

Cranbrook Church of England Primary School

Carriers Road, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3JZ

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The highly ambitious and effective headteacher has successfully embedded a very strong team spirit united in a determination to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Leaders and governors have secured ongoing improvement since the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are now good.
- The school values of perseverance, ambition, respect and kindness are evident throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and are happy in school. They behave well because staff have a consistent approach to managing behaviour.
- School leaders have done much to improve the attendance of pupils, which has improved markedly. However, the attendance rate for some pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, remains too low and some do not arrive punctually for school.
- Governors know the school well and provide good support and challenge to school leaders. They ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority in the school.
- Teaching is effective. Teachers plan interesting and stimulating lessons which motivate pupils. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress across a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, too few disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. However, the inspection found that the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in school is improving.
- Following a period of underachievement, pupils currently at the school are making good progress and are catching up. However, too few pupils, especially in Year 3, are on track to attain age-related expectations at the end of key stage 2.
- The newly established, exciting curriculum inspires pupils to learn well. However, teachers do not always adapt the curriculum to provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.
- Judged to be outstanding in the previous inspection, the early years continues to be of the highest quality. Teaching in the early years is more closely matched to the needs of children than is the case elsewhere in the school. As a result, children in the early years make rapid progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement still further by ensuring that teaching:
 - appropriately challenges the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, so they reach the highest standards of which they are capable
 - provides effective support to those pupils who underachieved previously so that they achieve age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- Further improve attendance and punctuality, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The determined and strong leadership of the headteacher has brought much-needed stability and a clear sense of purpose to the school community. As a result, current pupils receive a good and improving education.
- School leaders have the respect of governors, staff, parents and pupils. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said their child was well looked after at school and happy. Many parents praised the improvements to the school since the arrival of the new headteacher. Typical comments included, 'The new headteacher seems to have made a real impact and there is a more positive vibe around the school' and 'a lovely school with great and caring staff'. The inspection findings support these views.
- The headteacher's vision of high expectations is reflected throughout the school. The headteacher, in close partnership with governors, has established a drive for continuous improvement. Although the senior leadership team has only been fully in place since January 2017, its positive impact is already evident in the rapid improvements in the quality of teaching. The headteacher continues to develop the skills of leaders in the school. As a result, the school is well placed to sustain the improvements already made and secure further improvement.
- Staff are proud to work at the school and morale is high. Effective professional development, tailored to the needs of teachers, has improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection so that they are now good.
- The headteacher has completely overhauled the way that pupils' achievement is tracked. Frequent meetings are held with teachers and teaching assistants to discuss how well each pupil is learning. This has resulted in leaders having a sharp understanding about the progress of pupils from their different starting points. Swift action is taken to provide additional support to pupils who need it. This has resulted in improved progress for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A clear strength of leadership is the way in which school leaders work tirelessly to engage with parents and families for the benefit of pupils. The inclusion manager, working closely with the family and community manager, uses a wide range of strategies to communicate with families. Weekly meetings with parents who need them, an 'open door' policy where staff are readily available to talk with parents, and close links with local agencies are just some of the ways in which school leaders give good support to families. These all have a positive impact on pupils' emotional well-being.
- School leaders are doing much to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. Effective initiatives have resulted in a reduction this year in pupils' absence. Leaders' commitment to this is evident in the investment in the good work of the family and community manager. However, leaders recognise that even more could be done to improve punctuality and rates of attendance further, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the newly introduced curriculum which has been designed to improve pupils' attitudes to learning. Particularly effective are the 'stunning starts' where pupils take part in a day designed to capture their interest and imagination. For example, Years 5 and 6 spent a day in the forest, building dens and cooking over fires as an introduction to their 'outlaws' topic. A ride on the local steam railway gave pupils a taste of being a refugee during the Second World War and inspired good-quality writing.
- The curriculum ensures that appropriate links are made across subjects to make learning meaningful. Year 4 pupils explained how a visit to the local trampoline park had helped them to learn about perimeters in mathematics and flight as part of their science learning. A Year 6 pupil explained how she had developed her self-confidence by having to explain to a panel (a 'Dragons' Den') about her 'super dance disco shoes' designed with flashing lights and music. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs is well attended by pupils who speak positively about the opportunities they bring to enrich their school experience. A 'daily dash' gives all pupils a daily run and emphasises the need to keep fit. These types of activities make learning memorable and contribute well to pupils' academic, physical and personal development.
- The curriculum is usually well tailored to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, pupils who find behaving well difficult or who have special educational needs enjoy extra sessions in the 'forest school'. However, the curriculum is not always adapted sufficiently for the most able pupils to ensure that they reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- The school's values reflect the school's Christian character and British values. Assemblies provide frequent reminders about the importance of these. For example, during the inspection pupils new to the school were welcomed into the 'Cranbrook family' when they added a ribbon to the school cross while other pupils thought about the need for kindness. Pupils are keen to debate moral dilemmas such as whether Robin Hood was right to steal from the rich to give to the poor. Older pupils are happy to help around the school and take on extra responsibilities, such as being a school councillor or helping during assembly and playtime. In these ways leaders ensure that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders are making better use of the pupil premium grant this year than in previous years. As a result, gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally are closing.
- Effective use of the primary physical education and sport premium has increased pupils' involvement in sports, both in school and in local sports tournaments. Physical education coaches have worked alongside teachers to improve their teaching and this has made sure that the difference made by the additional funds is sustainable.

