

Rivenhall Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Rivenhall, Witham, Essex CM8 3PQ

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2018

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong and highly effective leadership. This has led to significant improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. The headteacher has a clear plan for what the school needs to do to improve further.
- Governance is effective. Governors make frequent visits to check all aspects of the school's work and school leaders are held to account for their actions.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are well supported by subject leaders and benefit from engaging in a wide range of training opportunities. Teachers work effectively with support staff to plan activities that help pupils to become successful learners.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well and treat others with respect. Pupils are self-confident and are eager to welcome and talk with visitors to their school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school. Safeguarding procedures are effective.
- The early years provision is well led. Children make good progress and achievement is consistently above average.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Their progress is tracked carefully and they are well supported.
- The school values all pupils equally. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities benefit from effective provision.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils develop a good understanding of the different major faiths in Britain.
- Teachers do not consistently set work that is challenging enough for the most able pupils.
- Pupils' progress continues to improve, particularly in key stage 1. Their progress in writing and spelling is not as strong as in reading and mathematics, particularly in key stage 2.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is too variable.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress in all subjects by:
 - providing learning tasks that consistently challenge the most able pupils
 - improving pupils' writing and spelling still further, particularly in key stage 2
 - ensuring that all subjects, but particularly French and information and communication technology (ICT), promote the same high standards as English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is unwavering in her determination to improve all aspects of the school's work. She has successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection, and has raised the expectations of the staff and the pupils. She is ably assisted by senior and middle leaders. The headteacher and all staff have a strong capacity to deliver further improvements.
- All staff feel valued and supported by the headteacher. They comment on the strong sense of community and teamwork within the school.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders and teachers have a clear understanding of the areas for development and these are reflected in the school's improvement plan. The school is supported well by advisers from the local authority and the diocese. Leaders work in collaboration with other schools in the area to share good practice. This also ensures that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress and attainment are accurate.
- The headteacher regularly monitors the quality of teaching and learning. She keeps detailed records of the progress of all pupils and uses this information to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. The information is used well by leaders and teachers when setting targets and organising further support for individual pupils.
- The headteacher manages teachers' performance well. She has challenged weak teaching practices and set ambitious targets for all teachers. Staff are positive about the range and quality of training that they receive.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. This funding has contributed towards a range of strategies, extra resources and visits that support and enrich their learning. Consequently, most disadvantaged pupils currently make good progress both academically and socially.
- The school has a strong inclusive ethos. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are welcomed, valued and nurtured. Their needs are identified by the inclusion leader at an early stage. She targets additional support well. Pupils are provided with a range of strategies to support their academic progress and, when necessary, their emotional and mental health.
- The physical education and sport premium grant is used effectively to provide a range of sporting activities which many pupils take advantage of. Sports coaches have enhanced the provision in the school and increased the number of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are encouraged to participate in fitness activities such as the 'Golden Mile' and they perform well in district sports competitions.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Moral values are embedded in all aspects of school life. Pupils are taught to value diversity and respect the views and opinions of others. The school promotes community spirit, tolerance and respect for others, and this results in a clear collective identity which embraces British values.

- Pupils benefit from engaging in a wide range of enrichment activities. For example, pupils have participated in concerts and recorded a CD. There are regular 'focus days', when pupils work within house teams on a variety of learning activities such as mathematical and scientific projects or design technology tasks. Pupils are also involved in fundraising for several national and international charities.
- Leaders and governors have worked successfully to engage parents and carers in the life of the school and their children's learning. Parents often attend assemblies, coffee mornings and information evenings. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View were positive about the school. One parent commented: 'I feel that Rivenhall Primary School is an amazing school which meets all my child's needs. It is safe, friendly and well managed.'
- The curriculum has been recently revised to enrich subjects such as history, geography, art, music and science. Displays around the school and within classrooms reflect the improvements in this curriculum. For example, in Year 5 and Year 6, there is considerable artwork on the First World War. However, standards in these subjects remain more variable than those in English and mathematics, particularly in French and ICT.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength of the school and members of the governing body have played a major role in driving forward the improvements made since the previous inspection. Governors are knowledgeable and have a good grasp of educational issues. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- Governors regularly visit to meet with leaders and check all aspects of the school's work. They regularly scrutinise pupils' progress information and invite school leaders to report at governing body meetings. Governors have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and they check on progress towards the areas for further development rigorously.
- Governors use an annual audit of their effectiveness to inform their governor development plan and to make changes that improve the way they work. Governors have received extensive training, for example on safeguarding, and coaching on school improvement from school advisers. This helps them to hold leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's pre-employment checks meet all statutory requirements. The school's safeguarding governor reviews the records of these checks regularly and confirms that they are completed fully.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead. She and a senior teacher are well trained. The school has recently undergone a safeguarding review by the local authority and has responded effectively to the suggestions made in the report.

- Staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. This includes training on the government's 'Prevent' duty to support pupils who are vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation. Staff clearly understand the importance of safeguarding and follow the school's procedures carefully.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Strong leadership from the headteacher and effective support and training for teachers have ensured that pupils are learning well and making good progress.
- Teachers have high expectations and pupils have good attitudes to learning. Presentation in books has improved significantly. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are warm and supportive.
- Teachers plan lessons well and use their support staff effectively. They meet each morning to review the planning for the day. Teachers use the information that they have on pupils' progress to plan activities that cater for the range of year groups and abilities that they have in each class. The most able pupils, however, are not always challenged enough and do not make accelerated progress in some subjects.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. In key stage 1, teachers plan the lessons well and pupils make good progress with reading. They are encouraged to read and there is evidence in their reading logs that they read widely at home, as well as in school. Pupils are also encouraged to write extensively. Pupils in key stage 2 use basic punctuation routinely well but their spelling is not as strong. A few pupils do not complete their worksheets or write in sufficient depth.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly. Teachers set complex and challenging problems that enable pupils to make good progress and develop a deeper understanding of mathematical reasoning. Pupils say that they really enjoy their learning in the subject.
- Trained teaching assistants provide a high level of support and care for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils who need to catch up are also provided with well-targeted support.
- Teachers typically assess pupils' work thoroughly and effectively. Feedback is given in line with the school's marking policy, and pupils respond to this well.
- The teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics is more variable. There is evidence of experimental and investigative work in science in key stages 1 and 2. In Years 5 and 6, groups of pupils were observed making cheese and lentil soup, darning socks and using ICT to research major battles for their topic on the First World War. In pupils' 'topic books', however, too often work is not fully completed.
- Teaching in French is not enabling pupils to develop their command of the language in any great depth. The teaching of ICT is hindered by the limited number of laptops and tablet devices that are available for pupils.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a safe, calm and nurturing environment where pupils develop self-confidence and social skills. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors and keen to talk positively about their experiences in the school.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is underpinned by the school's strong religious ethos and its determination to develop caring and tolerant citizens. In assemblies, for example, pupils are asked to celebrate differences in appearance and treat all people the same.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to take responsibility by joining the school learning council or becoming a house captain or a 'buddy' to children who are new to the school. They also organise the music in assemblies and help to manage the school library. This helps to develop pupils' organisational, decision-making and leadership skills.
- The school promotes pupils' physical health effectively. There are opportunities to join a variety of sporting clubs and after-school activities, including football, swimming, karate, tennis and dance. Pupils are encouraged to take part in the 'Golden Mile'. This involves walking or running around the school field. Thirty-six pupils have already completed 10 miles. Pupils say that they understand how to keep themselves safe on the internet, from 'stranger danger' and from traffic on the road.
- The school has developed a rich and stimulating learning environment with vibrant displays in classrooms and corridors. Most pupils say that they enjoy school. They listen attentively and are enthusiastic learners. In some lessons, however, a few pupils waste time and do not complete their work fully.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's clear codes of conduct help to ensure that behaviour is good. The new system of recording individual behaviour, which is used in each classroom, is having a positive impact. Most pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to each other.
- A few pupils are overly dependent upon their teachers, particularly in the early years, which means that they do not build resilience and develop problem-solving skills as quickly as they might.
- Incidents of disruption during lessons are rare and pupils' conduct at playtimes and lunchtimes is also good. The school has clear systems for rewarding good work and behaviour.
- Bullying is rare, and pupils know who to turn to if they experience any kind of problem.
- Attendance continues to be above the national average. The headteacher works closely with parents to reduce absenteeism. Pupils typically arrive at school punctually.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessment information, which is reviewed externally, and work in the pupil's books show that most pupils are presently making good progress in most subjects. Progress is not as strong in foundation subjects such as ICT and French.
