

St Cedd's Church of England Primary School

East End Road, Bradwell-on-Sea, Southminster, Essex CM0 7PY

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The determined and committed leadership of the executive headteacher and the senior leadership team has ensured that the relentless drive for improvement is shared by all. There is an absolute belief that all pupils deserve the very best to achieve their best.
- Leaders have an accurate and realistic picture of the school's strengths. They use training well to address weaknesses. However, the school's plans for improvement are not always focused enough on pupil outcomes. This hinders governors' ability to question the impact of the school's work.
- Outcomes at the end of Years 1 and 2 have been above the national averages for the last two years. There was a dip in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2016. However, pupils achieved well in 2015 and look set to do so in 2017.
- Teaching is good. As a result, pupils' progress is largely good across the school. There are some missed opportunities to challenge the most able pupils. A minority of disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points.
- Middle leaders are developing their roles well. This is because they have good role models and ready support from senior leaders and their colleagues.
- Some teachers' expectations are not as high as they could be. However, there is good evidence to show that leaders provide good support for teaching and learning to ensure that this does not impact negatively on pupils' outcomes.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not as effective as it should be. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should and their written work sometimes belies their ability.
- The curriculum is varied and offers pupils rich and exciting opportunities to learn. Pupils' interests in subjects such as geography, religious education and science are not always used to provide activities that are as stimulating as those in other subjects.
- Children get a great start to their education in the Reception class and achieve above the national average despite their often low starting points.
- Attendance of the majority of pupils is in line with the national average. However, there is a small group of pupils who are persistently absent or whose absence is unauthorised.
- Parents are very positive and supportive of the school. However, some do not always feel that they are as informed as they would like to be about leaders' decisions and actions.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all disadvantaged and the most able pupils make good progress from their starting points
 - the high expectations of the majority of teachers are consistently shared by all
 - the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is taught consistently well
 - learning in some subjects, like geography, religious education and science, is engaging and exciting and captures pupils' interests.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - improvement planning is sharpened so that it focuses even more clearly on pupil outcomes
 - the new local hub of governors regularly and rigorously evaluates the impact of additional funding on pupils' outcomes
 - leaders' and governors' communication with parents effectively responds to their views.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have an accurate picture of the school's performance. Leaders use good links within the trust as the basis for their judgements. The school's self-evaluation document does not yet feed into the plans for improvement as effectively as it should. The plans, therefore, do not focus sufficiently well on pupils' outcomes. This has not enabled leaders to regularly celebrate their many successes and share these with pupils, staff, parents and governors.
- Leaders have strengthened systems for monitoring pupils' progress. Pupils at risk of falling behind are highlighted for further support. This ensures that teachers are held closely to account not only for pupils' outcomes, but also for their subject leadership in English, mathematics and science, and their role in raising standards across the school.
- Teachers say they value the support that leaders give them in developing themselves professionally. Leaders have astutely 'matched' teachers to others to hone their skills. The direct impact of this initiative on the improvements in the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils is evident.
- Middle leaders are keen to develop their roles and raise standards of work. Several examples of how this is already well underway were seen during the inspection. For example, the leader of ICT has completed work to ensure that computing is taught effectively across the school. The efficient way that she has set up a 'Dropbox' for teachers to upload pupils' work is very effective in providing leaders with a clear view of standards across the school. Equally, the quality of art work in the school clearly shows the skills that pupils have had the opportunity to develop. The walls are adorned with beautiful art displays of anything from models of bugs or animals, to a model of the local church. The results are stunning and a joy to see.
- Leaders' design of the curriculum provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, and a strong moral code underpins the school's values. 'We achieve, we believe, we care' is evident throughout the school. Displays celebrate pupils' achievements, such as when they raised money for cancer in the Race for Life or achieved the Healthy Schools Status. As one parent commented, 'The school arranges fantastic opportunities for the children. Their interaction with the church and the village is fantastic.' In a small village school like St Cedd's, it could be very easy to become isolated from the wider community and world. However, leaders' determination for this not to be the case is evident in the diverse opportunities that are offered to pupils. Therefore, pupils show tolerance and respect in their day-to-day work, and, as a result, are well prepared for life in modern Britain and the wider world. The school's links with China, Ethiopia and Pakistan are greatly welcomed by pupils and parents alike. The opportunity to learn Mandarin is but one example in a whole array of experiences.

