

St Botolph's Church of England Primary School

Dover Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 9PL

Inspection dates

13–14 September 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership. With the support of other senior leaders, she has worked tirelessly to move the school forward since it became an academy. As a result, it is now a good and improving school.
- The headteacher's vision and ambition are shared by all staff and leaders and managers, including governors and the trust board.
- Teaching and learning are typically good across key stages 1 and 2. Consequently, standards have improved and are above national expectations. Most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress remains a little uneven across the classes and a few inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is engaging and motivating and there is now scope for pupils to learn in greater depth in subjects across the curriculum.
- On occasion, however, challenges for pupils of all abilities and particularly the most able are not demanding enough. As a result, some pupils do not always acquire greater depth in their learning or reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Children get a good start in the early years. The provision is well planned. Children are nurtured and thrive in an exciting and stimulating environment and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils behave well. They have very good attitudes to learning and enjoy all that they do at school.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and respectful of adults and each other. They are caring and kind. They feel safe in school and say they are confident to turn to adults should any problems arise.
- Sometimes, teachers do not always make the most of pupils' good attitudes and their good behaviour by giving them more opportunities to be resourceful and take more responsibility for their own learning.
- The headteacher and leaders at all levels have demonstrated a capacity to make further improvements. The headteacher acknowledges that the momentum of leaders' work must be sustained to ensure continuing improvement in all areas.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent in challenging pupils of all abilities, and particularly the most able, to reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Provide more opportunities in all subjects for pupils to achieve greater depth in their skills, knowledge and understanding, and develop more responsibility and resourcefulness in their learning.
- Make sure that leaders at all levels sustain the momentum of their work to continue improving outcomes for pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The highly effective headteacher is inspirational in her leadership. She has secured the confidence of staff, pupils and parents in her work to successfully provide a good level of education for pupils and ensure that the school continues to improve since it became an academy in 2014. One parent echoed the views of many with the comment, 'I have full confidence in the headteacher and her leadership. She is very much appreciated.'
- The headteacher sets great store in getting the best from staff and developing leadership skills. The deputy headteacher is currently providing leadership to a local school. The headteacher has seized this opportunity to restructure the leadership team to increase its capacity to make further improvements.
- Established and successful leaders have been added to the senior leadership team and new phase-leader roles created from the beginning of this school year. The impact of the work of English and mathematics leaders is evident in pupils' improved achievement. Middle leaders of the foundation subjects are skilled in their areas; they know the strengths and areas to develop. The full impact of their work has yet to be realised as the focus of leadership has been to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders at all levels work together well in strong, effective teams and feel supported and valued. The headteacher's expectations for leaders are very clear and they know they are accountable for the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress. There has not been enough time for the new roles to fully develop but it is acknowledged that the momentum of their effective work to date must be sustained to ensure continuing improvement in all areas.
- The performance of the school, including the quality of teaching and learning, is monitored effectively and gives leaders a clear steer for further improvement. If any weaknesses are identified, support is provided and improvement is expected.
- Responses to their survey demonstrate that staff have every confidence in leaders and are proud to work at the school. All staff feel they are treated fairly and with respect. There is a shared ambition and determination to provide the best for pupils.
- Pupils enjoy learning in a range of subjects through a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders have adopted a curriculum that provides pupils with memorable learning experiences, opportunities to develop and apply the skills they learn in creative ways and reflect and share their learning with others. Leaders acknowledge that there has been a focus on basic skills in English and mathematics and that there is now scope to ensure that there is an even greater focus on pupils learning in greater depth in subjects across the curriculum.
- The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors to school and clubs, all of which inspire and motivate pupils and make a significant contribution to their personal as well as their academic achievements.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded into the very fabric of all that the school does. The Christian values of the school – respect, resilience and

responsibility – are part of every day for pupils and they uphold these school values commendably so that they permeate every aspect of the curriculum and the school's work. Fundamental British values are promoted well and pupils are very well prepared for their future lives in modern Britain. Pupils learn about and celebrate different faiths and cultures. In their questionnaire, pupils agreed that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.

