

# West Kingsdown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Fawkham Road, West Kingsdown, Sevenoaks TN15 6JP

## Inspection dates

24–25 May 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders think that the school is better than it is. Consequently, they have not tackled necessary improvements with enough urgency or clarity.
- Leaders' checks of the quality of teaching are not sufficiently precise and thorough.
- Governors and the local authority share leaders' optimistic view of the school's effectiveness. They have not provided the rigorous challenge that could have supported school leaders to achieve a quicker and more consistent rate of improvement.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. This means that pupils do not achieve well enough over time, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough. The quality of pupils' work is similarly mixed.
- Too often, teachers do not use the information about what pupils already know and can do well enough to accelerate progress, including for the most able.
- When the level of challenge is not right, a number of pupils lose concentration or stop working altogether. This slows their progress.
- The quality of early years provision and leaders' oversight of this are not strong enough to ensure that children get off to a good start.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress has lifted from previously very slow rates and standards have risen.
- The strengths evident over time in some of the teaching contribute well to this improving picture.
- The range of experiences provided in and out of lessons promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils feel safe in school.
- Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They often find learning fun and their attendance has improved.
- Pupils are proud of their various responsibilities and awards.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years provision, so that it leads to consistently good or better outcomes by:
  - having consistently high expectations of what pupils are capable of
  - ensuring that all assessment is accurate, rigorous and used sharply to set the right level of challenge for pupils, including the most able
  - sustaining pupils' interest and expecting them to work hard and do their best across all of their work and subjects
  - checking that the school's marking and feedback policy is used consistently well so that it moves pupils on strongly in their learning
  - strengthening questioning to challenge and extend thinking, especially in the early years provision.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - raising expectations and increasing the urgency and pace of improvement
  - making sharp use of assessment information to identify and target areas requiring improvement and evaluate the impact of the actions taken
  - making sure that all checks on teaching and learning are rigorous and take full account of the impact of actions on the quality of pupils' learning and progress
  - making sure that leaders' evaluations are accurate by using assessment information and rigorous quality assurance to identify strengths and weaknesses
  - giving teachers clear and precise ways to improve their practice and ensuring leaders hold them rigorously to account for doing so
  - fully evaluating the impact of additional funding, including ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make the accelerated progress needed to catch up with their peers or fulfil their potential
  - improving the rigour and precision with which behaviour incidents are recorded, tracked and analysed
  - ensuring that the governing body holds leaders stringently to account for securing a quicker and more consistent rate of improvement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured consistently good teaching or outcomes for current pupils.
- Leaders' checks on the school's own performance are not rigorous enough. This has not been sufficiently challenged by governors or the local authority. Consequently, leaders believe that the school is better than it is and have not continued to drive improvement since the previous inspection with enough urgency or precision.
- Senior leaders' records of their evaluations of teaching and learning when observing in lessons are too superficial. They do not focus enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. The areas for improvement that senior leaders give to teachers are often not clear or precise enough to lift the quality of teaching more quickly. Required improvements are not checked carefully or systematically in subsequent monitoring to see that the necessary action has been taken. As a result, improvements are patchy and the quality of teaching too variable.
- Leaders do not make effective use of assessment information about the progress and attainment of current pupils to target improvement and measure the impact of their actions. Plans for improvement rarely include measurable targets or milestones, so leaders and governors have no way of checking that improvements are quick or consistent enough.
- The local authority has not provided school leaders with sufficient challenge. They have supported leaders' generous view of the quality of education at the school without rigorous evidence to back this up. Leaders have focused too much on how far they have come rather than on a clear picture of where they need to get to.
- The school has moved in the right direction since the previous inspection. Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have lifted, albeit from a low baseline. Strengths in teaching are leading to better progress for some pupils currently, although this is not yet a consistent picture. Many pupils have developed more positive attitudes to learning than was previously the case.
- The role of subject leaders is better developed, a key recommendation from the previous inspection. Mathematics and English leaders give sharp and precise points for improvement to teachers when scrutinising pupils' work, for example. They then refer to these areas when carrying out their next checks, to see whether there has been enough improvement.
- Staff make sure that the learning in a range of subjects is motivating and sparks pupils' interest. Parents and pupils spoke about learning being 'more fun now'. A wide range of varied experiences, both within and beyond lessons, contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Younger pupils described excitedly how their model houses were set alight in a demonstration of the Great Fire of London. They explained clearly how the fire started and why it took hold so quickly.
- Pupils are keen to participate in the range of musical and sporting activities that are provided. Use of additional funding for specialist sports coaching for both pupils and teaching has given pupils access to a wider range of experiences. Some pupils especially relish the increased opportunities to compete with pupils from other schools.
- Outdoor learning is an area that staff have chosen to develop. Together, staff and parents have created a rich outdoor learning woodland environment. The use of this is mainly being trialled by Years 1 and 4, who have already worked together to build shelters. During the inspection, they were busy planting flowers and vegetables and building bird boxes, strongly developing positive learning behaviours such as teamwork and perseverance. There are plans to extend these opportunities to all classes.
- Pupils understand how fundamental British values link strongly with the school's own Christian values. They are able to give examples of what these mean and how they are important to a harmonious community, within and beyond the school.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors share leaders' overly optimistic views of how effective the school is. This is because key documents such as the summary of self-evaluation and school development plan are not precise about what needs to improve and by how much. Consequently, the governing body has not challenged school leaders strongly enough or held them tightly to account for securing quicker or more consistent improvement.
  - Recently, the governing body has rightly asked school leaders to report assessment information in a suitable format that allows them to identify trends in performance more readily.

