

# St Ippolyts Church of England Aided Primary School

Ashbrook Lane, St Ippolyts, Hitchin, SG4 7PB

**Inspection dates** 6–7 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 of all ages and abilities achieve well because they are well taught. Standards are above average in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in reading is particularly strong because early reading skills are taught systematically and reading is promoted imaginatively as a pleasurable activity.
- Pupils enjoy school very much, feel safe, behave impeccably and contribute enormously to the positive climate for learning. Attendance levels are above average.
- Leaders monitor the school's work thoroughly. Systems to track pupils' progress and check on teaching and learning are excellent.
- Pupils receive detailed feedback about their work and respond to teachers' suggestions maturely and conscientiously.
- A successful emphasis is placed on pupils' personal development, particularly their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet of a consistently outstanding quality. Occasionally, the most able pupils are not challenged fully.
- Not all pupils make rapid progress in writing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited seven lessons and two guided reading sessions, all of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- He held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation and development plan, policies aimed at keeping pupils safe, and information relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- The views of 44 parents and carers were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspector also spoke to a small number of parents during the inspection.
- The views expressed by the 21 staff, who returned a questionnaire, were considered.

## Inspection team

Keith Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is less than half of the national average. In this school, this relates to those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- An average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is below average.
- The school's test results meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils are taught in five mixed-age classes. Reception children are taught alongside some pupils from Year 1.
- The school has employed a sports apprentice who contributes to the physical education and sports programme.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - sharing the outstanding practice seen in Years 5 and 6 to ensure that the most able pupils of all ages are consistently challenged
  - providing more opportunities for all pupils, and particularly the most able, to design and carry out investigations for themselves
  - implementing in full the school's plans for teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling so that pupils of all abilities make consistently rapid progress in writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Small numbers mean that the performance of individual pupils can have an exaggerated effect on the school's results in the national tests. Nevertheless, in recent years, pupils in Years 2 and 6 have reached above average standards, and were in the top 20 per cent of schools nationally. The proportion reaching the higher Level 6 in reading and mathematics was above that found nationally.
- When children first join Reception, they arrive with skills that vary from year to year, depending on the proportion of more-able children or those who find learning difficult. Most years, their skills are broadly typical of their age and, sometimes, they are a little higher. Children learn rapidly because of teaching that is often outstanding and they are very well prepared for moving into Year 1.
- Pupils' current work and the school's plentiful records show that, across the school, pupils achieve well. The progress of pupils in Years 4 and 5 slowed last year. Now in Years 5 and 6, these pupils are making rapid progress because of high quality teaching, and they are catching up quickly.
- Almost all pupils make the progress expected of them. In reading and mathematics in Year 6 last year, more pupils made better than expected progress than was the case nationally. The school has focused on accelerating pupils' progress in mathematics to match that seen in English. As a result, the gap is closing.
- Pupils enjoy reading very much and older pupils read widely for pleasure and to help their learning in other subjects. Standards are high by the time they leave the school. Staff have worked successfully to accelerate pupils' progress in writing, and some make excellent progress. The school recognises, rightly, that this is not consistently the case, however, and this remains a priority.
- There is no significant difference in the performance of boys, girls or different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates because a very close check is made on their learning. Steps are swiftly taken to provide an extra boost for those who need it. The few pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support that enables them to achieve well.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support individual pupils. The school has used this additional funding to provide support for these pupils on an individual basis and in groups and to enable them to take full part in a wide range of school activities. These pupils generally make good progress but there are not enough of them to comment on their attainment in English and mathematics without identifying them.
- Pupils make good progress in physical education because there is a well-planned programme and successful input from the sports apprentice. Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to their progress in all subjects.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils regardless of their age or ability. Pupils rise to the challenge. As a result, there is a very positive climate for learning, and pupils gain in

confidence and independence from the moment they start school.