- The use of additional funds provided through physical education (PE) and sport premium is effective. Pupils have numerous opportunities to develop and broaden their talents, participating in clubs such as athletics, football and line-dancing. Participation rates in sports and clubs are high and everyone is rightly proud of the school's numerous awards. The school employs a specialist sports coach who works alongside teachers to further develop teachers' skills in PE. Pupils clearly enjoy and benefit from these sessions, as could be seen during the inspection.
- The use of additional funding to support vulnerable pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged or looked after and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is effective. The school acts quickly to tackle any underachievement or barriers to learning. Funding is often used innovatively in, for example, the employment of a school counsellor, or to enable pupils to have experiences that they might not otherwise get. Leaders source whatever is needed with the guidance of specialist services to secure pupils' well-being.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire or who provided text messages were supportive of the school. They recognised the effective work being done by all staff. This widely shared view was expressed in one parent's comment, 'I have chosen this school for my child as I find it to be a very warm and welcoming school.' However, a number of parents expressed their concern at the way leaders share information with them or give them the opportunity to express their views.

Governance of the school

- The school has recently gone through a process of merging its governing body with another school in the trust to create a local hub of governance. As a result, there have been several changes both to personnel and procedures. However, governors and trust members who met with the inspector are absolutely committed to ensuring that this does not interrupt the continued journey of St Cedd's. To that end, the previous chair of the governing body is a valued member of the new hub.
- Governors and the trust have an aspirational vision for the school and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development. Minutes from the previous governing body meetings show that governors receive detailed information about the progress pupils are making, which leaders present in an honest and straightforward way. Governors test out the accuracy of this information. However, as the school's improvement plans are not focused well enough on pupils' outcomes, governor monitoring has not always been sufficiently sharp, for example on checking on the impact of funding to improve the outcomes of all disadvantaged pupils. As the local hub takes shape, governor minutes will need to better reflect the levels of strategic work they undertake so that parents are better informed about the decisions they make for the school's future.
- The work across the trust, with the diocese and the local authority, with whom the school continues to have good links, is improving staff development opportunities and training. This has enabled staff to share best practice and to continue to improve teaching and middle leadership.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a high priority among governors and staff. Governors' monitoring of safeguarding is rigorous. Records of safeguarding are detailed and show that leaders take appropriate actions in a timely fashion. Leaders know individual pupils who may be vulnerable, including those children who are looked after, very well and share information appropriately and sensitively.
- Staff have a good understanding of how pupils may be vulnerable and know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's safety or welfare. All staff are acutely aware of the difficulties faced by some pupils and their families. The culture of care and protection extends beyond that of fulfilling statutory requirements. Leaders are not only proactive, but are dogged in their determination to ensure that they address these needs. Warm relationships and a sense that everyone knows everyone in the 'St Cedd's family' and plays an active part in each other's welfare are palpable.
- Leaders ensure that the appropriate checks are made on adults' suitability to work with children. All staff are provided with regular training about how to safeguard and protect pupils from a wide range of risks.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. As a result, the majority of pupils achieve well. Some most-able pupils attain very well across the school but not all make as much progress as they are capable of, because teachers in a minority of classes do not have high enough expectations.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are consistently good. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning, find lessons interesting and behave well. One pupil commented, 'Teachers make things fun. You don't really know you're learning but you are!' The vast majority of teachers have high expectations and plan learning that matches the needs of pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants work seamlessly together to ensure that pupils concentrate fully on their work and are successful in their learning. As a result, pupils are engaged and interested in what they are learning, and enjoy challenging themselves and their classmates.
- Teachers give precise instructions to pupils and have well-established routines. Pupils enjoy the school's 'fix-it' sessions at the beginning of the day and respond well to teachers' comments. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and understanding. Many adults seen during the inspection were particularly effective in helping pupils to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge and skills. Some teachers' modelling and challenge was a real strength. In one combined science/English lesson, the teacher asked, 'What would your bug be called if it had a venomous sting? Turn your lightbulbs on and share your ideas with your partner.' As a result, pupils debated animatedly in their 'learning conversations' and voted for the best name; 'green-headed stinger' was the clear winner.

