

Hertford St Andrew CofE Primary School

Calton Avenue, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG14 2EP

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Hertford St Andrew CofE Primary School is an inclusive and happy school. It continues to provide its pupils with a good education.
- The interim headteacher, senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. They are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their determination has improved several areas of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- After a period of staffing instability which affected the consistency and quality of teaching standards, teaching, learning and assessment have improved.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is yet to reach the levels that the school aspires to. Nonetheless, pupils' progress is improving strongly across the school. Most pupils make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders provide a caring and nurturing environment where pupils grow in confidence and are keen to learn. This has a positive effect on their progress.
- Pupils enjoy the broad curriculum, which is enhanced by a wide range of trips, clubs and other events.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy school and say they feel safe. They are taught to respect and treat each other equally. Almost all parents and carers speak very positively about the school.
- There is strong leadership and teaching in the early years. The environment is well organised, and adults are caring. Children quickly settle in and make at least good progress in all areas of learning.
- The governing body provides clear strategic guidance through strong support and effective challenge. However, governors do not monitor and evaluate thoroughly the effectiveness of leaders' spending of the pupil premium funding to ensure the best outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Subject leaders ensure that pupils are taught well across a broad curriculum. They do not yet have a clear understanding of pupils' achievements in their subjects to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress across the curriculum.
- Teachers build on pupils' earlier learning effectively and manage their classes well. However, the work for the most able pupils is not routinely demanding enough. This means that these pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they could.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - governors and leaders rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of actions funded by the pupil premium to enable disadvantaged pupils to achieve consistently well across the school
 - leaders for all curriculum areas monitor and evaluate pupils' progress so they identify any underachievement and use this information to take action to raise standards in the subjects they lead.
- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that the most able pupils – in particular – are set work which consistently challenges and stretches them to achieve as well as they are able to.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Hertford St Andrew CofE Primary is a welcoming and friendly school where staff morale is high and pupils are happy and hard-working. The interim headteacher, senior leaders and governors are ambitious and committed to improving the life chances of all pupils.
- Senior leaders and governors have improved the quality of education provided since the previous inspection. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas needing further improvement. They have identified accurately the next steps required to make the school even better. Staff value the training opportunities they have to improve their practice. They work together closely so there is strong consistency in the way staff use the agreed teaching approaches. Staff responses to Ofsted's online survey show that they are unanimous in feeling supported and proud to be working at the school.
- In 2017 and 2018, standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics fell below the national averages at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. During this period, a significant number of teachers left or joined the school. Senior leaders' focus on improving teaching throughout the school and raising expectations of what pupils should achieve is rapidly improving pupils' outcomes. Currently, most pupils make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are confident and have a good understanding of their subjects. They share senior leaders' commitment to making the school as effective as possible. Closer monitoring of pupils' progress and staff training have contributed to an improving picture of pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Pupils enjoy an engaging curriculum that enables a range of subjects to be studied in meaningful and relevant contexts. For example, the Year 3 topic entitled 'island life' enables pupils to explore aspects of geography, music and art in a cohesive manner. Extra-curricular experiences – including trips and residential opportunities – enhance pupils' self-confidence.
- Leaders ensure that pupils become well-informed young citizens. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply, discuss and debate events of global and moral importance. Pupils construct reasoned arguments around topics such as whether zoos should be banned. During discussions, teachers skilfully support pupils to distinguish between fact and opinion.
- In this very inclusive school, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Staff use religious education lessons and assembly themes to promote equality and diversity. They encourage pupils to reflect on their feelings and to learn about and respect people from different faith groups and cultures. Pupils gain a good introduction to the importance of principles – such as the rule of law and democratic processes – through holding their own school council elections and carrying out numerous roles of responsibility in school. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

(SEND) wisely and regularly review how they spend it. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is knowledgeable and experienced. Her advice to staff about the best ways to meet pupils' needs means that individual programmes of support for pupils lead to good progress.

