

# Folkestone, St Martin's Church of England Primary School

Horn Street, Folkestone, CT20 3JJ

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have worked with relentless determination to successfully improve the school since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' achievement has improved considerably. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well above the national average.
- All groups of pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points, including disabled pupils, those with who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of most able pupils who reach the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above that found nationally. The proportion is particularly high by the end of Year 6 in mathematics and reading.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Teaching is exciting and challenging and inspires pupils to develop a love of learning.
- There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils, so pupils work hard and want to do well.
- Provision in the early years is excellent and, as a result, children are very well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They behave equally well in lessons, in the playground and around the school. They are extremely polite and respectful to each other and to adults. They live up to and promote the school's values exceptionally well.
- Rigorous and consistently applied procedures ensure that pupils feel very safe and secure in school. Pupils know who to talk to should they have any concerns.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and are great ambassadors for their school.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of the school and how well pupils achieve. They hold leaders to account very effectively.
- Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school's work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons, some of them together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at books, listened to some pupils read and observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions took place with pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The 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 41 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own recent parent survey and one written response. They also spoke to some parents at the start of the day. Inspectors also took into account 15 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Peter Thrussell

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after. The school also receives a service premium for pupils from service families, currently just under 10% of the school.
- The school meets the current government 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 which children attend full time.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club managed by the governing body.

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

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and use mathematical skills across the curriculum and implement plans to use more of the highly successful writing approaches in the mathematics curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. Her strong ambition and relentless drive, along with that of other leaders, including governors, has ensured that the school has rapidly improved since the previous inspection. As a result, the school provides an outstanding education for all its pupils, who learn and thrive exceptionally well.
- The local authority has provided good support since the previous inspection and has every confidence in the leadership and management of the school. The school works very closely with other schools in the area in strong partnerships to share expertise. The highly effective leadership demonstrates a strong capacity to continue to sustain outstanding performance in all areas of its work.
- There is a strong staff team and a shared determination to provide the best for their pupils. Morale is high and staff work with great energy and enthusiasm.
- Senior leaders evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses extremely thoroughly. Plans for further school improvement are based on exceptionally rigorous analysis of pupils' progress. Systems for assessing pupils' achievement are fully in line with the higher expectations within the new National Curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is checked regularly. Teachers know they are accountable for pupils' progress, and senior leaders set challenging targets for them. The well-established and effective arrangements for managing teachers' performance ensure that where any weaknesses are identified, support is quickly given and improvement is expected. Leaders identify professional development opportunities to meet whole-school priorities to raise achievement and the needs of individuals to help improve skills. There is very good support for staff who are at the early stages of their careers.
- Subject and phase leaders fulfil their roles very effectively. Their involvement in checking and reporting on pupils' progress has improved substantially since the previous inspection. They have good knowledge of their subjects and areas of responsibility and provide excellent guidance and support to colleagues.
- The curriculum is vibrant, creative, innovative and exceptionally well planned to fire pupils' imagination and interest. Pupils are given exciting and interesting experiences in a wide range of subjects based around termly topics. The arts, sport and computing all have a very high profile in the school. The curriculum is enriched exceptionally well with a wide range of clubs, trips and visitors to the school.
- The primary physical education and sports funding is used very effectively. Staff have received training in a range of popular activities such as netball and dance as well as some new sports for pupils such as lacrosse and handball. Pupils have more opportunities to participate in a range of activities, including competitive sports. In addition, funding has been directed to support identified pupils to promote healthy lifestyles and well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well through the curriculum, links with the church and the school's ethos and values. It underpins all that the school does. Pupils learn about faiths other than Christianity. For example pupils spoke with enthusiasm about what they had learned in their celebration of the Hindu festival, *Holi*, and a trip to a Hindu temple.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain as the school's values foster a culture of tolerance and respect. British values are strongly promoted. Pupils learn about democracy in their school lives, for example, by electing pupils to represent them in the school and attending the Houses of Parliament. They understand and respect the need for rules in the school community and beyond.
- All pupils have equal access to the opportunities on offer at the school. All staff ensure that pupils are safe to learn without any type of discrimination, and they are excellent role models in fostering good relations throughout the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and very secure. All staff are vigilant in protecting children and implement the agreed school procedures.
- Parents are very positive about all that the school offers children. They are supportive of its work and have every confidence in the leadership. Inspectors endorse the view of one parent who wrote, 'This is a school with an enormous heart. Children are happy, they are provided with many, many different learning opportunities and staff work collectively to create a safe and effective place of learning.'
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very involved in the school and meets its responsibilities exceptionally well. Governors are very well informed about the school from leaders and their own visits to school. They have a very good understanding of how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally. They check information about pupils' progress and hold leaders to account for all groups of pupils. Governors ensure that the school uses pupil premium and sport funding effectively to improve pupils'

