

Tunstall Church of England (aided) Primary School

Tunstall Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8DX

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2016

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils consistently attain high results. In 2015, all pupils in Year 6 made expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make a flying start to their education in the Reception year. They leave well prepared for secondary schools locally.
- Leaders ensure that the few pupils who experience potential barriers to learning are supported effectively. Disadvantaged pupils do as well as their classmates.
- Leaders know all the pupils well and what each one knows, understands and can do.
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully, making sure that any gaps in knowledge or skills are addressed quickly. The teaching of mathematics is particularly impressive.
- Leaders manage the idyllic site carefully so that teachers can make the most of the limited space.
- Leaders are preparing admirably for the move to the long-awaited new building elsewhere in the village.
- Pupils feel safe and happy at the school. The vast majority of parents are enthusiastic in their support for the school. They believe it serves their children extremely well.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They cope well with the existing, cramped conditions and cooperate with each other and adults magnificently.
- Pupils' attendance is well above the national average and has been for a long time.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say their lessons are fun and exciting.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Over three quarters told inspectors that they participate in clubs.
- The school makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It prepares them well for life in modern, diverse Britain and gives them a firm understanding of its Christian heritage.
- Governors support the school with rigour and precision. They have a wide range of skills which they volunteer in the service of the pupils.
- Leaders are working to ensure that the excellence of the school's work in English and mathematics extends to all subjects, especially as the new National Curriculum comes into being.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the new curriculum develops fully over time so that:
 - pupils gain the broadest understanding of the world
 - all subjects are delivered to the same level of excellence as English and mathematics.

- Ensure that all information is published in a timely manner on the school's website.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The long-serving headteacher is admired by pupils, parents and staff alike. She has built a strong staff team over the years. They work collaboratively and to great effect.
- The headteacher has extremely high expectations for all the pupils. She sets a calm and orderly tone for the school. Pupils like this and so do the vast majority of parents. The headteacher takes great pride in the school and this good example is appreciated by the whole community.
- The school's effectiveness is endorsed by the local authority which has asked it to expand its roll over the next six years. This is to make accessible more places for the expanding population in Sittingbourne. Regrettably, the new building, intended to accommodate the surge in numbers, was not ready when the first cohort of new pupils needed to start school in September 2015. The headteacher managed this challenge with considerable skill and noteworthy patience.
- The headteacher is ably supported by impressive senior leaders who know their roles extremely well. The deputy headteacher is highly experienced and expert in a range of areas of school life. Two other senior leaders ensure that, for example, the school is implementing a robust system of assessment to replace National Curriculum levels.
- The special educational needs coordinator has detailed knowledge of each child so that she can ensure learning activities support each one's needs. As a result, neither disadvantaged pupils nor those with special educational needs or disability fall behind.
- The deputy headteacher leads work in English and literacy skilfully. Mathematics is a strength of the school and is well led by the Year 6 class teacher. Both leaders provide their colleagues with examples of interesting and effective methods that help develop teachers' practice.
- Teachers receive purposeful training regularly. They are currently learning how to judge each pupil's progress against a new 21-step scale. They are rightly comparing their work with teachers in approximately 50 other schools in Kent to make sure that the standards at Tunstall compare well. Leaders challenge them in termly meetings to account for each pupil's progress. As a result, teachers are growing in confidence and standards are being maintained.
- Leaders at all levels work relentlessly to keep the school moving forward. They are not complacent and have in place a robust development plan aimed at addressing those areas that they judge could be even better. Currently, they are working on updates to all curriculum policies. This is intended to ensure appropriately that the school's work in every subject matches the excellence found in English and mathematics.
- Leaders plan extra-curricular activities that add huge value to pupils' learning experiences. Pupils benefit enormously from, among others, trips to the local gurdwara, the Houses of Parliament, Kent Science Park and Abbott's Laboratories. Such visits boost pupils' knowledge of the world in which they live as well as helping them acquire knowledge and skills. The knitting club encourages the craft skills of a significant minority of pupils who interact with the adult leaders of the club in a most charming manner.
- Music plays an important role in school life at Tunstall. A large number of pupils sing in the choir which performs with adult singers from the local church. Through the drama club, a large number of pupils are preparing to perform the musical *South Pacific* later in the school year. Many pupils are supported with instrumental lessons during the day. In the formal timetable, time is given over to music so that pupils can both appreciate music and perform it. This helps their spiritual development as it enables them to explore their creativity.
- Other aspects of pupils' moral, social and cultural development are enhanced by direct teaching as they learn the difference between right and wrong and how to cooperate with each other. This prepares them appropriately for the next stage of their education. Pupils learn to adopt healthy lifestyles and the benefits of participating in competitive sports, such as hockey. This is supported by focused use of the primary physical education and sports premium.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors ensure that the school has all the resources it needs to secure its high ambitions for the pupils. Governors check that good use is made of the funding the school receives. Governors were able to show, for example, the impact on the outcomes of last year's allocation of pupil premium funding (additional money from the government for pupils eligible for free school meals or those in the care of the local authority) on disadvantaged pupils' progress. This was necessary because the required statement was missing from the website. Governors are working with leaders to develop a new, fully-

