

Weeley St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Clacton Road, Weeley, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO16 9DH

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Considerable turbulence in leadership and staffing has limited the impact of leaders' actions to secure good teaching and, consequently, improve pupils' achievement.
- Until recently, governors have not challenged leaders effectively. As a result, standards are too low in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. Although reading, writing and mathematics are well established in the curriculum, other subjects are taught too infrequently.
- Leaders for subjects other than English and mathematics are new to their roles. They do not yet fully contribute in leading improvements within the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders use the pupil premium funding to support them, but this is not showing the intended impact on improving their academic achievement consistently across the school.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is not good enough. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can, and should, achieve.
- Teachers do not routinely use assessment information to provide pupils, including the most able, with learning that meets their needs and challenges them effectively. Consequently, not enough pupils reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Overall attendance is below the national average and persistent non-attendance is above average. This is having a detrimental effect on pupils' achievement.
- The behaviour of some pupils, in lessons and at breaktimes, is not consistently good.
- Children in early years spend too much time on activities that lack purpose. Children therefore do not achieve as well as they could.
- Leaders do not engage effectively with parents. Consequently, parents do not always understand the reasons for leaders' decisions or know what difference leaders are making.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' actions are beginning to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their different starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance, by ensuring that:
 - the skills and confidence of newly appointed subject leaders are quickly developed so that they can improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in their areas of responsibility
 - pupil premium funding is spent more effectively so that disadvantaged pupils throughout the school consistently make good progress in English and mathematics
 - the curriculum is broad and balanced so that it effectively prepares pupils for the next stage of their education
 - communication with families is both timely and of a high quality so that parents and carers feel well informed and understand the reasons behind leaders' decisions.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, by ensuring that all teachers consistently:
 - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve across the full range of subjects
 - use their knowledge of what pupils know and can do to plan lessons that meet pupils' learning needs, including for disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Ensure all staff consistently apply the school's agreed standards of behaviour and routines during lessons and at breaktimes, so that pupils are more engaged in their learning and they play positively together.
- Improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent non-attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve early years provision, by providing more challenging and purposeful opportunities for children to practise and develop their early reading, writing and number skills when choosing their own activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not been successful in improving teaching and learning and raising standards throughout the school. The turbulence caused by several changes in leadership and staffing since the previous inspection has left a legacy of inconsistent teaching and subsequently, variable outcomes. The current leadership team is positive and forging ahead with actions to rapidly improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Subject leaders, other than those for English and mathematics, are new to their roles. They have quickly understood the actions that are needed to improve the quality of teaching. However, their roles are currently being developed and so they do not yet contribute fully in the school's improvement.
- There is now a stronger focus on ensuring disadvantaged pupils make the progress required to attain as well as they should. The trust has commissioned an external review of the use of pupil premium funding. Leaders are ensuring that the pupil premium is deployed more effectively to eradicate any gaps in the knowledge and skills of those pupils eligible for the grant. This focused approach has started to have a positive effect. For example, disadvantaged pupils' achievement is better in Year 6. Nevertheless, pupil premium funding is not yet being used sufficiently effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils throughout the school.
- The curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop subject-specific skills and knowledge across a wide range of subjects. Because of this, pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education. Leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum and are putting in place a wider variation of subjects for pupils to access.
- Parents have mixed views about the school. Inspectors agree that the quality of education is variable. Relationships with some parents are not positive. Additionally, communication is not effective enough. Parents do not understand the reasons behind the decisions leaders make.
- The executive headteacher has set high expectations and has a clear focus on doing what is right for pupils and their families. Her determined leadership is steering improvements across several areas of school life, including the quality of teaching and improvements to pupils' behaviour. These developments are welcomed and appreciated by staff, pupils and parents. The executive headteacher is ably supported by the head of school and the subject leaders for English and mathematics, who share her focus to move the school forward. The leadership team contributes to identifying and monitoring the priorities in the school's improvement plan. Despite clear signs of positive changes, these are in their infancy and so the curriculum, teaching and learning, including in early years, still require improvement.
- There is a positive sense of teamwork in the school. Staff appreciate the training and support they are given. As a result, staff are keen to work together and share leaders' determination to improve outcomes for all pupils. Staff are positive about the changes recently put in place and are committed to doing the best for all pupils.

- The leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is effective. The knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that additional funding is well spent. Regular reviews of teaching and pupils' progress ensure that specific programmes of support are well suited to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well. Through their lessons and assemblies, pupils develop a good understanding of the school's strong ethos and a range of cultures and faiths seen in Britain today. This positive and inclusive approach prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding effectively. Pupils are provided with opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports, including dance, cricket and handball. Playground equipment and resources have been purchased to encourage pupils to be more active at breaktimes. The use of sports coaches to provide specialist support has raised the profile of PE and promotes healthy lifestyles.