achievement and well-being. They know how well teachers are performing, and support the headteacher in expecting the best and tackling any relative underperformance. They ensure that pay progression is linked to pupils' progress. Governors bring a range of expertise to the school and have a good understanding of the school's priorities. The governing body is committed to its own development and reviews its work to ensure that it is fully effective in holding the school to account for its performance.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes towards learning which helps them make rapid progress. Pupils conduct themselves equally well in and out of lessons, including at break and lunchtimes and when working with other adults. They are able and sensible enough to sort out any very minor disagreements between themselves, showing great maturity.
- Pupils are proud of their work and achievements and strive to do the very best that they can. Their work is neat and well presented. They thoroughly enjoy all that they do at school, which is reflected in their above-average attendance. A group of pupils agreed with one who said, 'We're happy, we're safe, we have fun and we learn loads; what more could we want?'
- Pupils are very friendly, polite and articulate. They show respect for each other and adults and go out of their way to welcome and include others, including inspectors.
- Pupils are great ambassadors for the school. They live up to and promote the school's values and behaviour codes exceptionally well because they are fully involved in deciding what they should be.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are developed exceptionally well because they know that their views and opinions are taken seriously and highly valued by all staff. They make an outstanding contribution to the calm, orderly learning culture in the school. Responsibilities, such as pupil voice representatives and buddies, are taken very seriously and enjoyed by pupils.
- Pupils say that pupils behave well and that the school is 'a bully-free zone'. They understand that bullying can take different forms, including cyber-based and prejudiced-based bullying, and are confident in turning to adults should any issues arise.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View and the school's own survey agree that pupils are well behaved.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Governors and leaders make sure that all systems for keeping pupils safe are rigorous and robust and fully implemented by all staff. All staff are appropriately trained. Parents agree that their children feel very safe in school and are extremely well looked after.
- Pupils say they feel extremely safe in school and that they know how to keep themselves safe out of school. For example, Junior Road Safety Officers are selected each year by the pupils to promote aspects of keeping safe on the roads. The pupils attend a conference in the council chambers to support their work.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are highly very aware of e-safety issues and the potential dangers of the internet and other social media.
- Appropriate risk assessments are carried out and a daily risk assessment is made and recorded of the outdoor area for the early years.
- The breakfast club provides a safe and healthy start to the day for those who attend.

## **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Leaders' high expectations and very effective support have ensured that teaching has rapidly improved since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils make excellent progress and their achievement is outstanding.
- Teaching inspires pupils to want to learn. Teachers capture pupils' interest extremely well so that they enjoy their lessons and are fully engaged in learning.
- Challenging tasks are suitably pitched to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and trusting. Pupils are confident to ask questions, are

imaginative and are prepared to take risks in learning and learn from their mistakes.

- Teachers very skilfully provide follow up questions to pupils' responses to encourage them to think deeply and extend their understanding. As a result, pupils are able to explain, reason and justify their ideas and suggestions in a great deal of depth. For example, pupils in Year 2 gave a range of well-considered responses to explain their reasons for deciding which number out of three given numbers was the odd one out.
- Pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers mark work using an agreed system that is clearly understood by pupils. Pupils respond thoughtfully to marking and written or verbal responses. Mistakes are not repeated, and excellent gains in learning are evident in their work over time.
- Writing has been a focus for the school. All staff have undertaken training so there is a consistent and highly effective approach to the teaching of writing across the school. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and achievement in writing since the previous inspection.
- Pupils have many opportunities to talk and rehearse their writing and they are very clear about what makes successful pieces of writing. Teachers expect pupils to apply their writing skills in all subjects and for all types of writing. Pupils in Year 5, for example, made excellent progress in vocabulary and spelling work that was part of their study of the Second World War.
- Mathematics is taught very well. Pupils' ability to reason is being continually extended, as they have to think carefully and use a range of mathematical knowledge to respond to teachers' probing questions. Teachers provide pupils with an excellent range of resources to help deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils do not have as many opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects as they do in English. The school has correctly identified plans to use more of the very successful teaching approaches that have significantly improved writing, in the teaching of mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is very effective. Starting in the early years, children get an excellent start to learning phonics and make rapid progress. Teachers ensure that pupils develop a love of reading from the start and as they move through the school, teachers inspire pupils to read widely, and provide them with innovative ways to develop their reading skills and fluency.
- Displays of pupils' work in classes and around the school celebrate pupils' achievements as well as supporting learning exceptionally well, through, for example, 'working walls'. Teachers and pupils use technology to excellent effect to support learning, for example, in their use of tablets and visualisers.
- In lessons, teachers skilfully manage the skills and expertise of teaching assistants. They sometimes work with pupils with special educational needs, and sometimes with the most able pupils, and make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. They also work very effectively with pupils who need additional support outside classes so that they can quickly catch up with the others.

