

# St Laurence in Thanet Church of England Junior Academy

Newington Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 0QX

<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 April
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Positive changes introduced by the headteacher have not had time to have sufficient impact. As a result, the progress of pupils is not yet good.
- Middle leaders are beginning to use information about the progress of pupils to identify gaps in their learning, but the practice is not yet consistent. As a result, teaching does not always meet the needs of pupils.
- Pupils needing more support do not always have enough help or the learning opportunities which best meet their needs. When this happens, pupils with special educational needs or disability do not attain as well as their classmates.
- Some teaching does not provide enough challenge for pupils. Consequently, the most-able pupils do not always work at the level they are capable of.
- New strategies to improve the teaching of literacy have not yet had time to develop. There is evidence of improved progress in reading in some classes, but the quality of pupils' writing remains variable.
- Teachers have an agreed approach for providing pupils with advice on learning but this is not applied consistently. As a result, pupils do not always respond to advice and their learning is reduced.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Her accurate self-evaluation has allowed her to pinpoint weaknesses and take effective action to address them.
- The trustees, Diocesan School Improvement Partner and other external partners work effectively with the headteacher to improve learning and increase the progress of pupils.
- Pupils feel safe and are confident. They care about their school. They are keen to make a contribution to the school community and improve their
- The school has good opportunities to collaborate with other schools. Pupils and teachers benefit from this engagement because more learning opportunities and good teaching practices are shared.
- Leaders are beginning to share the good teaching practice seen in some year groups more widely across the school. As a result, improvements in teaching are evident.

learning.

## **Full report**

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

- Ensure all pupils make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - challenging all pupils more consistently
  - planning additional support and learning opportunities which more accurately meet pupils' needs
  - insisting that pupils act on the advice they receive to improve their work and take greater responsibility for their own learning
  - raising expectations of the quality of pupils' written work.
- Strengthen the impact of middle leadership so that:
  - the quality of teaching and rates of progress of pupils improve more rapidly
  - the most-able pupils make better progress
  - information about individual pupils is used more effectively to plan the next steps for learning
  - the attainment of pupils with special educational needs or disability is raised
  - the variability in the quality of teaching is reduced.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leadership team have high expectations. These underpin the work of the whole school team and lead to a determined drive for improvement.
- Leaders accurately identify the school's strengths and weaknesses, using a wide range of information which they gather routinely. They regularly check that their judgements are accurate through the use of external validation.
- The headteacher works effectively with governors, school improvement partners and colleagues from other schools to identify areas for further improvement and introduce new practices which support them.
- Leaders have developed a positive learning culture for adults in the school. Senior leaders support staff effectively through training and coaching. Consequently, there is a willingness by staff to learn and develop their practice further. Teachers are using what they have learned to make rapid improvements to their teaching.
- Senior leaders have secure systems for checking how well teachers are doing. They support teachers in their work and hold them to account for the learning of pupils. Where leaders are stronger, they support this work and help teachers to use information about learning effectively to strengthen the consistency of teaching. This is particularly evident in mathematics.
- New subject leaders are growing in confidence, although their use of precise checks to evaluate the quality of learning are at the early stages of development.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain through their learning about values, faith and culture. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength for the school and is underpinned by the school's shared values. Pupils know how to be resilient and reflective learners.
- The school provides a wide range of learning opportunities which support the pupils' educational and personal development. Pupils appreciate and take an active part in extra-curricular activities. These add to their experiences and contribute to their learning.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been used wisely. As a result, the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally and in school are beginning to close. Disadvantaged pupils are helpfully supported in both their educational and personal development. This has resulted in improved attendance and better support for learning.
- Primary school physical education and sports funding has been used well to improve the quality of provision and this has had a positive influence on the health and fitness of pupils. All pupils benefit from physical education taught by knowledgeable staff. Adult play leaders and pupils trained as sports buddies encourage leisure activity and promote positive behaviour. The school begins the day with 'wake and shake' exercises which the majority of pupils participate in. This starts the day well and encourages a strong sense of community engagement.
- Most parents are pleased with the school and feel that the appointment of the headteacher since the last inspection has brought a positive and enthusiastic influence. This has generated a cohesive atmosphere, leading to better learning and behaviour. The increased focus on values has had an impact on pupils, who 'come home talking about them'.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The board of trustees is knowledgeable about the school and the steps required for continued improvement. Its members work closely with the headteacher, leadership team and school improvement partners and are fully engaged in school improvement planning and self-evaluation. Through this engagement they are able to question and challenge the headteacher effectively.
  - Trustees set clear milestones for school improvement and targets for teachers' performance. These actions are beginning to move pupils' learning forward.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. As a result, pupils feel safe and are kept safe in school. They are taught how to stay safe and know that they have adults they can talk to who will always help them.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good and as a result the progress of pupils is variable. Although senior leaders set high expectations of pupils and staff, inconsistencies remain across year groups and for different groups of pupils.
- Standards in writing have been low but the most recent work shows that pupils are making better progress. Teachers encourage writing using a range of opportunities which are of interest to pupils, such as descriptions of astronaut Tim Peake's journey into space. They teach pupils to edit and improve their work, but the quality of written work remains variable. Expectations are not yet consistently good enough. Spelling is not always accurate and handwriting is often untidy. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their ideas.
- Teachers give pupils advice which will help them to improve their work. However, pupils' understanding of how to improve as a result of the feedback they receive from teachers is inconsistent. Where misconceptions exist, pupils do not always receive enough advice to resolve them.
- Teachers work together to check the quality of the work in pupils' books. However, the information teachers have about pupils' learning is not always used effectively when planning lessons. Consequently, in some lessons the work is too easy for some of the pupils and too hard for others. The most-able pupils do not make enough progress in some lessons due to lack of sufficient challenge.
- At times pupils in need of additional support do not receive this soon enough. When pupils wait too long for support in class, this has a negative impact on behaviour and leads to a dip in progress. Extra support is in place for all year groups, but this is more effective in some than others.
- The teaching of mathematics is stronger than that of English. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge to practical work in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics ensures their explanations and examples are clear. Consequently, pupils use a range of methods to solve calculations accurately.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They have a good range of books for independent reading. They have opportunities to predict what will happen in stories and to review what they have read. Some lower-ability pupils who find reading more difficult do not recognise new words and their comprehension is not strong. The school has recognised this and is now providing them with better support.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Teachers encourage pupils to participate in lessons. Pupils have opportunities to talk about ideas and explore them with others before working independently. This helps them to learn well because they are able to share their understanding of new concepts and they are challenged to think carefully about them.
- The school works hard to engage all parents. Most parents express positive views about the school and learning. The school has a playground-based TV channel so parents can view information on teaching and learning. This enables them to support their children's learning more effectively.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The headteacher has set a clear ethos. Teachers discuss the school's values with pupils, who are reflective in their responses. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to school and their learning. They take pride in the school and support each other to behave well.
- Teachers give pupils opportunities to take responsibilities which include being on the school council, and becoming sports buddies and 'lighthouse beacons'. Pupils appreciate opportunities to make decisions at school council and discuss their work with classmates. They are all confident that they help to make the school a better place.
- Teachers support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They teach pupils appropriately about British values and encourage charitable giving. Pupils speak confidently about what they learn and celebrate their support for a wide range of charitable activities.
- The school successfully expands pupils' understanding of the local community through visits from a wide variety of agencies including the police and the coastguard service.
- Teachers use a wide range of opportunities to expand pupils' knowledge and appreciation of various faiths and cultures, ranging from a week's focus on Japanese culture to the study of the Mayan creation

