

St Margaret's, Collier Street Church of England Voluntary Controlled School

Collier Street, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 9RR

Inspection dates 16–17 July 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.

- Consistency and teamwork are evident in abundance in this good school. Pupils learn and grow in confidence because they are known and cared for extremely well.
- Children get a good start in Reception, and pupils through the school make good progress from their starting points. They achieve well across a broad range of subjects. Their attainment in English and mathematics by the time they leave school is mostly above average.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers make learning interesting and plan carefully to meet the needs of the different ages and abilities of pupils in their classes.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they thoroughly enjoy learning and socialising together. They say that they feel safe and their parents unanimously agree.
- The curriculum, built around themes, fascinates pupils and encourages them to be independent and find things out for themselves. Teachers are skilful in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills within these themes.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body work closely to check how well the school is doing. They have built well on the school's success when it was last inspected to bring further improvement to all aspects of the school's work, including teaching and pupils' achievements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet strong enough to lead to outstanding achievement for all pupils.
- Pupils' data handling skills are not as strong as other aspects of their numeracy.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are not given enough emphasis.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, she undertook seven short visits to lessons and small group sessions, involving all teachers in school at the time of the inspection, and observed an assembly. She also observed how pupils read and talked to some about how the school helps them to develop their reading skills.
- Meetings were held with school staff, representatives of the governing body and local authority, and a group of pupils.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including those that show how the school evaluates itself and plans for future development, and pupils' progress data. Pupils' work, information about how the school cares for and protects pupils, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and minutes of recent governing body meetings were also scrutinised.
- The inspection took account of 36 responses to the online Parent View survey, and questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Helen Hutchings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Collier Street is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The school is located in a village with a small population, so that many pupils travel considerable distances from other villages and towns in the wider area.
- The school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families) for around one in ten of its pupils, which is below average when compared with schools nationally. There are currently no children of service families in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average, although the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is low.
- Most pupils are White British. There are a small number of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, each covering two year groups. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught alongside some Year 1 pupils.
- The school works in collaboration with three Church of England schools locally, sharing professional development for staff and some activities for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make even faster progress, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their data handling skills in mathematics
 - placing greater emphasis on helping pupils to improve their handwriting and the presentation of their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills and experiences which vary considerably from year to year. In some years, they reach the levels expected for their age, whilst in others they are below. They benefit from the role models of older pupils in the class and develop an enthusiasm for their learning. They have frequent opportunities to boost their communication and social skills, discussing in detail what they are doing with an adult, including a number of volunteer helpers.
- Pupils continue to make good progress through the school, although there are variations in pupils' attainment from year to year dependent on the different abilities of each group. Results in the national tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are typically in line with or above average, and represent good achievement for each cohort. Last year, pupils' progress was significantly above that found nationally. Year 6 pupils about to leave the school have made faster progress than previously and are reaching higher standards so that they are very well prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been above average for the last four years, giving pupils a strong foundation for Key Stage 2 learning. Differences in progress evident in the last inspection have been ironed out, and pupils make consistently good progress through the school.
- Pupils' work shows that they frequently apply and consolidate their writing and numeracy skills in other subjects: for example, when older pupils analysed and presented their conclusions about the effects of deforestation and why it had taken place. In science, pupils develop their own strategies for carrying out and recording their own investigations. Many of the topics are planned so that pupils develop their geographical and historical understanding very effectively, and include study of current global issues.
- There are clear whole-school routines for pupils to record their work, such as writing down the success criteria which help them to be aware of what is expected for their work and measure their own achievements. Pupils' handwriting is not as well developed as other aspects of their writing which means that their work is not always neatly presented.
- The development of good reading skills at an early age enables pupils to work independently and effectively in other subjects. Pupils say that teachers choose books which they thoroughly enjoy as a whole class. Many activities are very effective in promoting a love of reading, for example a theatre visit to 'War Horse' after reading the book and regular visits by a local author. Class libraries are well stocked and used regularly by pupils, including for homework.
- The school monitors closely the progress being made by each pupil, showing its determination to ensure equality of opportunity for all by tackling any slowing of progress at the earliest possible stage.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified early and accurately. The school uses external support alongside a wide range of school interventions to give pupils the encouragement and specific support they need to make good progress towards their targets.
- The support for those pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well focused. Approaches such as one-to-one and small-group tuition, and funding for enrichment activities are effectively addressing the challenges pupils may have to their learning. As a result, gaps in attainment and progress are closing throughout the school, with those eligible making faster progress than their peers overall. However, because of their lower starting points at the beginning of Key Stage 2, there is still a small gap in attainment but this is smaller than found nationally. For example, last year there was a third of a level gap in mathematics, whilst the gap had been closed in English.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, with some that is outstanding, and this is recognised by those parents who responded to the inspection survey. However, there is not yet enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils to make faster progress, including in mathematics.
- Teachers plan very carefully for the range of needs in their mixed-age classes. Teachers know their pupils and their achievements well. Whole-class discussion and learning tasks are matched closely to pupils' earlier learning and capabilities so that little time is lost having to adjust activities because pupils do not understand. Pupils show that they are capable of undertaking open-ended tasks to challenge their thinking and boost their independence, but are not given enough opportunities to do so.
- Teachers have high expectations for the quality and quantity of pupils' work and behaviour. They balance carefully work to be done individually and activities where pupils collaborate and share learning in groups. Teachers give pupils numerous opportunities to share their views and opinions and to strengthen their learning by talking through their ideas before consolidating new learning in independent work. For example, after young pupils had considered how to stay safe in hot weather, they talked in pairs about how lettering might be placed on the page before trying out different approaches in preparation for compiling a poster about safety, successfully developing their early understanding of presentation.
- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants, who often support pupils experiencing some difficulty in their learning. Teaching assistants are careful that pupils do not become dependent on adult support, skilfully questioning and encouraging pupils to work things out for themselves. Training has been provided so that teaching assistants have the skills to be effective in taking small groups for catch-up programmes. The success of these interventions is monitored closely, and shows that they are very effective in bringing about rapid improvement.
- The school recognises that pupils have made more progress in English than in mathematics, and have identified this as a key focus for development in their teaching next year. Careful analysis has identified that pupils do not develop their understanding of data handling as well as other aspects of the mathematics curriculum.
- A key strength of teaching is the emphasis given to helping pupils to understand the quality of their work. Lessons routinely give pupils opportunities to reflect on and evaluate how well they have done against the success criteria set for their tasks. Pupils show maturity in discussing with others how their work could be improved. Marking is immediate and detailed, and pupils regularly carry out an additional task to show that they have understood the advice given by their teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school's ethos is one of harmony and calm, where pupils take responsibility for their own actions and treat each other with respect. Pupils reflect sensibly on behaviour in the school, saying how well they get along with one another and how much they love school. Almost all parents agree.
 - Pupils' enjoyment of school and their positive attitudes contribute very well to their achievement. Teachers make lessons engaging through interesting themes and approaches. Pupils' outstanding behaviour means that no time is lost in lessons: for example, well-rehearsed routines mean that the transition between whole-class and independent learning is rapid. This was seen in a lesson where older pupils moved seamlessly to group work after a teacher-led discussion, to consider in detail the causes and effects of the American Civil War, and how this impacted on the future development of the nation.
 - Pupils are comfortable to subscribe to the school rules because they have contributed to them,
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and value the cohesive school community. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare, and systems for following up such incidents are consistently applied, so that pupils know that issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. They say that it is rare that they are not able to resolve minor differences of opinion between themselves because they are taught how to handle such incidents. Trained peer mediators say that their services are rarely needed and that there is always an adult to turn to if necessary.

