

Eastchurch Church of England Primary School

Warden Road, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4EJ

Inspection dates

16 to 17 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too varied. Although many teachers use assessment well to make sure that pupils are challenged to learn, lessons are frequently uninspiring, and pupils' progress is limited as a result.
- Pupils do not receive a balance of subjects taught. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils have not built carefully on knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects. This leads to gaps in their learning in some subjects.
- Assessment across subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics is limited. Teachers and middle leaders are not yet able to use assessment information to improve outcomes for pupils across many subjects.
- Leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is weak. While the headteacher is working hard to bring about the improvements needed, provision for pupils with SEND is not consistently strong.
- Outcomes in the early years are not improving. Some outside areas appear to lack imaginative input and do not encourage children to learn through play.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing and mathematics. As a result, not all pupils use the skills they have learned in writing and mathematics well across other subjects.
- Not enough pupils attend school regularly. The attendance rate has not improved in the past year and has remained below the national levels for primary schools for the past three years.

The school has the following strengths

- Teachers use assessment information in reading, writing and mathematics well. They use this information to adapt lessons so that pupils focus on what they need to learn. This has led to attainment by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 improving over the past year.
- Governance is strengthening. Governors have used the training they have received to become more effective when monitoring.
- Pupils behave well across the school. They form strong relationships with one another in the early years and build on this as they move through the school. They are aware of the school values and proudly uphold them.
- Phonics is taught well. Children in the early years develop a clear understanding of the sounds that letters make. As children move into key stage 1, they develop an increasing ability to use their phonics knowledge to read well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership by:
 - ensuring that leaders responsible for SEND build highly effective systems to support the progress of pupils with SEND
 - ensuring that leaders responsible for the early years challenge and support staff to build environments that strengthen outcomes for children
 - improving communication with parents to ensure that they are confident about actions school leaders take
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they have the capacity to improve the consistency of teaching in a broad range of subjects across both school sites.
- Improve outcomes across a wide range of subjects by:
 - ensuring that the curriculum engages all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
 - increasing the level of challenge for pupils in writing and mathematics so that more attain at a higher level
 - ensuring that the curriculum is broad and balanced, allowing pupils to learn more and remember more
 - improving outcomes for pupils in the early years so that more children start key stage 1 with the skills they need in order to learn well.
- Improve attendance by:
 - ensuring that the curriculum fully engages all pupils so that they are keen to attend school
 - developing a range of highly effective strategies to raise the attendance of pupils who are missing school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership is vulnerable. Both leadership and staffing since the previous inspection have been turbulent, with a number of successive headteachers having been in post. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, leadership is stabilising and the headteacher is building a wider team of school leaders across this dual-site primary school. Governors have appointed external support, including a national leader of education and an education consultant for the headteacher, who are working to help strengthen leadership at every level across the school.
- Leadership of the wider curriculum is weak. Until May 2019, there were no middle leaders supporting the wider curriculum. Due to the limited numbers of staff appointed to support subject leadership, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have struggled to implement improvements swiftly enough across both sites. The school has now appointed three middle leaders and has commissioned a national leader of education to work with them to develop their skills.
- Leadership of SEND is not yet established. The school has recently appointed two new special educational needs coordinators, who have not yet developed systems to ensure that provision for all pupils with SEND is strong. Parents of pupils with SEND are not confident about the provision for their children, and they feel that communication with them is not effective.
- School leaders accurately identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have rightly challenged weaker teaching across the school, identifying appropriate areas for improvement and acting on them. While development is in the early stages, both the quality of teaching and outcomes across key stage 1 and key stage 2 are improving.
- Leaders support teachers to improve their practice, in particular providing helpful support to teachers who are newly qualified. Leaders have supported teachers in developing their practice in reading and mathematics, which has made teaching in reading and mathematics across the school more consistent.
- Extra funding to improve participation in sports is used well. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting activities, both within the taught curriculum and through lunchtime and after-school clubs.
- Parents show a growing confidence in the school leaders. Parents recognise that school leaders are working hard to make improvements to strengthen outcomes for their children. However, the views of parents differ depending on which school site their children attend, with parents at one site being more positive about the school than those at the other.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is starting to make a positive impact. Targeted support is put in place to allow disadvantaged pupils to catch up with their peers. While progress is being made, too few disadvantaged pupils make strong enough progress across all subjects.

