

St Katharine's Knockholt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Main Road, Knockholt, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN14 7LS

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The headteacher, staff and governors have worked successfully since the last inspection to ensure the school continues to develop pupils into well-rounded, confident individuals, who are well placed to move on to secondary school.
- Standards are consistently above the national average at both Year 2 and Year 6. Many pupils achieve at the higher levels, especially in English.
- Pupils in the Reception class get off to a good start because activities are interesting and well taught.
- Teaching is consistently good. A particular strength is the way lessons are planned to cover several different subjects and this captures the interest of pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they receive high quality support.
- All pupils are extremely keen and enthusiastic learners. They love coming to school and are polite and friendly to each other and adults.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough to ensure all pupils make rapid progress.
- Pupils are not always given the opportunity to discover things for themselves.
- Some teachers' marking is not clear enough about exactly what pupils need to do to improve their work. Pupils are not always given regular opportunities to respond to teachers' comments.
- Subject leaders are still developing their skills in checking the quality of lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons or part lessons, some of which were observed with the headteacher. They also conducted short visits to classrooms to look at pupils' work, observed support sessions for small groups of pupils, listened to pupils read and observed pupils in the playground.
- Inspectors observed an assembly and a dance session taken by a specialist teacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders responsible for English, mathematics, special educational needs and teaching, and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils from the school council and also spoke informally to pupils and parents on the playground at the start of the day.
- Inspectors took into account the 55 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire as well as the responses to the school's own questionnaire. They also took account of the 21 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Penny Spencer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Howard Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school has expanded since the last inspection and is now a single form entry school. It is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funds made available to schools by the government to support pupils in receipt of free school meals, in the care of the local authority or whose parents are serving in the armed forces), is much lower than average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use alternative provision for any of its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise achievement further, by:
 - ensuring all teachers plan lessons that give pupils more opportunities to work independently and discover things for themselves
 - making sure that teachers' marking makes the next steps for pupils' learning clear and precise and that pupils are given regular opportunities to respond to feedback and improve their work.
- Develop the skills of leaders in charge of subjects in checking the quality of pupils' learning and progress through lesson observations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the Reception class with skills and understanding that are broadly in line with those expected for their age in all aspects of learning. They make good progress and the proportion of pupils that reach standards in line with or above the average by the end of the year is high.
- All pupils continue to make good progress and standards at the end of Year 2 are consistently higher than average.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above the national average. In 2012, in English, all pupils reached the nationally expected standard and many achieved at the higher levels. In mathematics progress was a little slower and some pupils did not achieve as well as they did in English.
- The progress and attainment of current learners show continued improvements in all subjects, including mathematics, with more pupils making good or better progress towards challenging targets. This is because the school has successfully invested in specific mathematics training for all staff to increase their skills and knowledge
- The teaching of reading, including phonics (the linking of letters to sounds), is strong. The percentage of pupils who met or exceeded the standards set in the government's phonics screening check was above average.
- Pupils who read to inspectors were very enthusiastic and used their phonic skills effectively to help them read unfamiliar words. They could talk confidently about the books they were reading. Older pupils read extensively and enjoyed many different types of books. Parental involvement in reading is very high and the school uses volunteers from the local community to provide many extra opportunities for pupils to read to an adult.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and standards are above the national average for similar groups. This is also the case for the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium also make good progress. The average points score for this group at the end of Year 6 was in line with similar groups nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Reception class children learn in an exciting and stimulating environment that allows them to develop independence and confidence. The teachers' detailed planning is firmly focused on key skills but incorporates many ideas suggested by the pupils. Activities are carefully linked to the topic or theme. For example, inspectors observed pupils enthusiastically and accurately counting and adding real gingerbread men biscuits and hunting for missing gingerbread men shapes, before ordering them correctly, linked to the work they were doing on the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'.
- Teachers use carefully thought out questions to develop pupils' understanding and there are many opportunities for pupils to collaborate with each other. However, opportunities are sometimes lost for pupils to learn independently and find out things for themselves, because teachers occasionally do too much talking and give pupils the answers too quickly.
- Teachers' lesson planning is detailed and many lessons successfully link different subjects together. This was seen in a good science lesson linked to literacy, where pupils were developing their understanding of scientific vocabulary related to heat while reviewing a practical experiment. Good use of visual images on the interactive whiteboard further enhanced pupil engagement and understanding.
- Teaching assistants are an integral part of the teaching team and their work is carefully planned for maximum impact. They are well trained and successfully support individual pupils as well as running small-group sessions to boost learning for others. As a result, disabled pupils and those

with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points.