compliant website to be published to mark the school's move into its new building at Easter 2016.

- Governors are passionate and enthusiastic about the school. They have supported the headteacher through the turbulent process of securing the new building while maintaining high-quality learning opportunities in the present setting. The current buildings are cramped and present a range of potential hazards. Governors manage these risks well.
- Governors have a range of skills which they use generously in the service of the school. They understand their role and appropriate approaches. They hold the headteacher and other leaders to account but they also make regular visits to the school to support teachers' work or find out more about how well the pupils are doing. Governors play an active part in the performance management of staff. They ensure that pay rises are awarded only when targets have been met.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. They are managed rigorously and robustly through an effective team approach where governors, leaders and the office staff combine to ensure all pupils are kept safe. For example, the training provided by the school on safeguarding matters is planned well and careful records are maintained of those who have completed it.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The vast majority of teaching is highly effective. It leads to pupils making strong learning gains so that their attainment is well above the Kent and national averages.
- Teachers plan learning with great care. They take account of their own assessment of the previous day's work. This leads to them making accurate decisions about who needs further support or those who can move on at pace.
- Teachers use a wide range of activities to capture the interest, imagination and attention of pupils. Many described lessons as 'fun' or 'exciting'. Pupils are frequently actively involved in their learning so that their attention rarely wanes, such as when playing word dominoes to reinforce new words learned.
- Leaders have seized the opportunities afforded by changes to the National Curriculum to assess any gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills or understanding. They are now refocusing teaching so that pupils are prepared appropriately to demonstrate their mastery of topics in mathematics.
- The teaching of reading is supported well in the early years and Key Stage 1. The vast majority of pupils are able to apply their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) when reading unfamiliar texts. Parents share in this process as books go backwards and forwards to school for practise as well as enjoyment. There are good sets of books in each classroom and in the library area in the main building. World Book Day was observed magnificently on the first day of the inspection. Pupils generally love to read. The boys' reading club is an imaginative way of encouraging this passion for reading after school. It is supported by volunteer adult males from the community. Some are dads and some are grandfathers.
- The school has a simple and clear assessment policy which teachers, for the most part, follow closely. Written feedback on pupils' work is often highly effective at pointing out what needs to improve. Pupils are usually good at taking the advice or acting on it.
- Teachers check pupils' learning regularly in lessons. They use questioning skilfully to ensure that all are making progress and that no mistakes are being made as the lesson develops. Teachers also set work that provides an appropriate level of stretch so that learning never stays easy for too long. All teachers were seen using information technology to support pupils' learning.
- In all classes, teachers make outstanding use of their learning space, even when it is cramped or crowded with furniture. The Year 3 class conducted its mathematics lesson outside on the second day of the inspection, using the playground as a means of exploring measurement. Internally, every inch of space is used to display pupils' work or provide visual clues to support learning. Some classrooms had examples of connecting words for sentences, and others had clearly set out rules of grammar. These were in addition to displays about other world faiths such as Judaism or helpful labelled diagrams of scientific resources such as skeletons.
- The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils spell accurately. Time is used widely to support this initiative.
- Leaders manage the staff carefully so that each teacher is able to work efficiently with a well-trained assistant. In Reception, in each class, two assistants work closely with small groups. Sometimes they work to extend the most able, but, more frequently, they challenge lower attaining pupils to keep up with the rest of the class.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. There is a compassionate and nurturing ethos in the school. Pupils gain a sense of security during their time at Tunstall. This gives them great confidence and maturity.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful of each other and adults. They look after each other and express concern when others face difficulties. Pupils, and some families experiencing personal challenges, are provided with great care which reduces any negative impact on learning.
- Most parents were highly complimentary about the way in which their children have matured during their time in school. Some reported growths in confidence, and others, much enhanced self-esteem.
- Pupils exhibit good levels of resilience. They develop this at the school and it helps them cope when their learning is being assessed or when they are required to take tests.
- Pupils are rarely late for school or lessons. Leaders believe that every second counts and encourage pupils to not waste time themselves. This feeds into the outstanding punctuality pupils have and the speedy way in which they move between activities.
- All pupils, in all year groups, even the youngest, are able to express themselves clearly. They can explain accurately what they are thinking and ask for specific help if they need it.
- The school provides robust teaching on how pupils should keep themselves safe in a range of settings, including online. Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe at the school. Nearly all parents agreed that their children feel safe.
- Pupils provided ample evidence that they are taught well how to recognise bullying. A group of pupils presented a well-informed definition of their understanding of bullying. They were clear that bullying hardly ever occurs at the school. When it occurs, they were unanimous, 'teachers sort it out'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' conduct around the school and in lessons is excellent.
- Inspectors saw no poor behaviour. Pupils are routinely enthusiastic about what they are learning and display exemplary attitudes to each lesson.
- The school has not excluded any pupils for a very long time. Any incidents are dealt with appropriately and in a measured way. Skilful management means that simple playground disputes are neither exaggerated nor allowed to grow out of proportion. Records of any such incidents are meticulous and take account sensibly of as many views as possible.
- The attendance rates of pupils are exceptional. They are among the best in the country. There are a tiny proportion of pupils with persistent absence and the school works effectively with their families to help attendance improve.
- The school manages the supervision of play and lunchtimes carefully. This is to offset any potential hazards caused by the limited space. This has been further reduced recently by the addition of a further mobile classroom to accommodate the extra Reception class which started in September 2015. This also led to the removal of the climbing frame. Pupils are keen to get this centre piece of their playtime back when they get to the new building. Leaders' work has, however, resulted in the maintenance of a safe space where accidents and injuries are few.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- Pupils attain extremely high standards by the end of Key Stage 2. In 2015, in Year 6, 97% achieved the national benchmark in reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- Also in Year 6 in 2015, 100% of pupils made expected progress from the end of Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Higher proportions than nationally also made more than expected progress in each subject. This builds on their strong achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 with attainment well above the national average in these subjects.
- This was an improvement on the results in 2014, even though they, too, were also above the national average for that year. The standards likely to be attained by the current Year 6 are set to be at similarly high

