

# Churchill Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Rysted Lane, Westerham, Kent TN16 1EZ

## Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Weaknesses in the way the governing body has conducted its business have undermined the work of the new headteacher.
- Instead of supporting the headteacher when she correctly identified weaknesses in teaching and leadership, the governing body's actions have limited the pace of improvement.
- Teachers do not apply their knowledge of what pupils can already do and understand when they plan their lessons. Consequently, the most able pupils are not challenged enough, while some pupils struggle.
- Although current pupils' outcomes are improving they are not yet good, particularly in mathematics.
- The key stage 2 tests in 2017 yielded improvements when compared with 2016, but outcomes remain below the national average in mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make good progress because over time their needs have not been identified properly.
- In the Reception Year, activities generally lack challenge, especially for the most able children. Teaching is not informed by what children already know and can do.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has shown tenacity and determination, moving steadfastly to halt declining standards and address weak teaching throughout the school.
- The new deputy headteacher has brought much-needed, effective additional capacity to the senior leadership team.
- The chair and joint vice-chairs of the governing body are newly appointed this term. Many other governors are also very new. The chair is determined to provide new and effective leadership.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are strengths. They behave well throughout the school, even when teaching fails to capture their curiosity.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and secure good outcomes for pupils, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that:
  - teachers and other adults receive regular, high-quality training to support good learning for pupils at all levels
  - teaching captures pupils' obvious enthusiasm for learning and builds on their mastery of what they already know, understand and can do.
- Ensure that the needs and entitlement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are met effectively, by:
  - implementing the recommendations of the recent local authority review of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in full
  - ensuring that the leadership of this aspect of the school's provision is fit for purpose across the school.
- Strengthen leadership and build sustainability into the recent improvements in teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes, by:
  - ensuring that all staff members' expectations of what all pupils can achieve are routinely high
  - holding staff properly to account for the outcomes of the pupils that they teach
  - accurately assessing the performance of individual staff, tailoring training to their specific needs and empowering them to continually improve their performance.
- Undertake an external review of governance and in addition, improve the quality of governance in the school, by:
  - securing for all governors a clarity of understanding concerning the parameters of their roles and those of the senior leaders within the school
  - supporting leaders to become 'one voice' when communicating the school's vision and priorities for improvement to the school's parent body.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because until very recently the headteacher has not been supported properly by the governing body to bring about the rapid and necessary improvements that she correctly identified upon her arrival. Leadership capacity at a senior and strategic level has been limited.
- The school was last inspected and judged good by Ofsted in November 2013. Shortly after the inspection there was a period of joint part-time leadership until the headteacher resigned in 2015. The school was then led on a temporary basis until the appointment of the current headteacher in April 2016.
- On her arrival, the headteacher recognised that there was a culture of complacency, with insufficient focus on the needs of pupils. Key governors, staff and some parents were also in denial about the steep decline in pupils' standards and rates of progress within the school.
- In addition to low standards, the headteacher also inherited an approach to important aspects of safeguarding practice, health and safety requirements, staff training and the implementation of the new national curriculum requirements which lacked rigour. Until her arrival, none of these aspects was known fully to the governing body.
- Since her arrival, the headteacher has led the school with resilience and grit. With the support of Kent local authority personnel, she has taken tough decisions to address weak teaching and leadership successfully in the face of undermining conduct from some governing body and staff members within the local community.
- Her decisive actions have halted the decline in pupils' standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2. Nevertheless, there is still more to be done to improve the quality of teaching and improve pupils' outcomes to the level of 'good' overall.
- Safeguarding and health and safety deficiencies have been quickly rectified. The school's curriculum has been reviewed and adjusted and staff training and systems to support teachers' assessment of pupils' learning have been strengthened. However, weaknesses remain, particularly in the teaching of mathematics in all key stages.
- Until recently, leadership capacity has been limited. Several key post-holders have either been supported to improve or have left. At the time of this inspection, the headteacher was acting as the school's special educational needs coordinator on a temporary basis, having appointed a permanent replacement for January 2018.
- A recent local authority review of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities identified a number of recommendations for action. At the time of the inspection, in the absence of a full-time coordinator, not all of these actions had been implemented fully.
- Other new post-holders, such as the deputy headteacher, are beginning to make a positive difference. Feedback from parents, including the free-text commentary, indicated that they have noted the changes and are in support. One parent commented: 'I feel that the headteacher now has a fantastic team in place and will move the school forward in a very positive way.'

