

St Barnabas Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Quarry Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2EY

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a happy, caring and friendly school with a strong family atmosphere. One pupil summed this up with the comment, 'The whole school is your family and you have lots of friends here.'
- By the time pupils leave at the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English and mathematics are above average and are improving, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- All groups make good progress from their starting points including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and those from minority ethnic groups.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and have good, trusting relationships with pupils.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are proud of their school and work hard.
- Pupils are respectful of adults and each other. They are well-mannered and behave well.
- Pupils and their parents agree that the school keeps children safe and secure and that they are looked after well.
- Parents are pleased with the education their children receive and are very supportive of the school.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, know the school well and what it needs to do to improve. They have secured the confidence of staff and parents despite the many recent changes.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Provision in the early years requires improvement. Adults' focus is often on the activity rather than the learning, which does not promote better achievement. Learning opportunities are not consistently based on regular and accurate assessments of children's achievement.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Expectations are occasionally not high enough for the standard of presentation in pupils' books or the amount of work they complete.
- Teachers' expectations for pupils' progress are not always high enough and sometimes pupils are not set hard enough work.
- Pupils do not always have opportunities to respond to and act upon teachers' comments on how to improve their work.
- School improvement planning does not always reflect the correctly identified priorities with clear actions and measurable targets.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, some of which were joint observations with the acting headteacher.
- In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at their books and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher and staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan, information on pupils' progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at the 42 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), two written comments from parents and spoke to some parents at the start of the day. Inspectors also took account of 25 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school with an increasing roll.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The next largest group, around one fifth of pupils, are from Other White backgrounds, mostly of Eastern European heritage. Several other minority ethnic groups are represented in smaller numbers.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision is made for the early years in a Reception class that children attend on a full-time basis.
- The school has recently been led, until just before the inspection, by an interim headteacher. The deputy headteacher is currently the acting headteacher until July 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision in the early years to ensure that:
 - the focus of adults is on what children are learning not just the activity they are engaged in
 - staff use information from regular assessments to plan the next steps for children's learning.
- Raise achievement by improving teaching so that a greater proportion is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations for pupils' presentation of their work and the amount of completed work that they produce, and that they consistently promote rapid progress and challenge for all pupils
 - pupils have opportunities to respond to teachers' marking and feedback to help them make more rapid progress.
- Ensure that the priorities for development, which leaders and governors have correctly identified, are reflected more robustly in the school improvement plan with clear actions and measurable targets in order to sustain and accelerate the momentum of improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher is working effectively to maintain a calm, hardworking school with a purposeful atmosphere. There is strong teamwork among the staff and morale is high. Many agreed with the comment made by one member of staff that: 'Everyone in the school works well together as a team and family. All staff care about all the children and each other.'
- There have been many staffing changes, including in the leadership of the school, since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, senior leaders, including governors, have effectively tackled the areas for improvement that were identified at the previous inspection. Most notably, this has resulted in considerable improvement in the number of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 and this demonstrates that the school has capacity for further improvement.
- Senior leaders have a clear picture of what must be done next to sustain school improvement from accurate checks on the school's work and pupils' progress. However, the areas that leaders clearly know are priorities are not yet fully reflected in the school improvement plan. Measurable targets to evaluate the impact of the school's actions are not robust enough. There is a lack of focus on priorities for development in the early years.
- The acting headteacher is supported well by staff who are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and areas of responsibility. In a relatively short space of time, middle leaders have made an impact by providing good guidance and support to colleagues which is contributing to better progress. Regular scrutiny of pupils' books, observations of how well pupils are learning and information on progress for all groups are used effectively to monitor the quality of teaching. The professional development of staff is given a high priority and is linked to teachers' professional targets and national Teachers' Standards.