- The primary physical education and sport premium funding is spent effectively. Specialist sports coaches work alongside staff so that they develop the appropriate skills to teach a variety of physical activities. Additionally, pupils benefit from having access to a variety of school sports clubs, competitive events and activities. As a result, more pupils participate in a wider range of sports.
- There is now a stronger focus on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make the progress required to achieve as well as other pupils nationally. Staff identify any barriers to learning and increasingly provide appropriate support. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving. However, leaders and governors do not monitor how they spend the pupil premium or evaluate the impact of their spending decisions rigorously enough.
- Leaders for subjects other than English and mathematics check the quality of teaching in their subjects through observing lessons, scrutinising teachers' plans, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' work. Consequently, subject leaders can identify where teaching approaches are most effective and where they need to improve. As yet, these leaders do not have a clear picture of pupils' progress in subjects such as history, geography and art. The school's agreed system for assessing pupils' achievement is not firmly in place. This hampers staff in evaluating the progress pupils make in all subjects to ensure that they achieve consistently well across the curriculum.
- Leaders have established positive relationships with parents. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, appreciate the hard work and dedication of staff. The school provides empathetic pastoral support to pupils and families. One parent summed up the views of many by saying: 'My children are thriving at this school. They feel safe, happy and are clearly stimulated by the teaching. I am pleased with their progress in all areas.'
- The local authority provides effective training, support and challenge to the school, aimed at raising standards and improving pupils' outcomes. Leaders have appreciated the help of the local authority in securing the appointment of the interim headteacher until the substantive headteacher joins the school in April 2019.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strong feature of the school. Governors are passionate about their roles and are ambitious for the school. Between them, they have a wide range of relevant skills and experience. They visit regularly to observe for themselves the school's provision.
- Governors fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. They monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding closely to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
- Governors attend meetings and receive good-quality information from senior and subject leaders about how well the school is doing. Minutes of meetings show that governors routinely ask probing questions about finance, staffing, the quality of

teaching and pupils' achievement. However, governors do not challenge leaders and hold them to account stringently enough for the way they spend the pupil premium and to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve consistently as well as they can.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders, staff and governors ensure that pupils are safe and happy in school.
- Staff are vigilant in safeguarding matters. They are meticulous in recording any concerns that they might have about a pupil's welfare or safety. Detailed records show that any recorded concerns are followed up quickly. Where necessary, the school works closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders have ensured that there is appropriate support for vulnerable pupils and their families. The staff who support these pupils are particularly effective. This is because they know the pupils and their families well. They offer good support for pupils' well-being and encourage regular and prompt attendance.
- Procedures for vetting staff when they are recruited are thorough. Appropriate checks are made on all adults who work in the school, including volunteers.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. They fully understand their roles in relation to child protection. They talk confidently about the school's procedures for passing on any child protection concerns to the designated safeguarding leaders.
- Parents recognise and appreciate that the school places a high priority on maintaining pupils' safety and care.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know pupils in detail and have increasingly high expectations for them all to achieve as well as they can. Staff establish positive relationships with pupils. This contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning and pride in the progress they make.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They give clear explanations and often model what they expect from pupils. Teachers provide guidance on what good work looks like. For example, following support from the teachers, pupils in Years 2 and 3 were able to describe convincingly the strategies they were developing to add or subtract two-digit numbers in mathematics. In Years 5 and 6, the teachers explained clearly the features of direct speech. Later observations of the pupils' work showed how they had successfully improved their writing as a result of this clear guidance.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed. They work closely with teachers to ensure that the support they give to pupils – including those with SEND – is effective and well suited to pupils' needs.
- Reading has a high profile at the school. Staff give pupils frequent opportunities to develop their reading skills and they are encouraged to read for enjoyment. Displays in classrooms highlight interesting 'words of the week' for pupils to include in their speaking and writing. In the Year 1 classroom, a colourful and interactive display

challenges pupils to record when they have read a range of texts, such as a fairy tale, a poem or an information leaflet.