levels. This is due to leaders' relentless focus on maintaining standards. The forecasts are also based on rigorously assessed sample test papers aligned to the new curriculum and its expectations for pupils at age 11.

- Pupils in Key Stage 1 consistently achieve above average results at Tunstall. In 2016, however, there was a dip in this performance which resulted in scores in writing and mathematics being only broadly in line with national averages and below in reading. Leaders have analysed extensively what caused this and have put in place a range of measures to ensure the dip is not repeated.
- Pupils in Year 1 achieved exceptional results in the phonics screening check. Those who had not made this standard the previous year did extremely well in a resit in Year 2.
- The standards in the early years are extremely high with, for example, 94% of the girls in 2015 ending Reception with a good level of development. The few disadvantaged pupils all leave at this important level.
- The proportions of pupils who have special educational needs or disability are so small that they cannot be considered separately as a group. Individually, they do as well as their classmates and frequently better than all other pupils nationally.
- The most-able pupils at Tunstall achieve highly. All of those who excelled at the end of Key Stage 1 made extremely good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015. A significant minority of the cohort achieved the highest standards in mathematics. This prepares them extremely well for secondary education.
- The amount of value added to each pupil's education is above average and rising in mathematics. There is little variation between the performance of boys and girls on this measure or between advantaged and the tiny proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- Standards found in books in English and mathematics were found to be equally strong in all year groups. Progress in pupils' handwriting, depth of understanding and ease of expression were clearly evident in all books where pupils were seen to be writing at length. Work in mathematics was presented accurately, with working out shown clearly, and showed evidence of strong progress in all years in this subject.
- Less work was found in pupils' books recording their learning in foundation subjects. There was also less rigour found in teachers' assessment of this work. Standards in, for example, history and geography were not at the same exceptional level as seen in English and mathematics or science. Leaders are addressing this as they seek to ensure the broadest possible education for the pupils at Tunstall.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make a great start to school in Reception. By the time they transfer to Year 1, nearly all have reached a good level of development. The vast majority settle quickly, having developed good learning habits in the early years.
- Teaching in the early years has many strong characteristics. It is planned thoroughly, based on robust assessments of children's prior learning and is adjusted skilfully to take into account any unforeseen factors. Remarkable use is made of the outdoor learning space which is severely restricted on the present site.
- Early years leaders also ensure that there is an appropriate blend of learning activities led by teachers or teaching assistants and child-initiated learning through play. All adults engage meaningfully with the small groups of children that they are working with at any given moment. They ask questions to check understanding and take every opportunity to use correct terms so that children's vocabulary grows and becomes more fluent.
- Phonics is taught systematically and regularly so that children develop early reading skills quickly. During one session, a teaching assistant was working on words linked to gardening so that pupils' literacy developed while they explored the outside world.
- Pupils also learn to write with similar precision so that most move quickly from making marks to forming letters. By the end of Reception, nearly all are able to write meaningful sentences and paragraphs.
- Pupils acquire number skills securely too. A higher than average proportion is able to handle shape, space and measure adeptly compared with other children nationally. Activities making use of the construction area of the outside space help to reinforce pupils' application of number in a real world setting.
- In addition to basic skills in numeracy and literacy, children develop a strong sense of their own identity in the early years. This is aided by the consistently nurturing environment that the school provides. Great care is taken of the children.
- There are too few disadvantaged children in the early years to comment on their performance as a group.