- Senior leaders, staff and governors are fully committed to equality of opportunity and ensuring that there is no discrimination within the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. It is embedded in the school's values, beliefs and subjects taught and fosters good relationships, tolerance and understanding of diversity in all its forms. Collective worship provides time for reflection and promotion of tolerance and respect. Pupils develop a good understanding of different faiths and cultures. They understand and accept the rules of the school community and learn that there are rules and democratic values in the wider community. These aspects prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Well-planned and interesting topics link learning well across different subjects and are often based around a motivating text. The school has ensured that the requirements of the new National Curriculum have been successfully incorporated by appointing a middle leader to this role. Working closely with the English and mathematics leaders, and with the involvement of the pupils, this team has successfully provided effective knowledge, guidance and support. As a result, all staff are very clear about what should be taught with the opportunity to be creative and imaginative in how they teach it.
- A range of clubs, visits and visitors to the school successfully enhances pupils' learning and experiences. The use of the school grounds, eco-school activities, links with local traders and establishments, and strong links with the local church develop the community aspects of the school well.
- Additional funding for primary sports is being used well. Pupils' participation in a range of sports, for example cross-country, has increased. Specialist coaches work with pupils and teachers to extend and improve skills and benefit pupils' healthy lifestyles and well-being.
- Additional funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make similar good progress to others in school and disadvantaged pupils nationally. For example, funding is used to provide extra support for small groups, counselling, individual reading support and social communication skills. The acting deputy headteacher is successfully working with teachers and teaching assistants to remove barriers to learning including providing daily support and weekly targets for pupils.
- Links with parents are good. Parents are positive about the school and have confidence in the leadership despite the many changes that have taken place.
- The school works hard to ensure regular attendance, which has improved a little since the previous inspection and is currently just average.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding systems are effective, known and implemented by all staff and meet all requirements.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school and is particularly involved in working with the school to check on progress and support the acting senior leaders.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body knows the school well and is committed to its improvement. It has recently conducted an audit of governors' skills to ascertain how it can further support the school and provide strategic direction and challenge to aspects of the school's work. Governors have an increasing awareness of the school's performance through an understanding of the information on pupils' attainment and progress. They understand how the school's performance compares to other schools nationally. They are aware that they need to further increase their effectiveness in holding the school to account for its performance. The governing body is committed to appointing a substantive headteacher to move the school forward while retaining its family, caring and community strengths. Governors know about the quality of teaching and ensure that pay rewards and promotion are linked to pupils' progress. They have a good awareness of the use and impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the primary sports funding. The governing body ensures that all statutory duties are met including safeguarding requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. They work and play together well and have good attitudes to learning, which helps them to make good progress. School records show that behaviour has improved over time and that good behaviour is now typical.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good and is better now than it used to be. They clearly know the difference between right and wrong.
- Pupils know and understand the school's values of love, trust, compassion, perseverance and reconciliation and this contributes to the positive relationships pupils have with each other and adults.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and confident to talk to inspectors about their work and what they think about their school. They appreciate the benefits of belonging to a small school community.
- Most parents and almost all staff who responded to the questionnaires agree that pupils are well behaved. All parents agree that their children are happy at school.
- Only on a few occasions do some pupils become distracted and lose concentration when they are not fully engaged or motivated in their learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school keeps their children safe and that they are well looked after.
- Pupils say they feel safe and they have a good awareness of how to keep safe in and out of school.
- They say that they are not aware of any bullying in school or that it happens very rarely but is often just 'falling out'. Because of the good, trusting relationships between pupils and adults, they are confident that if any issues should arise they could talk to their teachers who would sort out any problems fairly and quickly.
- Pupils have a good awareness that bullying can take different forms including prejudiced-based bullying and bullying related to social media and the use of the internet.
- Pupils know not to say unkind things or use vocabulary that would cause offence to individuals or groups who may be different from them in some way.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. The good, trusting relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils enjoy learning and want to do well.
- Teachers plan their teaching well. They have good subject knowledge and lessons motivate and engage pupils' interests so that they learn well.
- Teachers promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively. Skilled questioning to check pupils' understanding challenges pupils to think deeply and allows teachers to reshape activities to speed up the pace of learning.

