

Orchards Church of England Primary School

Cherry Road, Wisbech, PE13 3NP

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching has not been good enough in the past to make sure all pupils, including those who need extra help, make good progress.
- Although pupils are now making progress at a faster rate, improvements have not yet been sustained over time.
- The work that teachers set for more-able pupils in lessons is insufficiently challenging.
- Teachers' lesson introductions and explanations are too long and there is not enough time for pupils to work on their own and find things out for themselves.
- The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work varies. They do not always help pupils to understand how they can improve their work, or provide them with regular opportunities to respond to advice.
- Leaders in charge of subjects do not make good use of pupils' assessment information to check on the quality of teaching in their subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils say they feel safe in school. Their behaviour is good and they show positive attitudes to learning.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The headteacher, governing body and other senior leaders are ambitious for the school.
- The staff is working well together to improve pupils' learning and progress.
- Teaching is improving because leaders provide teachers with clear advice and training which help to develop their skills. Consequently, all pupils are now making progress at a faster rate than in previous years.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers, and two assemblies. They observed 11 lessons jointly with senior leaders.
- Short visits to observe the teaching of reading were made. Activities related to the teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were also observed.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, staff and members of the governing body. In addition, the lead inspector talked with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play during break and lunch times.
- The school’s safeguarding policies, improvement plans, notes from meetings of the governing body and records of pupils’ behaviour were reviewed. Inspectors also looked at the work pupils were doing in their books, and at records of their progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), and 30 replies to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also met with parents and carers and sought their views at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector
Graham Marshall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Orchards Church of England Primary School and Nursery is much larger than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is well-above average.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding to the school. The funding is based on the number of children at the school in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is average. An above-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times of the year is well-above average.
- The school makes use of Meadowgate School to provide specialist resourced provision for supporting pupils' social and emotional development.
- A breakfast club, managed by the governing body, operates on the school site.
- The school is expanding from a two-form to a three-form entry school which will provide 630 places for pupils by September 2017.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2012. Seven new teachers have joined the staff since September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons are good or better and thus raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, by making sure that all staff:
 - set more demanding work in all lessons for those pupils who are more able
 - make lesson introductions and explanations shorter to increase opportunities for pupils to work on their own
 - give pupils precise guidance when marking their work and provide them with the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments, so they are clear about what they need to do to improve
 - learn from and adopt the most effective marking practice which already exists in the school.
- Strengthen the school's leadership and management by developing the skills of subject leaders in looking carefully at pupils' assessment information so they can play a greater role in accelerating improvements to teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics is below average. In previous years, pupils' progress, including for those pupils who need extra help, has been insufficient to enable them to reach expected levels by the time they leave the school.
- In the current year, almost all pupils are making progress at a faster rate than before in English and mathematics and attainment is rising, particularly in mathematics. Some more-able pupils, however, do not make good enough progress in lessons. Although pupils' rates of progress are improving rapidly, they are not yet sustained over time. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. They receive extra support in lessons and in small group work that helps to fill very specific gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. They get off to a good start because adults provide a good range of activities, both indoors and outside, that enable them to develop their skills across all areas of learning. Although closer to national averages, the skills of most children remain below average when they enter Year 1.
- Pupils' progress in reading is improving because young children and those who arrive at the school new to English are taught phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) every day. Adults help children to make links between reading and writing and encourage them to use these skills when learning about other subjects.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds who speak English as an additional language are supported well because adults throughout the school provide good language role models. They constantly introduce, repeat and reinforce new words and phrases in a variety of interesting ways. As a result, these pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Pupils who arrive at the school partway through the year are welcomed and settle in quickly. They are paired with a 'buddy' who helps them to learn routines and make new friends. Adults make early assessments of their skills to make sure they get the support they need.
- The school uses the extra funding it receives appropriately to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium. It provides a wide range of support programmes, including one-to-one tuition, small-group intervention activities and additional adult support in lessons. Year 6 eligible pupils in 2012 were, on average, about three terms ahead of their classmates in English and a term behind in mathematics.
- The few pupils who attend the specialist off-site provision make good progress, particularly in developing social skills and this helps to raise their self-confidence and self-esteem.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching in previous years has not made sure all pupils, including those who need extra help, make good progress. In some lessons, the pace of learning slows because teachers' introductions to lessons and their explanations are too long. As a result, pupils do not get sufficient time to get on with their own work and find things out for themselves. Sometimes,

more-able pupils needlessly participate in whole-class teaching and the work set for more them is too easy. Consequently, they do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