- In the past, staff were not held properly to account for the progress of the pupils they taught. However, teachers' performance management targets have now been aligned to the aspirational targets of the pupils they teach. Although training has been delivered to all staff on a range of topics, tailoring of professional development targets has yet to be fully developed.
- The curriculum is suitably balanced and broad, offering pupils a range of subjects as they progress through the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. A strong Christian ethos permeates the school. The termly emphasis, such as for 'kindness' challenges their thinking and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Subjects and topics are now complemented by the wide range of enrichment opportunities available to pupils through trips and after-school clubs. One parent commented: 'The curriculum is taught in a variety of ways and it is great to see improvement in physical education, literacy and extra-curricular activities... There is a freshness to the school and as parents of two children we are not only relieved but positive.'
- Until the arrival of the new headteacher, leaders did not evaluate the effectiveness of additional funding expenditure, including the physical education and sport premium and pupil premium funding, properly. This has now changed.
- Although leaders' analyses are embryonic, they have already gathered affirming evidence of improvements in attendance, rates of progress and outcomes of disadvantaged pupils across the school. Equally, a recent school-led parental survey indicated that parents were very satisfied with improvements to sports provision, funded through the sport premium.
- The local authority has provided a significant amount of necessary additional support. This has included personnel advice, linking the headteacher with an executive headteacher, conducting learning walks and checking teachers' assessments. This has enabled leaders and teachers to be confident that teaching and learning are improving from a low base.

## **Governance of the school**

- Until very recently, the school's governance arrangements have been weak. This is because over time, some members of the governing body have failed to act strategically or in some instances appropriately in relation to the following:
  - declining standards and rates of pupils' progress
  - their roles in monitoring and evaluating the impact of additional funding
  - their duties in relation to important aspects of safeguarding practice, such as requiring good references for all employees prior to issuing their contracts
  - maintaining strict confidentiality on matters concerning individual members of staff
  - their duties to provide challenge, care and support for the newly appointed headteacher in equal measure.

- At the end of the summer term, the governing body acted on advice from senior Kent local authority personnel. A new chair of the governing body and two joint vice-chairs were appointed. The previous chair of the governing body and vice-chair left the governing body and other new governors were appointed. Input from local authority personnel this term has been followed up. Governors with whom inspectors met had signed up for training and demonstrated a determination to execute their roles with the utmost integrity, seeking to secure further improvements to the school effectively.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are now effective. The headteacher and business manager have ensured that correct procedures are in place when appointing staff. The school's single central register of employees meets requirements. Staff with whom inspectors met demonstrated a clear understanding of the statutory guidance and know what to do if concerns about pupils arise. Staff found recent training on the 'Prevent' duty useful and know about the whistle-blowing policy. There is good evidence of liaison where necessary with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. However, although parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, universally felt that their child was safe in school, the headteacher and governors recognise that more could be done to improve communications with parents, particularly in relation to isolated incidents of bullying.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Visits to lessons confirmed that teaching is generally characterised by teachers' warm and inviting relationships with pupils. However, teaching is not yet consistently good. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics varies between classes.
- Teachers do not always consider how well pupils are learning in lessons or make use of this information to plan which work to set next. Consequently, in lessons some pupils finish their work early, while other pupils get stuck.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work in mathematics, English and other subjects, conducted alongside leaders, provided evidence of an absence of assessment of some pupils' work and sometimes incomplete or inaccurate assessment. For example, in mathematics work scrutiny showed that there was evidence of pupils being assessed at 'mastery' level being set the same work as other pupils at lower levels. During this joint activity, leaders were unable to present inspectors with evidence of teachers' use of pupils' prior assessment information to match tasks or next steps to these pupils' needs.
- In subjects such as science and religious education (RE), inspectors found that standards of presentation, grammar and spelling in pupils' work were not as high as in English. Equally, current books showed that in RE and science there was very little evidence of recording of assessment, as required within the school's assessment policy. Nevertheless, pupils' work in RE provided good evidence of challenge because teaching required pupils to respond to questions thoughtfully, enabling some creative and divergent responses from pupils on key moral themes.
- Scrutiny of pupils' English books offered better evidence of progress for some pupils. However, broader opportunities for pupils to develop and improve individual pieces of

writing were not found in books or in observations of learning.