- In 2017, most pupils in key stage 1 achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics compared with pupils nationally. In key stage 2, progress in writing was not as strong as in reading and mathematics, but most pupils made good progress in all three subjects. There were only seven pupils in this cohort. Due to the size of this cohort, care must be taken with the interpretation of the information.
- Few pupils made exceptional progress in reading, writing or mathematics in 2017. Significantly more pupils in all year groups are currently working at greater depth.
- In 2017, most pupils achieved the expected standard in phonics in Year 1. In key stage 2, attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling was below average. Teachers are working hard to ensure that pupils improve their punctuation and spelling, and this is having a positive impact on the proportion of pupils working at greater depth in writing, particularly in Year 3 and Year 4.
- The proportion of pupils who make good or better progress in mathematics is improving significantly. Pupils' books show that they are regularly set challenging mathematical problems to solve.
- Attainment in science was significantly below the national average in key stages 1 and 2 in 2017. The quality of scientific work in the pupils' books shows a marked improvement and most pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age.
- Disadvantaged pupils make at least similar progress to other pupils nationally with the same starting points. Currently, these pupils are making particularly strong progress in mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those with more complex needs, are well cared for. Their needs are accurately assessed, and their progress is tracked carefully. The progress that these pupils are making in mathematics is particularly good.
- Underachieving pupils are supported by a range of strategies to accelerate their progress. Leaders and teachers monitor the progress of all pupils frequently and rigorously to ensure that any emerging needs are addressed quickly.
- Too many of the most able pupils have made less progress than they might because they have completed work that is too easy for them. Older pupils' progress is starting to accelerate because they are completing more challenging tasks.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed. The experienced leader regularly checks and evaluates the provision and has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. She has worked successfully to raise standards of achievement and improve the classroom and outdoor environments.
- Children enter the early years with knowledge, understanding and skills that are usually typical of, or just below, those expected for their age. Adults check the progress and identify the needs of children carefully so that they provide them with appropriate support. Since 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen and is now just above the national average.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly. This is due, in part, to training from the local authority and support from the headteacher. Staff in the early years work well as a team. Therefore, lessons are well prepared and organised.
- Staff check children's progress regularly. Individual learning journeys, along with literacy and numeracy books, are used effectively to provide evidence of children's achievements.
- Improvements to the outdoor learning environment are having a positive impact on children's physical development. They particularly enjoy the mud kitchen and the writing den.
- The early years provides a safe and caring environment. Children behave well. Welfare and safety requirements are met in full.
- Staff liaise closely with pre-school settings to ensure that children make a smooth transition into the school. Good relationships with parents are also established at an early stage through home visits, coffee mornings and specific events to share information. The transition between the early years and Year 1 is also managed effectively.
- Staff provide good care, guidance and support and this helps most children to develop good attitudes to learning. A few children lack confidence and find it difficult to complete tasks or solve problems when they are working without their teacher's direct input.

School details

Unique reference number	115105
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10044756

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs K Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs R More
Telephone number	01376 514 509
Website	www.rivenhallprimary.co.uk/
Email address	admin@rivenhall.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 November 2016

Information about this school

- Rivenhall Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school is within the Diocese of Chelmsford.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited every class in the school at least twice, jointly with the headteacher. She observed the teaching and learning, talked to pupils and assessed the quality of their work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject coordinators, the lead for the early years foundation stage, all teachers, support staff, pupils and governors. The inspector also met with the school adviser from Essex County Council.
- The inspector looked at documentation, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weakness and areas for development, information on pupils' achievement, records of behaviour and the monitoring records of the governing body.
- The inspector looked at examples of pupils' work across a range of subjects in all year groups.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and discussed their reading experiences with them.
- Account was taken of the 59 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. The inspector also spoke with parents after school on the playground.

Inspection team

Jane Ladner, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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