- Much has been done by the English leader to ensure that reading is taught effectively and pupils enjoy reading. They say they do, with great enthusiasm. 'My bedroom is like a library because I like the experience of reading all the time,' commented one pupil. Pupils who read regularly at home can earn jelly beans for their class, the largest number being celebrated in collective worship. The recently developed library is proving very popular with pupils, who 'read to relax', as one commented. Pupils were involved with designing the attractive mural that a learning support assistant painted. A link with the council library has ensured that all Year 3 pupils now have a library card, and, as the library is not nearby as in other villages, the library bus regularly visits St Cedd's. Whole class novels are used by all teachers from Reception to Year 6 to stimulate pupils' love of reading and help them to learn more about the authors' different ways of writing.
- The considerable emphasis that has been put on reading is clearly paying wider dividends. In their writing and with increasing confidence and regularity, pupils are using really effective authorial techniques and language they have experienced. Pupils are rightly proud of their work. 'Ask yourself, is this work Year 6 worthy?' asked the teacher as pupils did their 'free-writing', which they say they really enjoy. The quality of work on many occasions was very high. What is more, pupils could not only say why they had chosen the particular area to write about, they could explain what they hoped to develop in so doing. The inspector asked pupils if they felt they had improved since they came into Year 6. They commented, 'The books speak for themselves. We're much more confident.' Pupils strive to have their work displayed on the 'hall of fame' in some classes, inspired by the class key texts.
- Teachers are working hard to ensure that they challenge all pupils, and in particular the most able pupils, to achieve as well as they can. This was evident more in some classes than others. However, pupils say they like to be challenged, especially in mathematics. The mathematics subject leader has put in place a variety of initiatives to not only support teachers' subject knowledge, but also inspire pupils to become 'mathematicians'. The evidence seen during the inspection was very strong. The inspector was particularly struck by the enthusiasm and determination with which the vast majority of pupils approached their work. They make good use of prompts on their desks, clear reminders on the white board and the support of their classmates to ensure that they are understanding and successfully completing their tasks. They are equally keen to move on to an even more challenging task, 'because it pushes us to the limit'.
- Staff are determined to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of basic literacy and numeracy skills. This has been fundamental in maintaining standards in early years and key stage 1, and continuing the improvement in key stage 2. Effective phonics teaching ensures that pupils have a very good start in their early reading. However, grammar, punctuation and spelling are not taught consistently well across the school. Teachers in key stage 2 particularly, do not routinely correct spelling of high frequency words, allowing pupils to repeat their mistakes. Nor do teachers insist on pupils using sometimes very basic punctuation, or employing more sophisticated punctuation in Years 4 and 5.