- Governors and leaders do not check the impact of how they have spent additional funding rigorously enough. This includes pupil premium and additional sports funding. Evaluations of impact are too anecdotal to show what is making the most difference to pupils' outcomes and why.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Several parents that spoke with inspectors particularly emphasised how the school supports families as well as pupils. Positive and open relationships between home and school support this. Regular training has ensured that staff are familiar with the most recent guidance and know what the particular procedures are in school. Safeguarding is frequently discussed in staff meetings and processes for reporting any concerns are clear and easy to use. All of this contributes to a culture where action is taken, including linking with other agencies where necessary.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- Across the school, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable. Consequently, the quality of pupils' work is also mixed and not enough pupils sustain strong progress over time.
- Some teachers' expectations are too low, unclear or inconsistent. Steady rates of progress are too readily accepted by leaders and teachers as good enough.
- Teachers do not use their assessments of what pupils already know and can do consistently well enough to make sure that the level of challenge is right, including for the most able. Too often this means that pupils do not achieve as much as they could.
- The use and impact of the school's marking and feedback policy is variable. Too often, pupils have not used or had the opportunity to use or follow the improvements that teachers identify. Some pupils understand clearly the next steps they need to take to improve their work, but this is not the case consistently enough across the school.
- Some teaching is evidently stronger. Where this is the case, pupils achieve better rates of progress than in the past.
- Some teachers and teaching assistants often use questioning well to extend pupils' thinking or check their understanding, for example asking pupils why they have used a particular technique in their writing.
- In some classes, the school's feedback policy is working well and moving pupils on in their learning. For example, teachers identify misconceptions in mathematics, explain these and give pupils a chance to have another go.
- The pitch of lessons mostly matches the new national curriculum content for particular ages well. In mathematics, for example, pupils are given regular opportunities to use and apply their skills in different contexts.
- Teaching assistants are mostly deployed well to support and enable learning. They often work with a range of pupils, according to the particular needs at the time. This includes pupils who have special educational needs or disability or the most able. This support typically has a clear focus and pupils report how helpful they find it in clearing up any misunderstandings, or helping them to move on if they are struggling.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** requires improvement

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Where teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough, too often a number of pupils do not take enough pride in their work. As a result, the quality of their work varies significantly, sometimes between books and from day to day for the same pupils. This slows the amount of progress that they make over time.
- The tracking and analysis of behaviour incidents is not rigorous enough. There are gaps in the recording of the actions taken and there is not a sufficiently clear overview to identify any patterns that might exist.
- Pupils express positive attitudes about the school and the stronger teaching that exists is capitalising on this well. In these classes, pupils take a real pride in their work and sustain this from day to day, which has a significantly positive impact on their progress.
- Pupils understand that it is a good thing when they are challenged by their work and made to think hard. They confidently volunteer to read or share their work in class or assembly. They are keen to serve on

the school and eco councils, wearing their badges and explaining their roles with pride.

- The various 'Star of the Week' awards are cherished by pupils, who are keen to win them. They have a good understanding of what it means to persevere, or reflect on their learning.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and a very good knowledge of how to protect themselves when using new technologies. Although they are familiar with the different forms of bullying, pupils think that any bullying is very unusual in the school. They are completely confident that adults listen to them and resolve any problems that they might have.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When the level of challenge is not right, a minority of pupils switch off. This slows their progress and sometimes leads to low-level disruption and calling out in lessons.
- Where teaching is stronger, very positive behaviour for learning is also contributing well to pupils' accelerated progress. In these classes, there is often an industrious and concentrated atmosphere.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well as they move around the school. They are polite and respectful to adults and each other.
- Staff work hard to support and include pupils with particular behaviour difficulties. For the first time in several years there have been some fixed-term exclusions, but there is evidence of improving engagement and behaviour for pupils with particular needs.
- Overall attendance levels have risen in recent years. School staff work well with parents to promote good attendance and reduce avoidable absence. The proportion of pupils that are regularly absent is higher than average, but this is disproportionately affected by the particular circumstances of a small number of families.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **require improvement**