Governance of the school

- Governors demonstrate commitment to the school and are ambitious in their expectations of pupils. As one governor said, 'We always question ourselves – is it working for every child in the school?'
- Governors play an active part in the school's continuing improvement. They have the skills and experience needed for the role and know the school well. Governors are

often available on the playground to talk to parents, and pay frequent visits to the school to talk to staff and pupils.

- Governors provide effective challenge and support to school leaders. Governors monitor the implementation and impact of the school improvement plan on pupils' achievement. They ask searching questions about the standard of education provided. Governors are clear about their role in the performance management of teachers and make sure that pay increases for the headteacher and teachers are linked to performance.
- This year, the governing body has increased its focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. This is contributing to the improving progress that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff and governors place pupils' safety and welfare at the heart of what they do. As a result, there is a strong culture of safety in the school. This is a very nurturing school where pupils are cared for very well.
- Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding policies and practice are up to date and fit for purpose. Staff and governors receive appropriate safeguarding training and frequent updates. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey agree that their child is kept safe at school. Pupils feel safe.
- Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. Concerns are rigorously followed up. Leaders are very aware of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Effective links are made with external agencies to provide the additional support that these pupils and their families need.
- Pupils are given good information about how to keep themselves safe because of the opportunities that the curriculum provides. Visiting speakers and special events such as anti-bullying weeks help to reinforce the importance of safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is now good.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils use the prompts and information on classroom walls to help them when they are stuck.
- Teachers make learning interesting for pupils – planning lessons and homework that motivate pupils and make learning fun. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and usually plan learning based on accurate assessments of what pupils know and what they need to learn next.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers make good use of practical equipment to help pupils deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils enjoy solving real-life problems, such as finding out how far they can run in five minutes or finding the distance from school to South America.

- Teachers use a range of effective strategies to teach writing. Linking writing to the exciting curriculum encourages pupils to write increasingly extended pieces. These allow pupils to develop their ideas and to practise their technical understanding of writing.
- Much has been done to improve the teaching of reading. Teachers promote an enjoyment of reading. The library is well stocked. 'Read with me' sessions encourage parents to read with their child in school. Pupils receive rewards for becoming 'home reading heroes' by reading frequently at home.
- Teachers do not always adapt activities sharply enough to enable the most able pupils to tackle ideas in sufficient depth. This slows the learning of the most able and hinders their success at the higher levels.
- Teachers are increasingly focused on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils learn well. This is proving successful and disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than previously. However, following a legacy of teaching that was not good, there is more to be done to ensure that teaching leads to all pupils fully catching up in the way they need to.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are polite to adults and kind to each other. Pupils develop self-confidence in this very caring, nurturing environment.
- Pupils understand the need to keep healthy. They enjoy the activities at playtimes and in the extra-curricular sports clubs. They take part enthusiastically in the daily run.
- Staff place a high emphasis on promoting pupils' emotional well-being. Pupils are looked after very well. There is a real sense of care which permeates the school. Pupils know they can talk to an adult if they have worries or concerns. Pupils are given good opportunities to share their feelings, for example by using a 'worry box' or a 'happy box'.
- Pupils feel safe. They learn the rules about how to keep safe in their daily lives, including keeping safe online.
- Pupils understand that bullying is wrong. The school values of respect and kindness are often referred to by adults and pupils. School records show that incidents of bullying are very rare and dealt with appropriately when they do occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey agree that pupils are well behaved. The inspection found that behaviour is typically good. The impact of the school's values can be seen in the good behaviour that pupils

demonstrate, both in classrooms and around the school. On the occasions when individual pupils do not behave well, staff deal with it effectively. There is a clear, understood system of rewards and sanctions that is consistently followed by staff. This helps to promote pupils' good behaviour.