- The teaching of phonics is effective, and pupils respond positively to the school's approach. Pupils enjoy reading both at home and at school, making good use of their phonics skills to support them. Older pupils are able to speak about their favourite authors and their love of reading.
- Pupils' achievements in writing are improving. Teachers use high-quality texts to promote an interest in writing and to help pupils to develop their writing skills. They help pupils to extend their vocabulary and use relevant technical language. Pupils have opportunities to write at length and to develop their writing using links to other subjects or current issues. As a result, they enjoy writing and write well.
- The quality of mathematics teaching is good. Teachers make effective use of resources to support pupils' learning. They make sure that pupils have opportunities to explain their ideas, use their skills to solve problems and develop their reasoning. The school's chosen strategy is to provide pupils with 'same-day interventions' if teachers and teaching assistants identify that pupils have not understood their learning. This approach helps pupils to master key skills and vocabulary quickly.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and plan interesting tasks to build on their earlier learning. Activities are often challenging. However, sometimes, pupils – especially the most able – finish their work quickly and wait too long to be moved on. This limits the progress these pupils make.
- Pupils say they enjoy learning across all subjects. The work in pupils' books shows that most make good gains in their learning in a range of subjects, such as science, history and geography. Subject leaders are currently developing an assessment approach for subjects other than English and mathematics so that pupils' progress can be checked rigorously to ensure that they achieve well across all subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school. They settle to tasks quickly and concentrate well. They respond to questions eagerly and are keen to contribute their ideas. Pupils told the inspector that lessons are interesting and fun, particularly their science lessons when they take part in practical experiments.
- A particular challenge for leaders and governors is the high number of pupils who start or leave the school other than at the usual times. These pupils – many of whom have low starting points – benefit from the strong support and nurture that ensure that they settle quickly and are ready to learn.
- Pupils appreciate their teachers. They commented, 'We get the help we need. We learn to work hard so we can have good careers and be successful in life.'
- Pupils feel safe and secure at school. They post any concerns in the 'time to talk' boxes that are in every classroom, and know that these will be looked at by the learning

mentor and acted on appropriately. They have learned how to stay safe, including when online.

- Pupils know about bullying and what to do if they see or experience it. Pupils say that bullying is rare and they are confident that their teachers will sort out any incidents quickly.
- The school is a caring and positive community in which all pupils are valued. Pupils show respect for each other. They cooperate well in lessons to share ideas and listen to the contributions of others. Pupils told the inspector, 'We're very friendly here – we help new people to settle in. We're a small school and so we get to know each other well.'
- The school has a strong Christian ethos which underpins regular acts of worship and celebration. Pupils are taught the importance of living a moral life and understand the difference between right and wrong.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They show consideration for one another as they move around the school and at playtimes. In the dining hall, they are well mannered and sociable.
- Leaders have set higher expectations for behaviour and the presentation of work. Pupils have responded to this by keeping the school rules and taking greater pride in their work.
- The school's behaviour policy has recently been reviewed. The structured approach to behaviour management supports pupils in understanding the rules and that there are consequences for poor behaviour. Consequently, the number of incidents has reduced, and pupils recognise that sanctions are applied fairly and that rules are more reasonable and clear.
- Leaders have worked hard to promote the importance of good attendance with pupils and their families, including disadvantaged pupils. Staff closely monitor why pupils are absent and follow up concerns with parents quickly. As a result, attendance rates are improving and overall attendance for the school is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who regularly miss school is also reducing and – although still high – is moving nearer to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 was below the national average. The school's assessment information shows that the small numbers in each cohort skewed the figures, and the high number of pupils who start and leave the school other than at the usual times affected outcomes. Leaders' determination to improve teaching and learning has swiftly addressed this decline in

standards. Throughout the school and within each key stage, most pupils make consistently good progress and attainment is rapidly improving.