- The progress of current pupils is not consistently good. Pupils make better progress in some subjects and classes than others. Overall there is not enough accelerated progress to ensure that enough pupils achieve as well as they could.
- The variability in rates of progress means that not enough of the most able pupils achieve as well as they could. The proportion of most able pupils that have reached the higher levels by the time they leave has shown an established rising trend; however, in 2015 they were still behind national figures in reading and writing. In mathematics they were just above national figures.
- Not enough disadvantaged pupils make the accelerated progress needed to catch up with their peers or fulfil their potential. Consequently, the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated over time. In the most recent set of published results, the proportion that made progress at a typically expected rate was better than other pupils nationally. However, the picture comparing proportions that had made more than the expected level of progress was much less positive.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make similar progress to their peers. The expectations of accelerated progress for pupils receiving additional help individually or in small groups are rightly high. This is leading to some accelerated progress, but the impact is variable, linked with the variable quality of teaching.
- In recent years, progress in writing has been especially slow. In some classes, pupils are making better progress now. With a sharper focus on grammar, punctuation and spelling, the technical accuracy of pupils' writing is improving. Pupils have more opportunities to write for a range of different purposes and the oldest pupils develop a strong understanding of how to adapt their writing accordingly.
- As previously exceptionally slow rates of progress have improved, so standards have risen. The previous Year 6 were the first cohort in four years to attain standards that were broadly in line with national averages. This was crucial because it meant they were better placed to be able to access the secondary curriculum in their new schools.
- Pupils learn a range of skills across a variety of subjects, including investigative skills in science. They enjoy these opportunities. When speaking, pupils particularly recall their history-based topics, such as the Romans and Ancient Greece. However, work in subjects other than English and mathematics is often of a lower standard and quality.

- Younger pupils have a secure grasp of the technical vocabulary associated with learning letters and the sounds that they make (phonics). They use their phonics skills well to read unfamiliar words. The most recent results of the Year 1 phonics screening check were above the national average. Pupils that did not meet the standard the previous year caught up well in Year 2.

## Early years provision

## requires improvement

- The oversight of those responsible for leading the early years provision is not clear or sharp enough. This includes ensuring that assessments of children's starting points and subsequent progress are sufficiently accurate and reliable. Leaders do not have an accurate view of current strengths and weaknesses and have relied too heavily on external verification of the quality of provision.
- Assessment processes and records are not sufficiently robust. The matching of adults' observations of children to the age-related bands they use to check how well children are doing is not sufficiently detailed or reliable. There are some anomalies.
- Feedback from the local authority moderation of children's assessments has been interpreted differently by different leaders in school. It is not clear whether assessments have been changed or if they could potentially be different with a greater range of evidence. Either way, it calls into question the rigour and validity of the school's assessments. The previous year's local authority moderation did not adjust any scores, but both visits only considered a limited sample.
- The proportion of children assessed to have reached at least the levels expected at the end of Reception Year has been well above the national average for the last two years. However, without rigorous or reliable assessment of children's starting points and subsequent progress, it is not possible to be certain whether children have done well enough over time.
- Too much of the teaching in early years lacks clarity and purpose. It is often unclear what children are supposed to be learning from particular activities. Routines are not sufficiently well established, which leaves children unsure of what is expected of them.
- The lack of clarity means that children lose focus and disengage too frequently, both during taught sessions and when choosing their own activities. This does not prepare children well enough with the positive learning behaviours needed for the Year 1 curriculum.
- Adults' questioning is not strong enough to promote consistently good learning. It does not extend and challenge children consistently well enough to sustain their attention and ensure that they achieve well. However, it does support children to think about the activities that they are doing. For example, children could say that they needed to make their butterfly wings 'symmetrical' and understood what this means.
- Children move well throughout the spacious environment, inside and out, to select their own activities. Adults prompt children well to gather their own equipment for particular tasks. For example, one small group cooperated successfully to organise the paints that they needed. This led to experimenting with mixing colours, one child demonstrating to her friend how to do this.
- Adults have positive and encouraging relationships with children, whose response indicates that they feel safe and secure.
- Children get a secure grounding in phonics in the early years, recalling and using the sounds that they have learned well. Their letter formation and writing also develops well. When directed or guided by an adult, many can write one or more simple sentences.
- Staff build good relationships with parents. Parents are positive about their experiences and how their children are doing. Leaders implement recommendations made by other professionals about children with particular individual needs.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130948
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012313

This inspection 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>	177
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Brindle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sonia Phillips
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 853 484
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.west-kingsdown.kent.sch.uk">www.west-kingsdown.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:headteacher@west-kingsdown.kent.sch.uk">headteacher@west-kingsdown.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16–17 June 2014

## Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has one class for each year group, including the Reception class that forms the school's early years provision.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Approximately one out of every 10 pupils is of Romany or Gypsy heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is around half of the proportion nationally. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children looked after by the local authority (disadvantaged pupils). In particular year groups over time these numbers have been exceptionally low, including in the early years provision.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils is identified with special educational needs or disability that are supported by the school. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of lessons in all seven classrooms. They also looked at pupils' work and spoke with them about their learning to get a sense of what teaching is typically like.
- The inspection team spoke with a wide range of people about their experiences, roles and views of the school, both informally and through scheduled meetings. This included pupils, parents, staff, leaders, governors, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese.
- They observed the school's work throughout the two days of the inspection and sampled a range of the school's documentation and records.
- The team analysed 34 responses to the online survey Parent View. They also took account of the few comments that were added alongside other inspection evidence. There were no responses to the pupil or staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Hogarth

Ofsted Inspector



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