## The achievement of pupils

**is outstanding**

- Children start in the Reception year with skills and knowledge that vary from year to year but which are generally typical for their age. The skills and knowledge of the children currently in this year are below that typical for their age overall, weaker in mathematics and stronger in physical and personal, social and emotional development. Children make outstanding progress in the early years because of the excellent provision.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national figure. This was an improvement from the previous year as leaders reviewed and changed the approach to teaching phonics to ensure more rapid progress. Pupils apply their phonic skills well to help them spell and read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils read with fluency and expression and enjoy a range of texts including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. By Year 6, they develop excellent higher-level skills of understanding and using texts, including on the internet, for research purposes.
- In 2014 there was a big increase from the previous year in the number of pupils attaining the expected and higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This demonstrates a continuing rising trend. The proportions of pupils who made the expected and better-than-expected progress by the end of Year 6 were considerably higher than found nationally.
- Current pupils are making very good progress across the school and work in their books as well as the school's checks on progress show that they are on track to sustain well-above-average standards by the end of the year.
- Pupils develop excellent skills in computing. They were very enthusiastic to show inspectors their skills,

particularly their work with the use of tablets to support interactive learning. They demonstrated impressive standards in drama and art.

- The most able pupils achieve very well. In 2014, the proportion reaching the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was above national averages in all subjects, and significantly above in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Currently, across the school, the most able pupils are challenged very effectively and make rapid progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to others and achieve outstandingly well. This is because, as with all pupils, their progress is rigorously checked and they are provided with timely additional support that meets their needs exceptionally well. The leadership and management of all aspects of special educational needs are extremely efficient and effective.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school achieve exceptionally well. In 2014, in the Year 6 national tests, their attainment was similar to that of other pupils in the school in mathematics and reading, and around four months behind in writing. Compared to other pupils nationally, their attainment was over four months ahead in mathematics, and nearly six months ahead in reading and writing. Over time, the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in school and nationally have reversed, closed or significantly narrowed.
- Pupils from service families achieve as well as others, make rapid progress and reach similar standards. Their needs are met exceptionally well and, as with all pupils, their well-being is given high priority.

### The early years provision

**is outstanding**

- Children get an outstanding start to school in the early years. Those who start with skills and knowledge levels below those typical for their age are helped to catch up quickly because teaching focuses precisely on gaps in their learning.
- Teaching is outstanding. As a result, all groups of children achieve outstandingly well and make rapid progress. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception year is above the national average. Children are exceptionally well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- The early years classroom has recently been improved and the outdoor space developed. Both spaces provide a wealth of experiences in safe and secure environments for pupils, in all areas of learning.
- The leadership of the early years, supported by the headteacher, is outstanding. Systems for checking children's progress are well established and staff make good use of tablets to capture significant milestones in children's development. Assessments of achievement are used very well to plan next steps for individuals.
- There are excellent links between home and school before children start so they settle in happily and quickly. Excellent communication with parents continues throughout the Reception year.
- Staff work extremely well as a team. They have an excellent understanding of the needs of young children, and great emphasis is given to promoting independence, social skills and enjoyment. Children quickly become confident to ask questions and develop a love of learning.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Expectations are high and routines are well established. Children show care and consideration for each other and share and play together very amicably.

## 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>	118675
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	462409

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tim Prater
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Love
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17–18 April 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01303 238888
<b>Fax number</b>	01303 268850
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@st-martins-folkestone.kent.sch.uk

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