Governance of the school

- Following the previous inspection, the local governance board and the trust have overseen several changes in leadership and staffing. Nevertheless, until recently, governors and the trust had not challenged leaders sufficiently. As a result, there has been a decline in standards over the past three years.
- Governors have recently undertaken an audit to ensure they have the necessary breadth of skills and expertise to carry out their legal responsibilities. Collectively, they possess a wide set of professional skills and knowledge.
- Governors undertake regular training provided by the trust and local authority so that they are up to date with all aspects of their role. Governance is becoming more strategic and sharply focused on the school's main priorities. Governors' regular visits, checks and meetings with leaders are strongly linked with gauging how well school leaders are securing improvement against the school's improvement plans.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders prioritise pupils' safety and welfare and make sure that policies and procedures are up to date and effective.
- Checks on the suitability of staff are comprehensive. Leaders have ensured that suitable monitoring is in place for all staff, governors and volunteers. Governors and the local authority check this information to ensure that it is accurately and precisely recorded.
- Staff, governors and volunteers receive regular safeguarding training. As a result, all who are involved in the school are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe. Staff are also clear about how to report any concerns that they may have about pupils' welfare. Staff understand how to identify when a pupil is at risk of harm and they are relentless in following up reported concerns.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Most enjoy coming to school and have confidence in the staff to look after them.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View and/or the school's own survey and those parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, agreed that their children are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across year groups. Not enough teaching is well suited to pupils' needs. This has resulted in pupils not doing as well as they should, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers are beginning to use assessment information more effectively, but pupils are still being given tasks that do not take into account their starting points. As a result, pupils' progress varies across and within year groups.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They ensure that the most able pupils are regularly given tasks that challenge them and stretch their thinking. Where this is the case, pupils' progress is better. However, not all teachers share the same high expectations. Too many are willing to accept lesser amounts, or poorly presented work. On occasions, teachers overly praise work that does not represent pupils' best efforts. They are too slow to challenge most-able pupils or do not challenge pupils at all. Consequently, pupils' progress slows and they do not achieve as well as they are capable of doing.
- Some teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they should. On occasions, teachers are slow to re-engage pupils who lose concentration during lessons.
- Younger pupils develop their phonics skills and use these when reading books. Older pupils enjoy reading and are becoming more competent and confident readers. During the inspection, pupils were celebrating World Book Day. Many pupils had come to school dressed as their favourite book characters. Throughout the day, inspectors observed pupils writing book reviews and keenly sharing their favourite books, explaining the reasons why they were recommending their choices to others.
- Leaders have prioritised making improvements to the way that reading is taught and promoted throughout the school. For example, they have introduced a new approach to developing pupils' reading skills which ensures that pupils learn key vocabulary, complete regular comprehension activities and are encouraged to develop a deeper appreciation of the texts that they read. Following training, teachers are gaining confidence in asking pupils different types of comprehension questions. Where teachers are using these new strategies effectively, the teaching of reading is improving, and pupils are making stronger progress in this area.
- Recent developments in the teaching of writing are beginning to improve pupils' written work. Where teaching is strongest, pupils' writing skills are being developed effectively both in English lessons and across other subjects. However, pupils' written work varies too widely in quality and content in different year groups throughout the school.
- Leaders have introduced changes that have improved the way mathematics is taught.

In particular, teachers are beginning to prioritise the development of pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, this is not embedded across all classes within the school.

- The teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics is not yet fully in place. Consequently, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders' actions are ensuring that teaching is improving, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6. Teachers in these classes are skilled in identifying where gaps in learning exist and provide effective support to enable pupils to catch up quickly.
- Pupils with SEND receive suitably tailored support from well-trained staff. Pupils' work is carefully planned to address their needs and improve their learning. As a result, these pupils' progress and achievement are improving in English and mathematics throughout the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils lack confidence and determination in their learning. When teaching does not excite or engage them, they lose interest. Staff do not consistently encourage pupils to develop the ambition and resilience to become more effective learners. Not all pupils understand or use these learning behaviours effectively to help them to achieve well.
- Most older pupils enjoy making a contribution to the school through additional roles, such as helping to set up and review assemblies and helping younger pupils in the dining hall at lunchtimes.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Pupils clearly explain how they make sure that they keep themselves safe from strangers and when they are using the internet. They know which adults to talk to should they have a concern or a worry. Pupils also told inspectors that there is very little bullying in the school. If on the rare occasion bullying does happen, pupils are confident the adults will sort it out quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour varies between classes according to the quality of teaching. When teachers are not vigilant, a significant minority of pupils tend to wander round the classroom, fidget or waste time. This slows their progress, and on occasions, that of others. As a result, some pupils reported regular disturbances to their learning.
- Most pupils behave considerately in the playground. However, the rough behaviour of a small number of pupils detracts from the enjoyment of breaktime for others.