- Most teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to the learning of pupils of all abilities and especially disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. They provide good support in the classroom and when working with small groups or individuals. They receive training and help pupils to achieve well and make good progress.
- There are some good examples of marking and feedback that give pupils good pointers on how to improve their work. However, pupils do not always have opportunities to respond to teachers' comments. Misunderstandings continue and errors are sometimes repeated.
- On occasion, however, teachers' expectations for the progress pupils can make, the amount of work they can complete and the presentation of work are not high enough. As a result pupils do not always do the best work they are capable of and their progress slows.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The relatively small and fluctuating numbers in the Year 6 group year on year mean that published information on attainment needs to be interpreted with caution. For example, in 2013, one pupil in Year 6 represented 11% of the group. In 2014, one pupil represented approximately six per cent of the group who took the tests. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- In 2014 the proportion of pupils who took the national tests at the end of Year 6 and reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above average. These results were an improvement from 2013 and show an improving trend over the past three years.
- The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014 was below average. Over time, however, standards by the end of Key Stage 1 have been improving at a faster rate than national. From their varied starting points pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics although they did less well in writing. Pupils made particularly good progress in Year 1.
- The most-able pupils are challenged well in most lessons and in well-planned activities to extend and deepen their knowledge. As a result, an increasing and above average proportion achieved the higher levels at the end of Year 6, most notably in reading and mathematics. Fewer pupils than found nationally reached the higher levels by the end of Year 2 although the proportion increased from the previous year in reading and mathematics.
- In the 2014 phonics check (sounds that letters make) for Year 1 pupils, the proportion that reached the required level was the same as that found nationally. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are developing their phonic skills well.
- Most children join the Reception class with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. In 2014, school information shows that the proportion which reached a good level of development was significantly above that found nationally. However, this is not reflected in the achievement of these pupils who are currently in Year 1.
- Pupils of all abilities enjoy reading and by Year 6 most read with fluency, expression and understanding. They know how to use books and the internet to find information and talk about favourite authors. They spoke with enthusiasm about the texts they are reading as a class.
- Currently, many pupils' work across the school is untidy and poorly presented. However, they are continuing to make good progress.
- All groups make broadly similar good progress from their varied starting points, because their needs are well met. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups and those who are learning English as an additional language.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is good. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils by the end of Year 6 was similar to their classmates in reading and writing and just over 12 months behind in mathematics. Compared to disadvantaged pupils nationally, they were nearly 12 months ahead in reading, six months ahead in mathematics and nearly four months ahead in writing. School records show that disadvantaged pupils throughout the school are making similar progress to others.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The provision in the early years requires improvement because too often, adults focus on the activity children are doing rather than their learning and achievement. This does not promote better progress.
- Children’s achievement is sometimes constrained because they do not always have first-hand experiences or the resources on which to base their learning. For example, when learning about letters and how to write them, children did not have any resources to help them form their letters correctly and so many were consistently reversing their letters.
- Assessments are not regularly linked to the characteristics of learning for young children. Information is not always used effectively to plan the next steps in learning which closely meet the needs of the children or provide them with appropriate challenges.
- Many children make steady progress and some make good progress from their starting points and so catch up quickly and are ready to continue learning in Year 1.
- The leadership of the early years ensures that there are good links with children and parents when they start so that children settle quickly and enjoy their time in the Reception class. The leader ensures there is a safe, caring environment indoors and outside.
- Children behave well and develop confidence and good attitudes. Relationships with each other and with staff are good and trusting so children feel safe and secure. They cooperate well with each other and learn to share and take turns. Sometimes, however, staff do things for children that they could do for themselves. For example, doing up their coats rather than encouraging children to try for themselves first.
- Leaders have not identified areas for the development of the early years provision.

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	118724
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	444271

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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Thompson
Headteacher	Moira Duncombe (Acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 May 2010
Telephone number	01892 522958
Fax number	01892 522958
Email address	headteacher@st-barnabas.kent.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

