

Tewin Cowper Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Cannons Meadow, Tewin, Welwyn, AL6 0JU

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides clear and determined leadership. She is supported well by the governing body and other leaders. Together, they are improving both teaching and achievement.
- Pupils in all year groups are keen to learn. They make good progress from their differing starting points in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils are kept safe while they are in the school at all times. Their good behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute well to the strong sense of community in the school. This, along with pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, prepares them for life in modern Britain.
- Parents hold the school in high esteem.
- Teaching is good. Teachers' marking is particularly effective. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work.
- Teachers use computers very well to capture pupils' interest and help them enjoy their learning.
- Governors work very effectively with the leaders and the local authority.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class because adults provide exciting and well-planned activities.
- The school works closely and effectively with other local schools, and benefits from the expertise offered by other leaders and teachers in the local partnership.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Lesson activities do not always stretch all groups of pupils sufficiently, including the most-able pupils, so that they deepen and widen their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as it is in reading and mathematics. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunities in other subjects to write at length and in different styles.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are not developed systematically across key stages. Consequently, they are not as good as they could be.
- Teachers do not always encourage pupils to be sufficiently ambitious in their choice of vocabulary.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, two of which were seen together with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of other short visits to lessons with the headteacher. The inspector also listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the headteacher, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Vice-Chair and four other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 65 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and eight responses to the staff questionnaire. The inspector also consulted 15 parents during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books and a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; school improvement planning; documentation relating to teachers' performance over time; and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Provision in the early years takes the form of a single class in Reception, which children attend full-time.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. This additional funding applies in this school to a small number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school works closely with local primary and secondary schools, and the Diocese of St Albans.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that more is outstanding and achievement is raised further, by making sure that:
 - the tasks set in lessons are appropriately demanding for all groups of pupils, including the most able
 - pupils are encouraged to use more extensive and ambitious vocabulary to make their writing more exciting and varied
 - pupils improve their handwriting and presentation skills across the school
 - pupils have regular opportunities to write in subjects other than English so that they are able to write at length and in different styles.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well-supported by the school's committed staff, has brought about rapid improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. Leaders and other staff have a shared sense of direction and they are focused sharply on raising standards. A consistent and effective system for supporting the needs of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties has resulted in improved behaviour and a reduced rate of exclusion.
- Senior and subject leaders, including in the early years, lead their areas well. They monitor the quality of teaching effectively and carry out regular checks on the work in pupils' books. Their rigorous reviews of how well pupils are achieving have ensured that pupils are making accelerated progress this year.
- The arrangements for checking teachers' performance are robust and leaders set teachers challenging targets. These are linked closely to pupils' performance and form the basis of any decisions about teachers' pay increases. Staff are supported through good quality training, which has led to improved teaching and rising standards.
- The curriculum offers pupils a good balance of subjects and imaginative activities which help them to widen their experience and understanding of their community and the wider world. As a result, pupils learn about key values that are fundamental to the British way of life, and appreciate cultures that are different to their own. In this way, the school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils participate in a wide variety of school clubs and activities, and can explore plant and animal life in the school's designated wild area. They take part in many sporting events and music activities, such as inter-school sports and music festivals. All these promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used effectively to train staff, to introduce new sports clubs and to engage more pupils in competitive sports. A high proportion of pupils now participate in competitive sports with other local schools.
- The school ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and develop well, whatever their background or ability. No discrimination is tolerated. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils so that these pupils receive good support. As a result, they make good progress.
- The school gives high priority to pupils' safety and well-being. All safeguarding arrangements are effectively implemented. Staff are trained in, and regularly updated on, safeguarding requirements.
- The local authority works effectively with the school by, for example, supporting and providing training for governors. The headteacher has worked closely with the local authority and other local schools to bring about improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school has a very effective partnership with parents, who regard the school highly. The school website provides very good opportunities for parents to access the extensive range of information the school provides. This includes details of the school's literacy and numeracy programmes, together with the new curriculum and assessment requirements, so that parents can support their children's learning at home.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the school because they visit it regularly to check its performance and work closely with the headteacher and staff. Governors know how well the school is doing and how it compares to other schools nationally. They successfully completed the external review, recommended by the previous inspection, and are now operating efficiently. They review the impact of teaching and

check the school's progress towards the targets set out in development plans. They use this information effectively to hold the leaders to account for the school's performance and when making decisions on teachers' pay awards.