Governance of the school

- Governors are effective. They have undertaken a skills audit to highlight key areas for training and have undertaken training to strengthen their roles. They have appointed strong support for the headteacher and have worked closely with the local authority and diocesan board of education to consider gaining wider support for the school.
- Governors are diligent in monitoring the quality of provision in the school. They undertake termly monitoring visits and ask searching questions of school leaders in order to make sure the plans for improvement are being implemented effectively. Monitoring reports have tended to be descriptive but, more recently, reports have become increasingly evaluative, setting out pertinent actions that governors are following up. However, governors' understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the wider curriculum is limited. Governors are rightly targeting this as a focus area in the forthcoming year.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school carefully checks that all adults working in school are safe to be with children. Records are detailed, and staff who maintain these records carefully check the suitability of all adults who are on the school sites. Volunteer helpers receive a comprehensive induction to make sure that they are aware of how to keep children safe. As a result, pupils are safeguarded from harm.
- The safeguarding leader has created a culture of safeguarding. Staff are trained in procedures to keep children safe, and they are given regular updates. Staff are clear about what to do if they have a concern about the welfare of any pupil, and they follow these procedures diligently. The safeguarding leader follows through on all concerns raised to make sure that pupils remain safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable. Teachers do not always plan lessons that build on previous learning. Too often, work does not match the pupils' needs or interests. As a result, pupils make limited progress in some subjects.
- In the strongest lessons seen, teachers encourage pupils to use what they have learned in previous lessons. Pupils are encouraged to use their writing skills across the various subjects. This helps pupils to strengthen their understanding.
- Teachers do not routinely plan work that matches the needs of pupils. Work is either too hard, or does not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. The high staff turnover has also brought inconsistency of teaching, with some pupils being taught by a high number of temporary teachers. As a result, pupils in some year groups have not progressed as well as they should.
- Assessment is not yet embedded across the broad range of subjects. Teachers are beginning to use assessment to clarify gaps in learning in reading, writing and mathematics. They do not use assessment to inform teaching beyond these subjects.

Therefore, teachers are not able to adapt plans to make sure that pupils learn more and remember more.

- Teachers build positive relationships with pupils. Pupils say that their teachers will always listen to their ideas in class.
- Phonics is taught well. Teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge and confidently demonstrate the sounds letters make. Books used in phonics lessons are linked closely to the levels of pupils' reading needs, helping pupils to practise the sounds they are learning. As a result, pupils have an improving ability to use their phonics skills in reading and writing across key stage 1.
- Pupils' reading is improving. Weekly reading comprehension lessons have been introduced this year. Pupils enjoy the texts selected in lessons, for example one pupil when questioned about a poem they were writing said, 'We are using the structure of the other poem to help us write our own.' However, reading books are not always carefully selected to meet the needs of the pupils, and consequently not all pupils enjoy reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not always take pride in their work. While some work is presented well, this is not consistent across all subjects and year groups. Pupils do not challenge themselves to produce the best work possible. Work in pupils' books is often poorly presented, and teachers do not routinely challenge pupils to strive for their best work.
- Pupils are not consistently positive about their learning. While many pupils enjoy the lessons and topics being studied, some do not. School leaders are aware of this and are currently reviewing the curriculum to make sure it is increasingly relevant for pupils and that it inspires them to learn.
- Pupils feel well supported by adults, and they feel safe. Risk assessments are in place for trips and for school activities. Pupils say they are confident in speaking with a trusted adult about their worries. Strong systems are in place to make sure playtimes are well supervised. As a result, pupils enjoy playtimes, and they form strong relationships with pupils and adults.
- Pupils believe that bullying is rare. When bullying happens, there are helpful systems in place to enable both the bully and victim to move forward. However, parents are less confident in the school's effectiveness in dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are taught about a range of cultures and religions through the curriculum. Pupils show a genuine care for their peers and consideration for those who may come from a range of cultures or have differing needs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils do not always talk with enthusiasm about lessons. While pupils behave well in class, too many pupils state that the topics they study are not interesting, and they struggle to see the relevance of what they are learning.
- Not enough pupils attend school regularly. While school leaders have worked hard to reduce the number of pupils with persistent absence, overall attendance rates have not improved and have remained below those seen nationally in primary schools.
- Pupils behave well at play. They conduct themselves well when moving around the school and are courteous to adults. While pupils acknowledge that there are a few who find it difficult to control their behaviour, pupils feel that the behaviour rules in school are fair and that they help them manage their own behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics by end of key stage 2 has been declining. Over the past three years, progress by the end of key stage 2 has been falling, with progress in writing and mathematics being in the lowest 20% of primary schools nationally. However, as a result of training and monitoring by school leaders, attainment by end of key stage 2 is strengthening in 2019.
- The wider curriculum does not provide the steps needed to make sure pupils learn well. There are limited examples of how pupils build systematically on skills, knowledge and understanding across all subjects. There is also inconsistency across year groups in the expectations for learning in some subjects, for example science and geography. School leaders are aware of this and, although improvements have been seen in books as a result of their interventions, progress remains limited across many subjects.
- Outcomes are improving in key stage 1. As a result of a restructure of how mathematics is taught and through effective use of assessment by teachers and school leaders, attainment has risen for the current Year 2 cohort. While attainment is strengthening in reading, writing and mathematics, not enough pupils reach age-related expectations in reading and writing, and no pupils met 'the greater-depth standard' in writing.
- Phonics outcomes are improving. By the end of Year 1, pupils build their knowledge of the sounds that letters make, and they are able to use this knowledge to read unfamiliar words. While the percentage of pupils attaining the phonics standard remains below the national level for all pupils, outcomes are strengthening. However, too many pupils in Year 2 do not move into key stage 2 with the phonics skills needed to support their ability to read.
- Recent improvements in the use of assessment for reading, writing and mathematics have helped staff to raise their expectations of pupils. Leaders use assessment information well to challenge teachers in understanding the need to use assessment to spot gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, progress in reading, writing and mathematics is improving. However, work often lacks sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able. Consequently, too few pupils reach the higher standard in reading,

writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leadership in the early years is weak. The school does not currently have an early years leader in post. This has led to improvements in the quality of provision being limited. School leaders have rightly appointed an early years leader for the forthcoming school year. However, due to the lack of strategic direction of the early years, the quality of provision in the early years is not yet good.
- Children do not make good progress from their starting points. Outcomes have remained static over the past year and have been below the national average for the past three years. Too few children develop core skills in reading and writing, because activities do not always help them to develop key skills through play. Opportunities for children to write through play are limited, and, as a result, no children worked beyond the expected standard in writing in 2019.
- Teaching is inconsistent in the early years. The strongest teaching ensures that a variety of meaningful activities are provided during child-initiated learning. Adults ask helpful questions that encourage children to immerse themselves in play. However, the purpose and focus of some activities in Reception Year is weak, leaving some children unmotivated to learn.
- The quality of the learning environment is too variable. In the best areas, children are drawn into learning because of the exciting environment. In one area, children keenly built towers using wooden bricks and carefully arranged a jigsaw on the digital screen, helping them develop both physically and socially. However, in another area, children struggled to find activities that enthused them to learn because the activities lacked purpose. School leaders are aware of this variation and are working hard to address this.
- Children form positive relationships. Teachers plan engaging activities for children in the Nursery, allowing children to develop strong friendships. As children move into Reception class, they continue to develop their communication skills, allowing them to talk about their learning with one another through play. As a result, pupils become increasingly self-assured and confident in their play.
- Children behave well. They form strong and positive relationships with adults and with their peers. They show care and compassion for one another. Adults support children in managing their own behaviour. Children build strong dispositions for learning, and they show respect for adults.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Adults make sure the environment for learning is safe. They undertake risk assessments to make sure children are safe both in school and when on trips. Staff receive training in paediatric first aid and safeguarding. As such, children feel safe and trust the adults who support them.

School details

Unique reference number	118644
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10088047

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Aaron Janes
Headteacher	Naomi Ivory
Telephone number	01795 880 279
Website	http://www.eastchurch.kent.sch.uk
Email address	office@eastchurch.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 to 8 May 2015

Information about this school

- Eastchurch Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized school, and above the national average size of primary schools. It is a school built on a split site, with the St Clements Site situated in Leysdown-on-Sea and the All Saints site situated in Eastchurch.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average for primary schools. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 26 lessons to observe pupils learning, with 19 lessons being visited jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and at breaktimes and had a formal meeting with a group of pupils at both school sites.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors, and representatives from the local authority and the diocesan board of education.
- Inspectors met with parents at the school gate and held meetings with parents on request.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's own assessment information; the school's self-evaluation; the plan for improvement; policies; minutes of the governing body and members' meetings; governor monitoring records; teaching and learning monitoring records; and records relating to pupils' attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school website and single central record.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The views of 71 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 43 free-text responses, were considered. The views of 67 pupils who responded to the Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire were considered. The views of 39 staff submitted through Ofsted's staff survey were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector

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