

Great Easton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Snow Hill, Great Easton, Dunmow, CM6 2DR

Inspection dates 11–12 July 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in writing, reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is usually good, with some that is outstanding. As a result, pupils, including children in Reception, make good progress.
- School leaders keep a close check on the quality of teaching. They have used staff training to overcome areas of concern so that teaching is **improving and pupils' achievement** rising.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is above average.
- **Pupils' attitudes to learning are impressive, as** are their relationships with peers and adults. Their behaviour is excellent. They feel very safe.
- The range of extra activities offered to pupils is extensive. Visitors, music, art, drama, sports activities and residential visits all enrich and **extend pupils' learning.**
- Governors know the school well and provide a high level of support as the school aims for further improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not make enough use of the information they already have to set work at the right level for all pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently show pupils how they can improve their work.
- Teachers do not always set work that demands enough of more-able pupils or makes sure that lessons are well paced.
- Subject leaders are not confident enough in checking the quality of teaching in their areas to bring about improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They observed 13 lessons, two of them jointly with the members of the senior leadership team, and made brief visits to several more. They examined **the work in pupils' books and work on displays**.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents covering safeguarding and child protection, **attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body**, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- They considered the 25 questionnaires completed by staff. They also took into account the views of 41 parents, as expressed on the Parent View website.

Inspection team

Stephen Palmer, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Susan Wood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the **government's** current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for **pupils' attainment and progress**.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that pupils make outstanding progress, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers set work that is appropriately challenging, especially for more-able pupils
 - teachers using **the information they have about pupils' skills and understanding to plan** activities which meet their needs
 - making sure that marking and feedback give pupils a clear understanding of how they can improve their work.
- Develop the capacity of subject leaders so that they can bring about further improvements in how well pupils learn by:
 - developing their skills in analysing the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in their subject
 - using this analysis to plan effectively for improvements to the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children join the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. However, some pupils start at levels, particularly in writing, speaking and mathematics, which are below those expected nationally. They make good progress as they mature, so that by the end of Year 6, attainment is currently above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year, most pupils have achieved or exceeded what is expected of children of their age.
- The knowledge and skills of pupils at the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics are above average. After a dip in previous years, there has been a recent improvement in the rate of progress in Key Stage 2. However, the achievement of pupils is not outstanding because their progress through Key Stage 2 is not sufficiently rapid.
- There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls. The small proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also achieve well because teachers identify their needs swiftly and accurately and give them good support and guidance. These pupils are included in all school activities, and what they have to offer in lessons is valued.
- The very small number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium benefit from one-to-one and small-group activities provided with the additional funding. This means that these pupils achieve well. There were not enough Year 6 pupils in 2012 known to be eligible for free school meals to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- **Progress in reading is mostly good. Pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is strong** because teaching in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 classes is systematic and effective. A higher proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check than the national average. Pupils enjoy reading and most develop as competent readers as they progress through the school.
- **Pupils write for a wide range of purposes. The examples of pupils' written work seen during the inspection show that pupils apply and improve their writing skills through their work in other subjects.**
- **Pupils' have well-**developed speaking skills and they express their ideas confidently; most are good listeners.

The quality of teaching is good

- **Teaching is usually good and some of it is outstanding. It has supported pupils' good progress** over time and has made an effective contribution to their well-developed social skills and excellent relationships.
- Teachers give pupils a clear idea of what they want them to learn and achieve. Teachers give the teaching assistants clear guidance on their role, which enables them to make a constructive **contribution to pupils' learning.**

