

# St John's Church of England Aided Primary School

Markfield Road, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 6RN

**Inspection dates** 19–20 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Achievement is good, and attainment is broadly average and rising. Pupils are making good progress across the school and learn especially quickly in reading. They enjoy books and make good use of their knowledge about the sounds that letters make.
- Most teaching is good or better. Teachers make sure that pupils of differing ability are given work that is just right for them and make lessons interesting. Pupils appreciate the visits and visitors that help to bring topics to life.
- The school has good systems for supporting pupils in their personal development and, as a result, pupils are polite and considerate. They feel safe, and behave sensibly because they want to do well at school.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be done next to make the school outstanding.
- The school is managed well and is improving rapidly. Leaders have been particularly successful in improving teaching, despite the many changes in teachers, and in checking up on how well pupils are doing.
- Governance is good because governors know how well the school is doing and provide good support to enable the school to develop further.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the school and agree that it is continuing to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Improvements made in mathematics are not as rapid as in English because pupils are not all good at mental arithmetic or knowing what to do when given a mathematical problem to solve.
- Leaders are not checking up on the attainment and progress of pupils eligible for free school meals thoroughly enough to ensure that the attainment gap is closed for all of these pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 22 lessons with six being observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account 85 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), a letter from a parent and held informal discussions with a sample of parents.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed in 34 staff questionnaires.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Howard Dodd	Additional Inspector
Peter Callaghan	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- About a tenth of pupils are supported through school action. This proportion is similar to the national average. A further tenth of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, which is above average.
- Approximately a seventh of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional money provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families). This is below the national average. The school has no pupils from service families.
- About a third of the pupils in Key Stage 2 joined the school in Year 3 from other schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been 10 new teachers since the previous inspection, including some senior leaders.

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

- Raise attainment and increase progress in mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that teachers always provide mental mathematics activities that challenge pupils of differing abilities
  - making sure that pupils can carry out mental mathematics quickly and accurately
  - enabling pupils to understand what calculations they need to solve mathematical problems.
- Close the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils at the school, by:
  - ensuring that their attainment and progress are checked with greater rigour
  - making sure that governors are fully aware of the impact of pupil premium funding on pupils' attainment and progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children starting school in the Reception classes are working within the levels expected for their age. They make good progress, especially in learning about letters and sounds and in mathematics. For example, in letters and sounds, children enjoy sorting the real and imaginary words and saying 'ding' when they are right. In a number lesson, children followed up their learning by counting down when blasting off in the role-play rocket. Progress is not quite as fast in reading. Some opportunities are missed for children to extend their reading when choosing to work outside.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average, but rising across the school with the improvements in teaching. Pupils are now making good progress, including those who join the school in Year 3, with the best progress being made in reading. When reading, pupils show good understanding and know how to improve. As one pupil said, 'I could practise breaking up words more.'
- The school promotes equal opportunities and has been successful in closing the gap in attainment between boys and girls in writing, by making sure that writing topics are of greater interest to the boys. Boys are now more enthusiastic. For example, they respond well to writing accounts following educational visits and have especially enjoyed the topic on the Second World War.
- While progress in mathematics is good, it is slower than in English because not all pupils use their knowledge of mental mathematics quickly and accurately enough or have a secure understanding of how to solve mathematical problems.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The school identifies what needs to be done to help them to learn more quickly and, consequently, many catch up with the other pupils and no longer need additional help.
- The attainment of the very few pupils who are looked after by the local authority compares favourably with other pupils at the school. The attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals was lower than for other pupils by almost a year in English and mathematics as measured in average point scores in the end of Year 6 tests in 2012. The attainment gap is closing for pupils currently in the school, especially in English, although the school does not check up on these pupils with enough rigour to ensure that they all do as well as they could.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching is good or better because teachers have good subject knowledge and provide a wide variety of activities to maintain the pupils' interest. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed collecting and interpreting information on graphs about their favourite planets and, in Year 4, pupils were pleased to write fairy tales inspired by a visit from an author.
- Teachers form good relationships with the pupils and make good use of questioning to involve pupils in their learning. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, questioning was used exceptionally well to help pupils finish their writing using flashbacks and, consequently, the work was completed to a very high standard.
- Praise is used well to encourage and support pupils and pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn in each lesson. For example, in English in Year 3, pupils were clear about how they could improve their persuasive writing.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support for small groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In the Reception classes they ask probing questions to extend the children's learning. For example, children who were working with guttering outside were encouraged to think about how water flow changes when the guttering was raised at one end.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and mostly provide guidance on how pupils can improve

next time. Pupils appreciate these comments and are keen to follow up advice and answer any questions that have been asked. This was seen being used particularly well in some Year 5 mathematics books.