story. Pupils learn to discuss and debate issues and differences. They have their own perspectives challenged and they learn to understand other viewpoints. They are respectful towards these.

- Pupils have an opportunity to come into school for breakfast and also to join the popular 'wake and shake' exercise routines to start the day well. This has resulted in better attitudes to learning and supports the sense of community.
- Teachers develop pupils' awareness of keeping safe and of e-safety well. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are well looked after by the adults. They know who to talk to if they have any problems.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of additional opportunities which include clubs, visits and competitions.
- The Explorers Club provides 'wrap around' care for pupils at the end of the school day.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are generally proud of their school and positive about it. They move around the school sensibly and use equipment, such as computers, respectfully and appreciatively.
- The school leaders and pastoral team have worked effectively to encourage good attendance. Historically, there has been some persistent absence. Where this relates to the unique circumstances of particular pupils, the school works effectively with these pupils and their families. There are still some groups of pupils who miss school more regularly than they should. Activities at the beginning and end of the day have provided greater support for disadvantaged pupils.
- The vast majority of pupils, parents and staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaires felt that pupils were well behaved in school.
- Most pupils behave well in class as a result of positive relationships with their teachers and a clear understanding of school values. They meet the teachers' expectations in their work. When teaching is less effective and lacks challenge, or when support is not immediately available to them in lessons, pupils do not remain focused and they can be distracted.
- Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and respond well to questioning in class. They are able to work in a quiet, focused manner but also learn with partners or in groups. However, sometimes they do not take enough responsibility for acting on the advice they receive to improve their work.
- Pupils are taught about bullying and derogatory language and understand they are not acceptable. Pupils know that poor behaviour is unacceptable and that teachers will take action when this occurs.
- The school helps pupils to focus on good behaviour. Although some pupils do not have positive attitudes, their behaviour is well managed by the school.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Too few pupils make the progress they should from their different starting points. This means that pupils are not strongly prepared for the next stage in their education. In 2015, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below that of pupils nationally, despite some improvement on the previous year.
- In current cohorts, pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate in some year groups. Progress remains variable, however, and is strongest where teaching meets the needs of pupils most effectively.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are beginning to make better progress now than in the past. However, support for these pupils is variable and gaps are not closing as quickly as they should. This is because information about what they know and can do is not being used consistently well to inform teachers' planning.
- The most-able pupils have some opportunities to attempt more challenging work. Evidence in books shows that the quality of their work is improving. However, too few of the most-able pupils are making good enough progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from additional support, one-to-one tuition, additional reading opportunities and a homework club. The additional provision for learning, together with wider support, is beginning to help them to learn more rapidly.
- The school works well to identify those pupils who join the school with lower attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, ensuring that additional resources, interventions and support are put in place where required.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138592
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002405

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsored by the Diocese of Canterbury
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	252
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jan Dash
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Michelle Palmer
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 592 257
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stlaurencejuniors.co.uk">www.stlaurencejuniors.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:headteacher@st-laurence-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk">headteacher@st-laurence-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 February 2014

## Information about this school

- This is a Church of England junior academy sponsored by the Diocese of Canterbury.
- The school is part of the BRESIC (Broadstairs, Ramsgate, Ethos School Improvement Company) collaborative and is an associate member of WRAP (West Ramsgate Achievement Partnership)
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding) is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school Explorers' Club managed by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed extra-curricular provision.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views by talking to pupils around the school, in lessons, during playtimes and by meeting with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and four trustees, including the chair of the board. An inspector also spoke with representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's checks on its own effectiveness, information about current pupils' achievement and attendance, behaviour logs, minutes of governing body meetings, statutory policies and school development plans. Inspectors checked the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe, including the checks made on staff.
- Inspectors looked at 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), including three written responses. In addition, inspectors spoke to parents before school. Inspectors also considered the responses from four pupil questionnaires and 15 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Ann McCarthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Katherine Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Sackett	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
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