- Where teaching is most effective, teachers achieve a high level of commitment from all pupils, who make good or better gains in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers check their understanding through perceptive questioning, and their comments challenge pupils to think more deeply. The pace of these lessons is brisk and pupils are given enough time to work on their own.
- Pupils use the skills they have acquired through literacy lessons in other subjects. As a result, they have a wide range of opportunities through which to practise and apply this learning, and this is reflected in the high quality of the content of their written work
- The teaching of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is specifically aimed at improving their basic skills. Pupils who are not doing well enough are given extra support through small groups and one-to-one tuition. The extra support is beginning to help them to catch up.
- The displays in classrooms are stimulating, offer resources to help pupils find out for themselves, and reflect the broad range of subjects they study.
- Teachers do not consistently take into account what pupils have already learnt when planning lessons. As a result, the work on a few occasions is not demanding enough, especially for more-able pupils, and so pupils do not always make as much progress as they should.
- **When marking pupils' work, teachers do not consistently give pupils feedback on how well they are doing, nor give them advice on how they can improve.** As a result, pupils are not sure about what they can do for themselves to get better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils display excellent attitudes to their learning. They take great pride in their work and **appreciate what the school provides for them. For example, one pupil said, 'School is brilliant, epic, creative, sporty and healthy!'**
 - Pupils are very keen to learn in as wide a variety of ways as they can. They take an active role in planning what and how they want to learn in class topics.
 - Incident logs indicate an extremely low level of poor behaviour, and this is reflected in comments made by pupils.
 - Pupils have an excellent understanding of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, and know how to stay safe. Pupils carry out their own risk assessments prior to activities away from school, which develops their sense of personal responsibility.
 - All groups of pupils relate very well to each other. They respect the needs of other pupils, and what other pupils have to offer. They are courteous and have a real pride in their school and the achievements of their peers.
 - The pupils take a keen interest in the running of the school. They have opportunities to speak to school leaders about ways in which teaching and learning could improve, as well as about new things they would like to have in and around the school. For instance, pupils proposed that the school should build a henhouse to keep some chickens. They talked to local craftsmen to
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establish the costs, and are now involved in organising care for the chickens and distribution of eggs in the local community.

- All parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their child was safe at school, and that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils' attendance has risen to above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The setting of targets for teachers to improve their work has established clear links between **teachers' pay and their impact in the classroom on pupils' skills and knowledge. Continuing staff training is rightly linked to the school's key priorities for improvement. Recent external training on the teaching of writing has strengthened teachers' skills and has enabled pupils to make better progress than previously.**
- **Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed to make sure that extra help is provided to those who need it.** Senior leaders and governors maintain a review of the performance of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who are supported by pupil premium funding. They make sure that these pupils all have the same chance to succeed as their classmates. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- The headteacher has introduced appropriate checks on the quality of teaching. Following a check, areas for improvement are agreed with the teacher, and this is followed up with further checks to see that the quality of teaching is improving.
- The school checks its performance accurately. However, leadership and management are not outstanding because they have not yet brought about outstanding teaching or achievement.
- Before the appointment of the new headteacher, subject leaders had few opportunities to find out how well their subject was taught. While they now have more opportunities to check teaching, they are not confident enough in assessing its quality to plan effectively to make the quality of teaching better.
- The activities that pupils undertake, both during the school day and out of school, build their skills and contribute well to their personal development. Knowledgeable visitors, sport, music, **drama, art and educational visits all promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural** development well. Residential visits for Year 5 and 6 pupils, where they enjoy adventurous and team-building activities, help them develop confidence and resilience.
- **The school has strong links with parents, who are supportive of the school's ambition to help pupils to do their best.**
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body maintains an overview of data on pupils' performance and knows how well the school is performing in comparison with other schools. Governors keep themselves informed about the overall **quality of teaching. They are fully aware of the need to align teachers' performance in the classroom with their pay rises and promotion. They support the way the teachers' performance is managed and know about how the school rewards good teachers**

and is tackling any underperformance. The governing body makes sure that the pupil premium **is used to boost the achievement of eligible pupils. It ensures that the school's safeguarding arrangements meet current national standards.**

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115177
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	412405

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Pickford
Headteacher	Claire Jackman
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2010
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Email address	admin@greateaston.essex.sch.uk

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