- Recent bespoke mathematics training for all staff, alongside the purchase of new resources, has helped to develop teachers' skills in accelerating the progress of all pupils in mathematics. Recent assessment data show that this is having a very positive impact.
- Marking is frequent and follows the school's policy. However, teachers' written feedback is not always clear enough in guiding pupils to improve. Opportunities to respond to feedback are not consistently applied in every class, leading to slower progress for some pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. Throughout the inspection they were unfailingly polite and keen to show inspectors the many interesting things within the school grounds, including the impressive chicken coop.
- They have excellent attitudes to learning, work extremely hard and are eager to succeed.
- Behaviour around the school is very positive, especially in the playground. Pupils use the excellent adventure and outdoor play equipment safely under the watchful eye of interested adult supervisors who are actively involved in what is happening.
- There is strong feeling of support and cooperation among pupils and staff alike. Inspectors saw several instances of pupils spontaneously volunteering to help their peers, who had been absent, to catch up with learning.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They strongly believe that behaviour is good and that the school keeps their children safe and secure. This view was echoed by the pupils and staff and endorsed by the inspection team.
- Pupils have numerous opportunities to represent their school on the school council, as playground friends and as members of sports teams and the choir. They take their roles very seriously and responsibly.
- Pupils have a very secure knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations including on the internet. Visits by the local police and planned lessons on safety support their understanding effectively.
- Pupils say bullying is very rare and parents and staff fully agree. Evidence from the detailed records kept by the school show the very few incidents are rapidly dealt with and parents are always informed and involved.
- Attendance is consistently above average because pupils want to come to school every day and learn.

The leadership and management are good

- Led by a strong and determined headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders and the governing body, everyone works together as a cohesive team to secure good outcomes for all pupils. As a result there is strong capacity for continued improvement.
- The school regularly checks on how well teachers are performing. Career promotion and salaries are closely linked to staff performance. Excellent opportunities are provided for individual training and development, and this is strongly appreciated by all staff.
- The school has accurately identified the necessity to further develop the skills of subject leaders so that their impact on improving pupil achievement is even more influential. This process has already begun with, for example, additional training and opportunities for subject leaders to undertake joint lesson observations with the headteacher.
- The school's procedures for evaluating its effectiveness are strong and leaders' judgements are accurate and reflective. As a result development plans are clearly focused on the key priorities. The recent extra training for staff, in mathematics, was as a direct result of the analysis of pupil outcomes and a desire to secure rapid improvements.
- The school works closely with a cluster of local schools to share good practice and moderate

work. The cluster also employs an external consultant, shared by schools, to support school improvement and performance management.

- The local authority provides light touch support to this good school.
- Funds available through the pupil premium are used well to provide additional support sessions in a number of subject areas, including mathematics. The impact of this support is carefully monitored by the headteacher and governing body.
- The range of subjects and activities is broad and varied. Frequent trips and visits from outside speakers enable pupils to gain much first-hand experience and this adds strongly to their overall enjoyment of lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. All pupils have equal access to a wide range of enrichment activities including dance, drama, sports and music, including learning how to play the ukulele.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is established and experienced. Governors are well trained and use their individual expertise to lead effective committees, as evidenced by the detailed and comprehensive minutes of meetings. They provide a good level of challenge to the headteacher, including that related to staff salary progression and promotion. They are competent to analyse assessment information to ensure pupils are making sufficient progress and are aware of the performance of the school in relation to others. They make sure the pupil premium is allocated effectively and monitor the impact of this on pupils' standards. Safeguarding procedures are exemplary. Governors are securely placed to make sure the school continues to improve.

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

Unique reference number	118713
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	403360

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Doreen Jones
Headteacher	Sarah Jane Tormey
Date of previous school inspection	June 2008
Telephone number	01959 532237
Email address	headteacher@knockholt.kent.sch.uk

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