- Teachers make increasingly effective links across the curriculum, particularly in writing and mathematics. For example, in one English lesson the teacher made very good use of an interactive computer program and science to develop writing skills, which included specific scientific language. This being said, leaders are aware that teachers do not create as many opportunities for the development of English and mathematics in some areas of the curriculum, for example geography and religious education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are interested in learning and work very well together. The school's focus on improving pupils' thinking skills has been successful in ensuring that pupils talk about their learning with increasing confidence. This is particularly so in their 'learning conversations' with their partners.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, including when they are online or using a mobile phone. They know who to go to if they have any worries and say that adults take their concerns seriously, even if 'it is a little thing', as one pupil commented.
- Parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire say that pupils are happy and safe, and enjoy coming to this, in their own words, 'amazing, fantastic, creative' school. They say that leaders are caring and supportive of their children in every way possible. One parent commented, 'Our two children that attend St Cedd's have received the best we could wish for and beyond.'
- Pupils enthuse about the wide range of sporting opportunities the school offers, including after-school clubs. They are very proud of their achievements, for example in reaching the final in netball this year and coming second in the Dengie athletics competition in 2016. They are equally proud of the responsibilities they have as play leaders, school or learning council members or toilet monitors, 'because we are trusted'.
- The majority of pupils' attendance rates are above the national average. However, there remains a group of pupils whose persistent or unauthorised absence is still above the national average. The executive headteacher is relentless in working with parents to ensure that pupils attend regularly. A few families resist this well-targeted and appropriate support. As a last resort, leaders unashamedly put in place penalty fines to ensure that parents understand the impact that poor attendance has on their children's learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave very well during lessons and when moving around the school. Pupils say behaviour is generally good, although, as one pupil said, 'Some people let us down.' That phrase in itself epitomises the pride pupils feel and the sense of right and wrong that the school emphasises in two of its six values: friendship and wisdom.

- Playtimes and lunchtimes are very well organised. Pupils have many activities that they can take part in, and numerous areas of quiet and shade. Midday assistants ensure that pupils are safe, checking regularly on the many areas in which pupils could hide, should they choose. However, pupils prefer to have their turn in the 'mugger' or on the climbing equipment, or catch up with their friends in the music and drawing areas.
- The school emphasises respect for others and taking care of each other. This was beautifully demonstrated in collective worship when pupils were encouraged to think about how they can 'serve' others. Pupils put forward many suggestions. Looking after friends if they are lonely, doing things for others or helping out at home were among the many responses.
- Pupils know what bullying is. It is when 'someone is being mean continuously'. They say that bullying is very rare and that there 'used to be bullying but it has stopped now'. Leaders take any concerns very seriously and ensure that pupils understand the consequences of any bullying.
- The views expressed by parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire are that pupils behave well. The majority reported that any concerns they had are addressed well by the head of school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils in key stage 1 have attained above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics since the school opened as an academy in 2014. A small number of disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their peers nationally in reading in 2016. The vast majority of key stage 1 pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, currently in the school are making good progress from their individual starting points.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. This has had a positive impact on pupils' past achievements as well as on pupils' current outcomes. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 1 is above the national average.
- Leaders were rightly disappointed with the 2016 outcomes for pupils in key stage 2. The combined subjects of reading, writing and mathematics were below the national average. This included a small number of disadvantaged pupils. Attainment in reading and mathematics was weaker than in writing. Slower progress made by some middle-attaining pupils worsened the attainment in mathematics. Leaders have successfully addressed these weaknesses, which did not mirror the very positive picture of Year 6 outcomes in 2015.
- Work in pupils' books, the school's own assessment information and the teaching seen during the inspection evidence that pupils in Year 6 are making good progress. This is because the teacher sets work that is now better suited to their needs. The majority of current pupils are on track to attain well this summer. However, a few most-able pupils, including a small number who are also disadvantaged, could make even more progress than they are.

