- Where teaching is weaker, adults do not have the confidence to assess in lessons to make work easier or harder when pupils require this.
- In some classes, additional adults make a very positive contribution to learning, including when supporting pupils with SEND.
- There is a new consistent approach to teaching mathematics spreading across the school; however, it has not yet reached the oldest pupils. The new stepped system builds carefully on previous knowledge and understanding and allows pupils to complete 'stepped' tasks to use, apply and deepen their knowledge and skills. Classes where this approach is embedded are making the strongest progress in developing their fluency, problem-solving and mathematical-reasoning skills.
- The teaching of phonics is not precise enough. In key stage 1, the teaching of reading does not build on the good start children make in Reception. Pupils who fall behind in learning to read are not helped to catch up quickly in Year 2 or key stage 2. These pupils do not have reading books that match their phonic ability. During phonics teaching sessions, different adults use different approaches, and this can hinder progress when pupils move between groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and learning. They like their teachers and think they help them learn well. Pupils like school and have a sense of pride in the school and their achievements. They feel safe in school and well looked after. They are polite, friendly and respectful to each other and adults.
- Pupils are pleased to take on extra responsibilities, like being a member of the school council. Pupils feel they make things better in the school, and are proud of the 'spiritual garden' for example. Older pupils have a range of opportunities to take on different responsibilities, such as being a prefect or peer mediator. Pupils are democratically elected to these roles.
- There are no concerns about bullying of any kind. Pupils know that there are adults to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils are taught how to get along with each other well and how to be safe in school and in the community.
- The use of part-time timetables has reduced significantly, because the school is now meeting the needs of its most vulnerable pupils better.
- Families greatly appreciate the support offered by the pastoral and well-being manager, especially at times of difficulty.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance is significantly below the national average. One in five pupils are persistently absent. The school's actions to tackle absence are only just starting to

have a positive impact on improving attendance.

- Around the school, behaviour is positive. Pupils listen respectfully to each other. They answer questions sensibly and with enthusiasm. They move between activities well, including when they have new supply teachers.
- Most pupils are proud of their work and are keen to explain and show it to visitors. They like the reward systems and are proud to 'move up' through the various stages.
- Pupils from all different backgrounds play well together at lunchtimes. They enjoy the generous space available and are well supervised.
- Pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour are supported well. However, leaders' analysis of behaviour is not sharp enough, so it is not possible to demonstrate how behaviour has improved over time. Similarly, leaders are unable to show how the appropriate use of exclusion has led to improvements in behaviour for individuals.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, achievement at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 has been low in reading, writing and mathematics. Although teaching has begun to improve, it has not yet made up for previous underachievement.
- Attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check and Year 2 re-check has been low because the teaching of reading in key stage 1 does not build well enough on the positive start made in Reception.
- Current pupils' books clearly show that pupils have made progress from their beginning-of-the-year starting points in writing. There is evidence of expanded vocabulary and increased and accurate use of a range of punctuation, including complex sentence structures. The accuracy of spelling varies. There is some very impressive writing by the most able pupils. Progress is uneven, however. Handwriting does not consistently follow the school's agreed model.
- In mathematics, current key stage 1 pupils are making progress from their starting points and in many cases strong progress. This includes disadvantaged pupils, the most able, and pupils currently being taught by supply teachers. The curriculum is well covered and there are ample opportunities to problem-solve and reason, especially since March. This allows pupils to apply their knowledge and skills well.
- In key stage 2 mathematics, the new stepped approach is offering a rich and challenging mathematics curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge and skills progressively. Pupils, including those with SEND, have made strong progress from their starting points, deepening their understanding by solving a wide range of challenging problems or giving reasons for their answers. In Year 6, the strong progress made at the start of the year became stilted after Christmas due to teaching being too focused on exam technique and questions rather than deepening pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils apply their writing skills well in a range of topic work to express what they have learned in different subjects. However, pupils' progress in developing specific knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects is not as well developed as it could be.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have successfully led improvements in teaching and outcomes for children in the early years so that the provision is now good overall. Support from the executive headteacher's partner school has been very helpful in improving the provision.
- Stable staffing in the early years has helped the provision to provide a positive start for children. The early years leader knows the Reception children exceptionally well as individuals and can talk about specific key moments in their learning. She is developing a strong overview of the provision and knows what needs still to improve.
- The most consistently strong teaching is in early years. Children are given opportunities to solve problems and work together well with their friends to do this. The mixture of activities helps the children to work at a mostly appropriate level, although the most able children responded well when they were challenged more. Adults intervene well to help children to use the correct vocabulary or to extend the detail in their descriptions.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are supported very well, which gives them increased confidence. Children with SEND have their needs identified quickly and receive the support they require.
- Children make progress in all areas of learning from often low starting points and in many cases good progress. Books and online journals show that children from a range of different starting points are being supported well to make progress over time. Children do not achieve as well in their knowledge of the world, and this is an area where teachers know they need to do more to increase children's experience and knowledge of the wider world.
- Most children listen well and behave sensibly in Reception. They talk politely to their partners to share ideas. Only occasionally is there some minor silly behaviour. Children are content and engaged. They are happy to make choices and only sometimes need adult guidance.
- Parents, including those of children in the Nursery, are kept informed of their children's progress through an online system. Teachers provide home visits at the start of the year to get to know children well.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years and all of the statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	139822
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10099815

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	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Richardson
Headteacher	Wendy Robinson Howard Fisher (executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01622 754 666
Website	www.archbishopcourtenay.org.uk/
Email address	smorgan@archbishopcourtenay.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 March 2019

Information about this school

- Archbishop Courtenay Primary School opened as a sponsored academy in September 2014. The school is sponsored by Aquila, the Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust.
- A new executive headteacher took up post in April 2019. The current headteacher is leaving in August 2019. The current deputy headteacher will become head of school from September 2019.
- Archbishop Courtenay Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school's maintained nursery provision will be closing at the end of July 2019 following agreement with the Department for Education.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, are both well above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above national figures.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The school has a Christian character. The last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in June 2015 and judged the school to be good.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as the fifth monitoring visit since the school was judged to require special measures. On the second day, it was deemed a full Section 5 inspection.
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes, including the Nursery. Nearly all of the observations were carried out with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, headteacher and deputy headteacher throughout the inspection. An inspector also met with hub leaders to discuss their recent work on raising standards.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO and a trustee from Aquila. He also met with the chair of the local governing body.
- A wide range of pupils were spoken to formally and informally by inspectors. Some pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 read to an inspector.
- Leaders worked with inspectors to look at an extensive sample of pupils' work from this academic year.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, governance and school improvement.
- An inspector spoke to some parents collecting their children at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Margaret Coussins

Ofsted Inspector

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