- Governors monitor the impact of spending effectively. For example, they check impact of the primary sport funding on pupils' health and well-being, and the impact the pupil premium funding has on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Governors ensure that the procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to learn. They work together well and readily discuss issues and ideas that are important to them. Occasionally, during lessons, there is a small amount of low-level disruption when a few pupils do not concentrate fully and when the work does not challenge them sufficiently. In most cases, however, pupils are very proud of their school. They say the school's values, such as tolerance and responsibility, help them to achieve well and prepare them for the next stage of education.
- The school's procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are good and they are applied consistently by all staff. As a result, pupils display good levels of self-discipline in and out of the classroom, and grow up as confident learners.
- Pupils readily take on responsibilities. For example, they choose a number of charities each year and raise funds for them.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school carries out checks on all staff before they are allowed to work with children. The staff implement the school's safeguarding policies effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel safe because they know that adults in school will always help them, as will their friends. Pupils are well informed about all types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that bullying is very rare and that, should it occur, it is quickly and effectively resolved.
- Staff help pupils to develop their understanding of how to stay safe and teach them how to make safe choices. Pupils have a clear understanding of the dangers that they might face in daily life, such as misuse of drugs.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved and is now consistently good in all key stages, with some examples of outstanding teaching. This has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in reading, and mathematics. Good relationships between adults and pupils help to promote a positive learning climate in all classrooms.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. They have good subject knowledge and guide pupils' learning effectively, giving clear instructions about the work pupils have to do. They use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and ensure that pupils build on their prior learning. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were taught the use their grammar skills they had learnt in previous session to write an opening paragraph of their own story. Next day, pupils completed the story in a computer session, where they used their punctuation skills effectively to make the story interesting and imaginative.
- Learning support assistants plan activities jointly with class teachers and give effective support to disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Consequently, all

these pupils make good progress as they move through the school.

- Teachers mostly ensure that the work they set provides an appropriate challenge for all groups of pupils. However, occasionally, they do not make use of information they collect about pupils' progress to ensure that work they set pupils is demanding enough, including for the most able.
- The teaching of reading is good. Teachers provide pupils with interesting and informative stories and information texts during lessons. These enhance their understanding of characters and of different styles of writing.
- Teaching in mathematics is also good. Pupils are making good progress because teachers ensure that the pupils have mastered the key skills they need before setting them problems to deepen their understanding further.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their writing skills in literacy lessons. They use their reading sessions effectively to learn how to analyse the effectiveness of different styles of texts. However, they have limited opportunities to write at a length in subjects other than English. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to use extensive vocabulary or explore different writing styles for themselves, so that they can make their writing interesting and exciting. Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are not developed consistently across the key stages.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and pupils receive clear guidance on what they need to learn next. Pupils regularly follow their teachers' suggestions for the next steps they need to take.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has taken decisive action over the past two years to improve pupils' achievement. As a result, pupils throughout the school have made accelerated progress since the previous inspection and achieved well from their starting points. Pupils' work in the past two terms in the current academic year clearly indicates that this good progress has been sustained. In both 2013 and 2014, attainment at the end of Year 6 was in line with the national average; however, in 2014, it was weaker in writing than in reading or mathematics. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was significantly above the national average in 2014.
- An increasing number of the most-able pupils make good progress in all areas. They read a range of texts by well-known and popular authors, and analyse events and characters clearly and confidently. In mathematics, many of these pupils are developing good calculation and problem-solving skills. However, some of the most-able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could because the activities they are given do not challenge them sufficiently.
- Progress in writing, although improved over the past two terms, is not as rapid as that in reading and mathematics. This is because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to extend their writing skills by writing at length in subjects other than English. Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are not well developed. When writing, they do not look to be as ambitious in their choice of vocabulary as they could be.
- There were very few disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding in Year 6 in 2013 and 2014. The number of eligible pupils was too small to make any reliable comparison between their attainment in English and mathematics and that of other school pupils or pupils nationally. However, the school's current data indicates that the pupils supported through the pupil premium make the same progress as that of their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. This is because they receive good support from teachers and other staff. By the time they leave, their reading, writing and mathematics skills are close to the expected level in each subject.

The early years provision**is good**

- Leadership and management of the of the early years provision are good. The leader, ably supported by her team, has ensured that teaching is consistently good. Consequently, children make good progress in all areas.
- The school's good communication with parents means that parents are kept well informed about how their children are doing, and know what they need to do to help their children to learn. Children's learning journals, that record their learning in school, are sent to parents so that they can support their child's learning at home. All parents consulted during the inspection stated that their contributions are valued and that they are very happy with the school's work with their children.
- A high proportion of children starting in Reception have skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and enter Year 1 well prepared for further learning. In 2014, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was well above the national average.
- Behaviour is good. Children play safely and harmoniously together, and have an excellent and caring relationship with adults. They listen carefully and are starting to take on simple responsibilities, such as tidying up.
- Children's health, safety and well-being are of the utmost importance to staff, and all adults ensure that children enjoy a safe and secure learning environment at all times.
- Teaching is good. Staff provide a range of engaging activities that encourage children to become confident learners. Children engage well in the indoor and outdoor activities they choose for themselves as well as those which are directed by adults. Children enjoy writing stories and explain clearly what they are learning. In one particularly effective lesson, they were purposefully engaged in writing a letter to the 'Magic Fairy' who sent them 'magic dust'. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are fully involved in all activities and benefit from good support they receive from skilled staff. Children's progress is carefully recorded and the information gained is used effectively to inform planning.

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	117457
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	462087

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Forrest
Headteacher	Alison Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2013
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