- Good teaching of phonics has ensured that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been in line with national figures since the previous inspection. Pupils generally read widely, with fluency and comprehension that are appropriate to their age.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress as a result of well-targeted support, including from teaching assistants. Staff monitor their progress carefully and adjust provision to meet their needs. Several parents commented on the high-quality support their children receive. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well from their different starting points.
- Pupils who join the school at times other than in the Reception Year settle well in this welcoming school. They make good progress from their starting points, which are lower than those typical for their age.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, often supported effectively through carefully planned small-group work. However, their performance is not yet sufficiently strong to ensure that a high proportion of pupils leave Year 6 achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils have many opportunities to practise literacy and mathematical skills through their topic work. Pupils' work on display and in their books shows that most groups are making good progress in a wide range of subjects, including science, history, geography and art. However, leaders do not yet routinely monitor or evaluate pupils' achievement in all subjects to be able to identify and address any underachievement.
- The work in current pupils' books shows clear evidence of most teachers building on previous learning and moving pupils on with appropriate tasks. However, at times, the most able pupils – in particular – are not challenged sufficiently to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, these pupils do not achieve the higher standards they should.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the early years with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age, particularly in the areas of communication and language. Through good provision in both the Nursery and Reception classes, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has grown year on year. It is now closer to the national average. Consequently, children are better prepared for moving to Year 1 than in the past.
- The provision in the early years is well led and managed. The experienced early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development.
- Staff recognise the limited speaking and listening skills of some children when they join the school. Consequently, there is an emphasis on encouraging children to speak clearly and in complete sentences. Teachers and teaching assistants ask insightful questions and give children time to reply. Staff model the use of language well so that children's speech and language skills are quickly improving.

- Class sizes in both Nursery and Reception are very small. Staff know the children well and make sure that they are supported to be ready and willing to learn. Children behave well and listen to adults. They settle into school routines quickly and grow in confidence, learning to do things for themselves. Examples of this include collecting the resources they need and choosing their own snack.
- Activities are purposeful and linked to the children's interests. There is a good balance between work that is led by the adults and opportunities for children to explore ideas themselves and follow their interests. Children work well together, taking turns and sharing.
- The focus on language leads to a range of resources being available. Staff display prompts prominently to help children with their early reading and writing skills. For example, a group of boys in the Reception class enthusiastically used sound mats to help them write 'the dog'.
- Adults provide many opportunities for children to sing rhymes, share stories and write their ideas and thoughts. One child carefully and accurately wrote their name on a piece of paper so the adults visiting the classroom would remember who the child was.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Teachers model the links between letters and sounds well and encourage children to learn these. Children use their knowledge to read simple words and form short sentences when writing. In the 'veterinary surgery', children used their phonics knowledge well to write out some appointment cards.
- Adults make regular observations of children's progress and tailor future activities to each child's next steps in learning. They record each child's development clearly and share the information with parents. Parents are very positive about the early years provision and leaders provide a range of workshops to encourage parents to understand how they can support their children's learning at home.
- The early years environment – inside and outside – is well organised, with a good range of activities that cover all areas of learning. Safeguarding is equally effective in early years as in the rest of the school. All welfare requirements are met in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff show great care for the children in their charge.

School details

Unique reference number	117397
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10086780

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Ramsay
Interim Headteacher	Jamie Brown
Telephone number	01992 583 105
Website	www.hertfordstandrew.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@hertfordstandrew.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the government's pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEND support is above the national average, and the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The interim headteacher joined the school in January 2019 and will remain in post until the substantive headteacher joins the school in April 2019. The interim headteacher is working closely with the substantive headteacher and shares information regularly to support this transition period.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector – together with the interim headteacher – visited all classrooms to observe teaching, pupils' learning and behaviour.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were examined by the inspector throughout the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders – one of whom is the SENCo – the early years leader, a group of subject leaders, the learning mentor and the office manager.
- The inspector met with several governors, including the chair of the governing body. In addition, the inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority to discuss its work with the school.
- The inspector spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school. A meeting was also held with a group of pupils more formally to discuss their learning and many aspects of school life. The inspector attended a whole-school assembly.
- Some pupils were heard reading their books. The inspector also talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- The school's website was scrutinised, as were a range of school documents, including: assessment information; minutes from the governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about safeguarding and attendance.
- The inspector considered the 13 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 13 responses to the Ofsted free-text system. The inspector also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. Additionally, the inspector took account of the 14 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the 14 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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