- The inspector viewed numerous writing and mathematics books from key stages 1 and 2, saw a variety of lessons and checked the school's own assessment information. The proportion of pupils working at age-related expectations in the vast majority of classes is high. Pupils across the school are largely making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. In many lessons, the inspector observed very effective and well-planned support and intervention to help pupils to be successful in their learning. Individual plans for these pupils show that the special educational needs coordinator and external specialists undertake regular reviews to ensure that any barriers to learning are addressed quickly and effectively.
- Pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics is evident in topic books, and in displays of pupils' work in classrooms and in communal areas in the school. Pupils' English and mathematics skills are used well in subjects like history and science.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter St Cedd's with skills and knowledge that are below those that are typical for their age. This is particularly so in communication and language. However, strong teaching over time ensures that all children in Reception get a very good start to their education. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of their time in the Reception class is above the national average. The vast majority of children are, therefore, well prepared for their move into Year 1. A number exceed the standards expected of them at the end of the early years.
- The school makes every effort to ensure that transition arrangements are effective. Parents are viewed as an essential part of their children's development and parents say their views and input are valued. Some parents make valuable use of the online shared area to which they can contribute their observations of their children's progress and also see the progress their children are making at school.
- The early years leader ensures that, from the moment they come to school, the children are assessed so that everyone knows individual children's welfare needs and they settle quickly into school life.
- Leaders ensure that children are nurtured within a caring environment. Adults take care to ensure that all children are included in activities that are appropriate to their stage of development. Children, therefore, behave well and are able to move from one activity to another having had a positive experience.
- Children play well together and on their own. The inspector watched a group of children not just playing with a target net and bean bags, but designing and developing a competition to see who could score the most. Clearly, children make choices about what to do and are given the freedom to collect, move or change equipment as their play develops.

- Children keep themselves safe by considering possible risks. Leaders have already begun to plan for an even more stimulating and developed area for outdoor learning. This is being designed to further widen and develop children's learning experiences and to better match the learning environment in the bright, inviting classroom.
- Adults teach phonics effectively, enabling children to write with a degree of accuracy. In one phonics session, children were learning the new sound 'ea'. The learning support assistant skilfully tested children's grasp of the sound using words like 'meat', 'seat' and 'tea', before showing them pictures to affirm their understanding. A delightful conversation then ensued between children about having a cup of tea with custard cream biscuits on their school picnic!
- Children are developing a good understanding of number. They enjoy using the variety of equipment to learn to, for example, share 20 cubes between two plates. Equally, children use fruit and vegetables to create repeating patterns in paint. Most children can count up to 20, and some beyond, and were keen to show the inspector how they could count objects correctly.
- Opportunities for children to practise their writing skills and number bonds are provided for effectively in the outdoor area. Children do, however, choose to use the bikes, practise their throwing skills or play with the water tray when they are free to do so. As a result, their physical skills are developing well, as is their ability to share activities with their friends.
- The early years curriculum captures children's interests well. Children are offered a wide range of experiences to further explore their interests. As one parent commented, 'St Cedd's is a place that I would have loved to attend myself as a child.' What a glowing endorsement.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. At the time of the inspection, there were no breaches to statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	140844
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10031338

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Simmonds
Executive headteacher	Pauline Ward
Telephone number	01621 776 219
Website	www.st-ceddsprimary.co.uk
Email address	head@st-cedds-pri.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St Cedd's is a smaller than average primary school where pupils are taught in single year group classes with small numbers in each.
- The school opened as an academy in April 2014 and is part of the Vine Trust. The executive headteacher leads St Cedd's and another local primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

- The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- A separately led and managed breakfast club operates within the school. This provision was not part of the inspection.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2016, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons, many of which were with the executive headteacher or the head of school.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the school office and pupils. She met with governors, including the past and new chairs of governors, and members of the trust, including the chief executive officer. The inspector also had a discussion with a local authority representative.
- The inspector took account of the 46 responses to Parent View and considered the text messages provided by 35 parents. She also considered the results of staff and pupil surveys that the school had previously undertaken.
- Along with the inspector, leaders of English and mathematics scrutinised a wide variety of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at pupils' work and talked to pupils about their learning during visits to lessons. She also listened to pupils read and talked to them about their books.
- A wide range of documentation was presented to the inspector. This included the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, governor minutes, monitoring files of teaching and subject leader files. The inspector scrutinised the checks that the school does on the suitability of adults to work with children, and leaders' records of behaviour, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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