- The quality of teachers' marking in pupils' books is uneven. There are good examples in some classes of how teachers' comments develop pupils' understanding. However, not all teachers' marking provides pupils with clear and precise feedback about what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are not consistently given regular opportunities to respond to teachers' comments so they can improve their skills.
- Improvements to teaching are leading to most pupil groups now in the school making progress at a faster rate. In the most effective lessons, teachers have high expectations of learning and behaviour. They take account of what pupils already know to plan activities that are set at the right level of difficulty to move their learning on. Teachers make good use of 'talk partners' to help pupils to share their ideas and to practise speaking and listening.
- Teachers' use of computer technology engages pupils and helps to maintain their interest. In Year 2, for example, pupils enthusiastically turned simple sentences into more complex ones using a range of connectives. The teacher used pictures from the internet to support pupils' understanding and a spinner randomly selected different connectives. Consequently, pupils' engagement levels were high and this contributed well to their good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults take advantage of children's interests to plan activities that help them learn new skills. Particularly good progress was seen during a session when children in the Nursery searched for objects in the sand and had to decide whether or not the object's name began with the letter 'b', then learned to write the letter 'b' while excitedly exploring the texture of foam with their fingers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically, pupils' behaviour in lessons and as they move around the school is good. They respond well to the school's systems for managing behaviour and have a good understanding of its rewards and sanctions. The 'Well-being Team' provides good support to eligible pupils and their families. Consequently, pupils with often complex learning and behavioural needs are helped to participate fully in school activities. Exclusion rates have been significantly reduced.
- Most pupils say that they feel safe, that staff are helpful and care for them. They understand the behaviours that constitute bullying. Pupils report a few instances of name-calling, but know how to seek help if needed. They have a well-developed understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet or mobile technology.
- School leaders have worked hard to promote good attendance. Consequently, it has improved. However, it remains a little below average due to a small proportion of families who take extended holidays in term-time.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good. They work together well in lessons and are supportive of one other. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and when they are asked, settle quickly and get on with their own work without fuss. In a few lessons, and usually related to teachers' long explanations, some pupils lose interest and, as a result, their learning slows.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Those in charge of leading different subjects do not analyse pupils' assessment information in

sufficient detail. Consequently they are not as well informed as they could be about how pupils are doing.

- Led by the new headteacher, senior leaders are ambitious for the school. They are clearly focused on taking the right actions to improve pupils' progress and raise standards. Subject leaders are working hard to improve teaching and ensure pupils make better progress. They observe teaching, provide training for staff and keep a check on how well their subjects are taught by looking carefully at how teachers plan lessons.
- Leaders take appropriate action to ensure pupils get an equal chance to succeed and they tackle any form of discrimination robustly. Staff meet regularly to look at how well each pupil is doing. This ensures those who need extra help are supported in small group work and one-to-one teaching sessions. The school makes effective use of the 'Well-being Team' and external agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Teaching is improving because leaders give teachers clear feedback after watching them teach. They are set precise targets for improvement and provided with professional training to develop their skills. Teachers new to their teaching career are supported well by more experienced colleagues. The staff team are behind the drive to improve pupils' achievement and are working well together to learn from the best practise that exists within the school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. This ensures children get off to a good start, particularly in learning speaking, listening and communication skills.
- The school offers pupils a range of subjects enhanced by trips and visits. Adults foster a positive climate for learning and together, these make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective partnerships and links with the church and community provide good opportunities for pupils to enjoy sport, to reflect on and appreciate art as well as different cultures, beliefs and values.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school in terms of increasing leadership capacity and improving teaching and learning. It has made sure that key staff, including governors, have received appropriate training to help bring about improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware that pupils' attainment is below national averages and that the focus on improving teaching must be maintained to raise pupils' achievement. Governors make frequent visits to lessons and school events. They have made the most of training opportunities so are able to make more informed choices about the school's work. Governors challenge the school to improve its performance although its records of discussions in holding leaders to account are not as thorough as they could be. They check that the headteacher and other teachers are meeting the targets that are set for them. Governors manage the school's finances effectively and plan ahead to make sure that funds, including the pupil premium, are thoughtfully allocated and spent in the best interests of the children. They look closely at how well eligible pupils are doing and ensure that the extra help they receive is making a positive difference to them, both academically and socially. Governors see that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	133782
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	400147

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Purt
Headteacher	Nicola Parker
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2011
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