- Teachers understand the needs of the pupils they teach and ensure that they carry out tasks that provide the right level of challenge. Occasionally, at the start of mathematics lessons, the mental mathematics activities are not well enough judged to ensure that all pupils work fast enough when adding, taking away, multiplying or dividing. Consequently, they do not learn to make quick calculations when completing their work.
- In a few lessons, teachers spend too long talking to the class and, when this happens, pupils do not get on with their independent work quickly enough.

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

- Pupils, including those who join the school after Year 2, enjoy lessons and are keen to share their ideas. They typically make positive comments, such as 'this is a really fun school'. Children in the Reception classes settle into routines quickly and are confident to make choices about their learning.
- Across the school, pupils have a good attitude to learning, listen intently and are keen to become involved in discussions. They support each other and concentrate well. For example, in Year 1, pupils worked sensibly in pairs when playing reading games, enabling the teacher to share a book with another group of pupils. Occasionally, pupils do not take enough care with their handwriting.
- Pupils behave well and say that they feel safe and happy at school. Almost all parents who responded to the on-line Parent View questionnaire agree. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe, including from cyber bullying, and are clear about the school behaviour policy.
- Rare instances of poor behaviour or bullying are dealt with swiftly and to the satisfaction of the pupils concerned and their parents. Pupils agree that behaviour is good most of the time, but comment that 'some are naughty in some lessons'. Peer mentors in Year 6 are available at playtime to help sort out minor disagreements between pupils as needed.
- The school prevents and tackles discrimination robustly and pupils respond positively to the school's 'values education' and, consequently, they are polite and respectful of the needs of others.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. The school is working closely with a small number of families to improve their attendance.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Leaders, including those new to their roles, are ensuring that the school is continuing to improve since the last inspection. They have a clear understanding of what works well and what needs further development.
- They check teaching rigorously and, consequently, teaching is now mostly good or better. Teachers are very keen that their teaching should be excellent and training is used well to bring about improvements. Leaders have successfully started to move some good teaching to outstanding.
- Leaders have generated a wealth of information on how well pupils are doing and have used this to support individuals and groups. However, information on how well pupils eligible for free school meals are doing is not checked with enough rigour so that their attainment and progress across the school can be readily compared with that of other pupils.
- The curriculum has been extended since the last inspection with the addition of many activities and visits to generate and maintain the pupils' interest in learning. For example, pupils have fond memories of an overnight stay on the 'Golden Hinde' and their visit to Kew Gardens. The

curriculum ensures that pupils leave school with skills that will equip them for the next stage of their education. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for pupils to extend their writing when working in science.

- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Clear guidance enables pupils to be socially responsible and to show empathy and tolerance when working with others. In one assembly, slides of donkey rides and other seaside delights were admired by the pupils when considering the value of special holidays such as Palm Sunday.
  - Most parents and carers are pleased with the school and make positive comments about the staff, such as, 'they have got time to listen to you' and 'they are friendly and open'.
  - Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All members of staff are fully trained in keeping pupils safe and are checked for suitability for working with children.
  - The local authority provided considerable help in the past but provides a reduced level of support, reflecting the successful improvements being made by the school's senior leaders.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school and how well pupils are doing compared with other schools. They ask challenging questions of senior leaders and know how teaching is checked and good teaching rewarded. Weak teaching is not tolerated. Governors are aware that pupil premium funding is spent on extra help for pupils and to fund educational visits, but do not have a clear picture of how much it is benefiting the pupils so that the attainment gap can be closed. Governance has improved since the last inspection and continues to develop, with good levels of relevant training being attended.
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## 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>	125164
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	402317

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>	488
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susan Gibbin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Wombwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 342009
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