- There are too few children who have special educational needs or disability in the early years to comment on their performance as a group. However, the team has become adept at identifying any children beginning to display signs of falling behind or other more concerning barriers to learning. They work successfully with leaders, parents and other agencies to commission appropriate expertise or interventions such as that available from speech and language therapists.
- The early years team works very well with parents. This begins with initial assessments as each child joins Reception. Parents provide useful information about the child which is captured in their learning journals and their 'my unique story' books. Arrangements for delivery and collection of children mean that parents have access to the class teacher informally on a daily basis. Most parents commented favourably on this helpful aspect of school life.
- The behaviour of children in the early years is exemplary. They respond well to the firmly-established classroom routines that are introduced early in the school year. Children do exactly what they are asked to do very quickly without being overly managed.
- Children are safe in the early years. The safeguarding arrangements are first rate and, as a result, children play and learn happily together. They treat each other kindly and take turns as appropriate. They join in enthusiastically with each new activity.

School details

Unique reference number	118735
Local authority	Kent County Council
Inspection number	10011120

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Doreen Hunter
Headteacher	Kathryn Hutchings
Telephone number	01795 472895
Website	www.tunstall.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@tunstall.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 July 2011

Information about this school

- Tunstall Church of England (aided) Primary is a smaller-than-average school on the outskirts of Sittingbourne, Kent. It is growing in size annually to meet the need for more primary places in the locality.
- The school is housed in a combination of a very old school building and six mobile classrooms. The school moves into brand new, long-awaited, purpose-built premises in the centre of the village at Easter in 2016.
- There are slightly fewer girls than boys in the school.
- There is a below average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic families in the school. The vast majority of children speak English as their first language.
- There is a tiny proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- There are no pupils currently who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is well below average.
- The school benefits from a population that remains stable.
- The school works with others locally in the Gateway Alliance which enables leaders, teachers and governors to share ideas and practice voluntarily.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as a short inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. During the first day of inspection, senior leaders presented compelling evidence that the school might be judged outstanding. The lead inspector converted the inspection into a full inspection under section 5 of the same act. Two further Ofsted inspectors joined the team on the second day.
- Inspectors observed learning in 14 lessons, as well as conducting three focused tours of the school. On the first day of the inspection, the headteacher accompanied the lead inspector on an extensive learning walk around each class.
- The lead inspector met regularly with senior leaders. He also met the special educational needs coordinator and the subject leader for mathematics.
- Inspectors met the school council and heard four pupils read. Inspectors spoke frequently to pupils in lessons, at play and lunchtimes. Inspectors also took account of 99 responses to Ofsted's new confidential pupil survey.
- Inspectors met parents at the school gate, took into account written notes passed to them through the school and considered 88 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's confidential parent survey).
- Inspectors spoke to teachers and considered 21 responses to Ofsted's new staff survey.
- The team also examined a range of the school's documentation including its own evaluation of its performance and its development plans. Inspectors looked in detail at the checks undertaken on staff or those volunteering to work in the school. They also considered the notes of visits of external supporters such as the local authority and the governors.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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