- Some parents expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes. Parents' mixed views reflect differences in the quality of pupils' behaviour throughout the school.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved in the current school year. School records and observations during the inspection support this view. Equally, there has been a noticeable drop in incidents logged by school staff and the number of fixed-term exclusions since the changes to the school's behaviour policy took effect.
- Pupils' attendance over time, and at present, is below the national average. In addition, the proportion of pupils who do not attend school regularly is above the national average. Disadvantaged pupils are far more likely to be absent than their peers. This is inhibiting some pupils' learning as they are not present to access the curriculum as often as they should be. Leaders have recently worked with the local authority to review and improve the school's approach to monitoring attendance. As a result, leaders are working more closely with pupils and their parents, and the attendance of some pupils is improving.
- Most pupils get on well together. Pupils behave well in the dining hall. They enjoy chatting with friends while they eat their lunch. Most speak to adults politely and follow their requests promptly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders' actions to improve standards in key stage 1 and key stage 2 have lacked urgency. The progress pupils make is not consistently good in all subjects and all year groups. Too many pupils are not prepared as well as they should be for the next stage of their education.
- Since the previous inspection, the standards reached by pupils at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 have declined in reading, writing and mathematics. Too many pupils do not make sufficient progress from their various starting points.
- Current pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics across year groups is variable because of inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment. However, pupils' current workbooks and the school's current assessment information demonstrate that in Year 5 and Year 6, pupils' progress is stronger than previously in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress and attainment of the most able pupils vary across the school. A number of the most able pupils themselves confirmed to inspectors that they feel they are capable of achieving more. These pupils, across year groups, are not reaching the higher standards of which they are capable, because teachers do not provide work that is challenging enough. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, for example, not enough pupils reach greater depth or the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 has been above the national figures since the previous inspection. However, in 2018, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard at the end of Year 1 was below this.
- The pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils is being used increasingly

effectively, but has not yet secured good academic outcomes. In 2018, disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 were below the national averages. The gap between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and that of other pupils nationally is not diminishing because they are not making enough progress.

- Pupils do not regularly access a broad range of subjects. When they do, pupils' work across the curriculum varies considerably because some teachers' expectations are lower in other subjects, for example in science and history.
- The school's assessment information and work in current books indicate that pupils with SEND are making strong progress from their starting points because of the high-quality support they receive.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has been similar to the national average since the previous inspection. Children join early years with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age in most areas of learning. This does not represent sufficiently positive progress for some children.
- Children have the opportunity to learn in well-resourced indoor and outside areas. However, the effectiveness of teaching in early years is mixed. Children typically make more progress when working directly with a teacher or teaching assistant than when tackling independent activities. This is because staff do not make the most of the learning environment by providing a wide range of stimulating and engaging activities so that children learn as they play. As a result, children are not developing their early reading, writing and mathematical skills well enough and they do not get the maximum benefit from the provision available.
- The leadership of early years has recently improved. Following training from the trust, leaders now have a more accurate view of what needs to improve and what is working well across early years. Plans for improvement are coherent and more focused.
- Relationships between adults and children in early years are positive. Children's behaviour is typically good. Staff ensure children are well cared for and learn and play happily together.
- Staff, led by the SENCo, identify children's additional needs well. Staff work well with external specialists to ensure children receive the help they need early and quickly. The SENCo monitors any additional support for children with SEND to ensure it is effective.
- Children generally use their phonics well when writing words and sentences independently. For example, a group of children were observed writing simple words to describe their artwork.
- Safeguarding is equally effective in early years as in the rest of the school.
- Parents of children in early years are well informed and feel involved in their children's learning because staff provide a range of informative meetings and workshops. These events help parents to understand how to support their children's learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	140181
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10086776

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Tim Rose
Executive Headteacher	Lorraine Ratcliffe
Telephone number	01255 830234
Website	www.st-andrewsprisch-weeley.co.uk
Email address	office@st-andrews-weeley.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 July 2015

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is sponsored by the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust. The trust delegates aspects of governance to the local governance board. The board of trustees is the accountable body.
- As a school with a distinctive Christian ethos, the school was last subject to a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in November 2017. At that time, the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England school were judged to be good.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the government's pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. The proportion who have an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

- The executive headteacher leads another local primary school, spending half the week at Weeley St Andrew's Church of England Primary School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher or the head of school.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' workbooks throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and the head of school, both of whom hold a designated safeguarding leader role. Inspectors met with: the leaders for English and mathematics; a group of leaders of other subjects in the wider curriculum; the SENCo; the early years leader; a newly qualified teacher; the school's finance officer; and the business manager.
- The lead inspector met with a governor from the local governance board, the chair of the academy council, the chief executive officer, and the trust's academy improvement lead, and held a phone conversation with the local authority's school effectiveness partner to discuss their work with the school.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes to seek their views about the school. One inspector attended a whole-school assembly.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents including: assessment information; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; minutes from the local governance board meetings; reports from external consultants; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 47 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 47 responses to the Ofsted free-text system. Inspectors also spoke to parents before school and during the inspection and scrutinised the responses from the school's own recent parent survey. Inspectors considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

James Richards

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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