- Pupils feel exceptionally safe, understanding the difference between occasional inconsiderate behaviour and deliberate bullying. Matters relating to staying safe are discussed regularly within the curriculum so that pupils have a good understanding of relevant issues such as road and internet safety.
- Attendance is consistently above average and continues to improve.

The leadership and management are good

- Staff speak of the headteacher's inspirational leadership in establishing a climate where all are valued. This is underpinned by a clear set of values where effort and achievement are recognised and celebrated. Under his leadership, facilities have been improved to support a broad range of activities, such as the kitchen where pupils of all ages regularly prepare food.
- The school's view of its work is honest and accurate, and is used well to plan for future developments. Subject co-ordinators take a lead in checking how well their areas are being taught, and staff value the support of colleagues on an everyday basis. As such, teamwork is strong, and staff are proud of the school and highly committed to its development.
- Performance information is used effectively to check on how well pupils are doing, to hold teachers to account and to plan future training needs. Strong partnerships within the 'collaboration' of local schools are effective in sharing professional development and reviewing the school's practice against that of others. There is now a solid base of outstanding teaching in the school on which to build further.
- The school's vibrant displays are testament to the wide range of activities being undertaken within and beyond lessons, promoting pupils' academic achievement and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A wide range of visitors, frequent visits linked to curriculum themes and involvement in competitions and local events effectively enrich pupils' experiences and develop their sense of community. Art and music are particular strengths, observed in enthusiastic singing during assembly. All pupils have opportunities to learn to play at least two instruments during their time in the school. Pupils' excitement about school activities was seen as they anticipated the Year 6 dress rehearsal of their end-of-year music and drama performance.
- The school works in close partnership with the local authority requesting and receiving support for its planned development. This has included giving an external view about how well the school is doing, training for teachers to develop their teaching from good to outstanding, and funding support for work within the 'collaboration.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors, alongside the headteacher, set a strong strategic direction for the school, ensuring that its values are maintained and strengthened. They have a deep insight into the work of the school through frequent visits to it and through regular analysis of performance information. They use this to ask probing questions of senior leaders. Consequently, they have a good understanding of how the school's performance compares to that of other schools nationally and use this information to plan for the future and to allocate resources. They understand how the pupil premium funding is spent and check on the effectiveness of its use. They check on staff performance and make sure that salary progression is based on effective classroom performance. Governors ensure that procedures to secure the safety of pupils and adults meet requirements, and make regular checks to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

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	118636
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	403354

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Stevens
Headteacher	Paul Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2008
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