- Overall, attendance has improved. However, leaders are aware that the persistent absence levels of some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are too high. Leaders are using appropriate strategies to tackle this but know that they need to continue to work with families to reduce absence still further.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement across the school has improved since the last inspection and is now good because of leaders' determination to secure good teaching. Work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking system show that, in almost all year groups, pupils currently in school are making good progress from their different starting points.
- The school's exciting curriculum, combined with good teaching, has resulted in improved progress across a range of subjects. Pupils achieve well because the topics interest and motivate them. For example, to develop their science understanding when the whole school competed in the 'egg drop' pupils readily found materials that would protect an egg when dropped from a height. Year 2 pupils gained greater understanding about historical events when their models of houses were burned during their topic about the Fire of London.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2016 was similar to the national figure because of effective teaching in Reception and Year 1. The proportions of pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 working at the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics are higher than in previous years. This is preparing them well for key stage 2.
- In 2016, the proportions of non-disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 who reached standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics were similar to or higher than proportions nationally. However, too few disadvantaged pupils met the expected standards. Although their progress was better in Year 6, disadvantaged pupils did not fully make up for their previous underachievement at the time when teaching in the school was not meeting their needs.
- Improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been a school priority this year. As a result, disadvantaged pupils currently in school are making better progress than their predecessors. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils working at age-related expectations is improving.
- Despite the improvement in the rates of progress of most pupils, the attainment of some pupils, particularly in Year 3, remains below age-related expectations because of the legacy of poor teaching. These pupils still have ground to catch up if they are to meet expectations by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. They are supported well by teachers and support staff who usually adapt tasks to meet individual needs.
- In 2016, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards at the end of Year 2

and Year 6 were much lower than the national figures. Although the progress of the most able pupils is improving, they still make less progress than they could.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Strong leadership by the headteacher and, since January, also from the newly appointed deputy headteacher, has ensured that the early years has continued to provide an outstanding start to children's school life. Early years remains the strongest part of the school because the teaching and the curriculum are more effectively adapted to meet the precise needs of children than is seen in other parts of the school.
- Teaching in the early years continues to be outstanding. Staff have very high expectations of what children can achieve. Year on year, the proportion of children who leave Reception with a good level of development is higher than the national figure. This represents excellent progress from their starting points, which are often low. As a result, children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used well. Excellent support, from adults in school as well as from experts from outside, is given to children who need extra help. Adults know the children exceptionally well. Activities are precisely adapted so that each child makes the rapid progress they should.
- Staff make frequent checks on how well children are learning. 'Learning journeys' meticulously record each child's successes and make clear their next steps in learning. Adults use questioning highly effectively to assess children's learning and to guide and prompt them so that their ideas and understanding are extended.
- Both the inside classroom and the outside area provide excellent opportunities for children to explore, be creative and to delight in their learning. For example, when exploring the book 'Peace at last', children excitedly made beds for 'daddy bear', took part in role play, made books and developed their understanding of subtraction by taking teddies off a bus.
- Developing children's language is, rightly, a high priority. Adults use very rich, varied vocabulary to encourage children's speaking and understanding. Children are encouraged to talk to each other about their play and to discuss their ideas. For example, during the inspection children worked cooperatively together to make a marble run, helping each other to make it work well.
- Adults consistently demonstrate the behaviour they want to see in children. Children learn to behave extremely well, playing and learning happily together. Adults are highly skilled in guiding children who have more difficulty concentrating. As a result, all children develop positive attitudes to learning that stand them in good stead for Year 1.
- Strong links are made with parents. Parents are invited to contribute to children's 'learning journeys' and a variety of workshops give good information to parents about the teaching of basic skills, such as reading and phonics. Building even closer links with parents forms part of the school's plan for further improvement.
- The early years provides a very safe environment in which children can flourish.

School details

Unique reference number	118600
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10032855

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marcus Bell
Headteacher	Rosie Piper
Telephone number	01580 713249
Website	www.cranbrook-cep.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@cranbrook-cep.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 June 2015

Information about this school

- Cranbrook Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- Children in the early years are taught in one full-time Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There has been a huge turnover of staff since the previous inspection. The

headteacher became the acting headteacher in May 2016 and the substantive headteacher in September 2016. The deputy headteacher and inclusion manager were appointed in January 2017. Only one teacher currently in school was in post at the time of the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons across all year groups. Many of these lessons were visited jointly with the headteacher or the inclusion manager.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work for the current year to inform their judgements about pupils' progress, attainment and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils about their learning and their experiences of school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and attended a school assembly. Inspectors observed pupils at lunch and during playtime.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, a group of teachers in their first and second years of teaching, several governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents gathered from the 40 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also had conversations with parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school's own information about how well pupils are achieving, the school's checks on the quality of teaching and the school development plan.
- A review of safeguarding records and procedures was also carried out.

Inspection team

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