- Discussions with pupils revealed that they generally enjoy their learning. Some pupils, however, feel that they are not sufficiently challenged in their learning. Comments such as, 'I know I could definitely do more. You only need to look at the ticks in my books to see, I get everything right' and 'you start off easy and then it gets harder' or 'if you do the easy questions you can then do the harder ones' typify some of their perceptions.
- Inspectors visited a range of lessons across subjects and key stages during the inspection. During visits to classes they were able to speak to pupils and observe their positive attitudes to learning and their willingness to participate and engage. The newly introduced use of success criteria and colour-coding of tasks was also in evidence and understood by pupils.
- The teaching of phonics is under review. Leaders acknowledge that current provision is inconsistent with two different schemes being followed in Reception and Year 1. Consequently, there are plans for whole-school training on the teaching of phonics, including for other adults.
- New approaches to the use of assessment and the teaching of mathematics, in particular, have yet to become secure. Alongside a turnover in staffing at the end of the academic year, teachers' unfamiliarity with elements of the pedagogy required have compounded this issue. Observations of learning and discussions with staff revealed that some staff lack a complete understanding of the school's new approach to teaching mathematics.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils listen well during lessons and are eager to learn. They are keen to work hard and respond patiently and courteously, even when the teaching fails to inspire them or the work is too easy.
- Pupils are encouraged effectively to take on roles of responsibility and, where appropriate, help other pupils. The work of the school council is valued. It develops their understanding of democracy alongside their keen sense of fairness and right and wrong.
- Pupils take an evident pride in their school and were keen to talk to inspectors about their experiences. In discussions and reading sessions they were able to talk confidently about improvements they would like to see at the school, especially in the level of challenge.
- Pupils say they feel safe and incidents of bullying do happen but are rare. This was reflected both in conversations and in the Ofsted pupil survey. They understand about the different types of bullying and are confident that staff in the school are there to help, should a problem arise.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Behaviour around the site, at breaks and at lunchtimes is calm and safe.
- Rates of attendance are above average overall, except for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities whose rates of attendance have been lower than their classmates. Encouragingly, recent strategies to track and support these pupils to attend better have yielded significant improvements.
- In lessons, pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning. This was particularly noticeable even when teachers or other adults had lingered for lengthy periods helping individual pupils, not noticing that others had finished or were stuck.
- The school has a clear and effective system of sanctions and rewards and works closely with parents and appropriate agencies to support pupils where necessary. Exclusions from school are rarely necessary.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils do not yet reach the standards of which they are capable. Funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been targeted carefully enough the past. Until very recently, leaders have not been able to evaluate accurately the impact of this funding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities currently within the school do not benefit from up-to-date provision mapping. A temporary, part-time specialist is due to start at the school very soon. Governors have appointed a permanent coordinator with effect from January 2018.
- Outcomes and rates of progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 have improved in reading and writing and are now average overall. However, this improvement was not replicated in mathematics, where outcomes and progress declined to below average.
- In 2017, higher-attaining, middle- and lower-attaining pupils underachieved compared to national benchmarks in mathematics, as did disadvantaged pupils and those who had special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Current rates of progress in key stages 1 and 2, although improving, are variable because teaching is inconsistent. Not all staff are using the new assessment system in line with the school's policy. Some teachers now need a more bespoke approach to their professional development to support them with gaps in their particular skill set.
- During the inspection, inspectors listened to a range of readers of differing abilities. Inspectors found that higher- and middle-attaining pupils' reading was broadly fluent and secure. However, lower-attaining pupils reported that although they were encouraged to read at home, staff do not routinely listen to them read in school.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Children join the early years provision with skills and abilities that are at least typical for their age and some considerably higher than typical. At the end of their time in Reception, a higher proportion of children than nationally are ready for Year 1. However, some children underachieve, particularly the most able.
- For example, parents who completed the Ofsted free-text wrote: 'My child attended a private nursery and was taught a lot in terms of alphabet and number. I am concerned that he is not learning, but merely relearning and not progressing' and 'There seems to be no allowance for ability... they are all going along at the lowest level.'
- As elsewhere in the school, teachers and other adults do not use their knowledge of children routinely to plan activities for them that will build on what they already know, challenge their thinking and develop their skills more rapidly. As a result, some children do not make the progress that they should across all areas of learning.
- Outcomes in 2017 showed that children achieved less well in reading and writing than in number. Leaders have introduced the 'literacy tree' from September to help secure improvements in this aspect. However, at the time of this inspection it was too soon to assess its effectiveness.
- The leader of early years is new in post with effect from September. She acknowledged in discussions with inspectors that currently there is only limited use of children's baseline assessments to inform planning and activities or evaluate the effectiveness of teaching in moving children's learning on.
- Senior leaders confirmed that systems are now being put in place to analyse the effectiveness of early years provision more accurately, including the effectiveness of additional funding such as for disadvantaged children where applicable. However, at the time of this inspection these changes in approach were too embryonic to assess.
- Children behave and respond well in Reception as elsewhere within the school. Visits to the Reception area confirmed that relationships are strong, children are polite to each other and respectful. Timely refocusing and reminders also ensure that children are able to talk about the context of their learning confidently, with good listening skills in evidence.
- Safeguarding is effective. Adults take good care of children and prioritise keeping them safe. Children with high levels of need are supported effectively and all are taught to manage risk well.



## School details

Unique reference number	118616
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10037813

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Daniel Frith
Headteacher	Lena Pennacchia
Telephone number	01959 562197
Website	<a href="http://www.churchill.kent.sch.uk">www.churchill.kent.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@churchill.kent.sch.uk">headteacher@churchill.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	19–20 November 2013

## Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school with provision for early years in two Reception Year classes.
- The school meets the government's latest floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Since the school was last inspected in November 2013, the previous headteacher resigned after a short period of jointly leading the school on a part-time basis. The school was then led on a temporary basis until the appointment of the current headteacher in April 2016.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional pupil premium funding.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its

website.

## Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, made visits to lessons in each key stage and scrutinised pupils' work within lessons and separately alongside the headteacher, deputy headteacher and another senior leader.
- Inspectors also listened to pupils read and scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, leaders' development plans and assessment information.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, groups of new and more established staff, the leader of early years and the deputy headteacher. The lead inspector spoke with a senior member of Kent local authority advisory staff on the telephone and also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of staff and pupil questionnaires and 60 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text comments. The lead inspector also took account of one letter from a parent. Inspectors also spoke with parents as they dropped their children at the school.

## Inspection team

Lesley Farmer, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Scutter	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Rome	Ofsted Inspector

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