- A key strength is the high quality marking of pupils' work. Whatever the subject, teachers give detailed feedback of how well pupils have tackled the work, and a clear indication of how they can improve. Pupils are given time to respond to these comments and take on board the suggestions. Invariably, their work improves as a result.
- Teachers plan the work carefully to match pupils' capabilities. They usually assess pupils' understanding vigilantly during lessons, deal with any misunderstandings as they arise and modify the work in light of pupils' responses. This works well and ensures a good pace of learning.
- There is usually a good level of challenge for the most able pupils. This is consistently so in the oldest class, and this has resulted in these pupils making faster progress than was previously the case. Elsewhere, there are not always enough opportunities for the most able to design and carry out investigations for themselves or begin work from a different starting point from the rest of the class.
- Children in Reception thrive in highly supportive, challenging and well resourced environment. There is a strong and successful emphasis on promoting children's speaking, listening and independence.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning and welfare of all pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive timely and skilful support that is very well matched to their differing needs. As a result, they are fully included in lessons and in all the activities hosted by the school and achieve well.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Pupils enjoy school very much because they feel safe and find lessons interesting and fun. Their highly positive attitudes are a key factor in their successful learning, and this is one of the reasons why the progress of pupils in Years 5 and 6 has improved so much this year. Attendance is good.
- Pupils' behave impeccably in and out of lessons. They are invariably attentive in lessons, willingly contribute to discussions and work hard to improve. Relationships among pupils and with the adults are extremely positive. They collaborate well in groups and share their delight in each others' successes.
- Lunchtimes are much civilised and break-times are lively and enjoyable. Boys, girls and pupils of different ages mix well.
- A very small minority of parents who completed the online survey felt that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. Pupils report that bullying is extremely rare and they are confident that incidents are dealt with swiftly by staff. Almost all parents said that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after. They indicated that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved.
- Older pupils, in particular, understand different forms of bullying. They know how to stay safe when out of school, including the dangers presented by using the internet. Pupils are extremely mindful of each others' safety, for example, during physical education lessons or practical activities.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The school evaluates its performance accurately because it has excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring teaching and learning. Plentiful information is gathered, and this is used shrewdly to identify gaps in pupils' learning and aspects of teaching that can be improved.
- As a result of this robust monitoring, weaknesses in teaching and learning last year have been eliminated and those pupils at risk of falling behind are catching up quickly. The staff are fully behind leaders' and governors' efforts to provide the very best for pupils, and they present excellent role models for them.
- The school provides a broad, imaginative and exciting range of activities that promotes pupils' all-round development very well and contributes to their high levels of enjoyment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very strongly. Changes are being made to the way that grammar, punctuation and spelling are planned and taught, to ensure consistency across the school. It is too soon to judge the eventual impact of these changes, however.
- Most parents are supportive of the school. A small minority who took part in the consultation would like more information about their children's progress and would like more account taken of their concerns. Inspection evidence shows that the school provides wide ranging and detailed reports on pupil' progress. Leaders take parents' views seriously and deal effectively with matters arising.
- The school works well with the local authority and in informal partnerships with other local schools, particularly to review teaching and learning.
- The school has already taken important steps regarding the recently announced sports funding. The recent appointment of a sports apprentice is helping to raise the quality of teaching and learning in physical education and sport.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very well informed about the school's performance and hold leaders to account. They contribute fully to planning future developments and have good systems to find out about the school's work for themselves.
  - Governors understand the data produced about pupils' progress and receive regular reviews of teaching. They use this information to set target for the headteacher and ensure that teachers are rewarded appropriately for their performance. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
  - Governors oversee finances well and ensure that staff are deployed to secure the best value for money. They ensure that the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used to enable those pupils to raise their attainment.
  - Systems to keep pupils safe meet national requirements, and are checked thoroughly and regularly. Staff training in child protection and first-aid is kept up-to-date.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117440
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427242

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	138
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Thake
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Peddie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 June 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01462 432080
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