- The inclusion leader provides strong senior leadership for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She is skilled and experienced and leads a dedicated team of staff who provide a range of additional support for pupils. Early interventions and strong links with outside agencies and parents enable needs to be identified and addressed across the school.
- Leaders are aware of the slower progress made by some pupils in this group, particularly where there are complex needs and very low starting points. Measures have been taken to address this in the current school year. Actions are underway to raise class teachers' accountability in providing high-quality teaching that meets the needs of pupils in class. The leader is providing effective support to help teachers do this. Additional special educational needs funding is used effectively to ensure that all pupils' basic needs are met so they can participate in learning.
- The pupil premium funding is spent effectively to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life and, as with others, progress is improving.
- Good use is made of the primary physical education and sport funding to increase the provision for physical education. Specialists work with pupils and teachers to enhance skills, leading to improved outcomes for pupils.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent summed up the views of many with the comment, 'The children are so well behaved; it is so pleasing. The school has lots of activities and clubs. They are also taught tolerance of other cultures and beliefs. If I had to choose all over again, I would choose this school in a flash.'

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors have a wide range of skills, experience and expertise. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the aspects that could be better.
- The governing body has restructured and is now far more strategic in its work than previously. Governors are well informed by leaders and their own monitoring activities. They know the right questions to ask to understand how well the school is doing compared to schools nationally. They provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support to leaders and share the vision and ambition for the future of the school and the outcomes for pupils.
- Governors ask appropriate questions about the spending of additional funding such as the pupil premium grant, sport funding and funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that funds are spent wisely and are making a difference to pupils' progress and attainment.

- There are clear plans for the governing body to further improve its effectiveness in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of care at the school and the school's ethos promotes all aspects of safeguarding very well. All staff are aware of their responsibility to keep pupils safe and are vigilant in doing so.
- Staff receive regular training so they are kept up to date with any new requirements. The headteacher, the inclusion manager and another senior leader are the designated safeguarding leads. They ensure that one of them is always on site so staff know who to go to if they have any concerns.
- All staff know the procedures to follow should they have any concerns and what to be aware of to ensure that pupils are protected. Record-keeping is efficient and well organised.
- The school site is secure. All visitors are checked in and wear badges so that pupils can identify them. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out, including when pupils go out on trips.
- All the required information is checked and recorded to ensure the suitability of adults to work with pupils.
- Leaders ensure that any referrals to external agencies are acted upon rapidly. Parents are involved as appropriate to ensure that pupils receive timely and effective support to ensure their safeguarding and protection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is typically good and, as a result, standards have risen and continue to improve. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement in lessons.
- Pupils spoke of how much they enjoy learning new things. A group agreed with one pupil who said that teachers provide, 'fun activities and no lessons are boring'.
- Pupils develop confidence as learners. They know how to be successful because 'teachers model what they are looking for and they always help you if you are stuck'.
- Pupils enjoy the challenges presented to them and the fact that, in mathematics, for example, they can choose their own level of challenge.
- Teachers usually question pupils well to encourage them to think about and extend their learning.
- Classrooms are well organised with displays to support pupils' learning. Working walls celebrate and inspire pupils' learning and are used well as prompts for learning by teachers and pupils.
- Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in, for example, physical education and music,

which has a positive impact on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in these aspects.

- Very positive relationships between pupils and teachers mean that pupils want to do well, work hard and strive to do the best they can.
- Phonic skills are taught well and used effectively by most pupils to help them read unfamiliar words. These skills get them off to a good start in the early years and key stage 1. Leaders have correctly identified, however, that the provision of high-quality books needs updating in the early years.
- Reading for enjoyment is promoted well. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the online reading programme. Teachers effectively plan a range of work across the curriculum, based on an overall topic and motivating and inspiring texts. All teachers provide sessions where they focus on a group to develop reading skills. These are more successful in some classes than in others and leaders have already planned training sessions to enhance teachers' expertise in this area. Similarly, there is some variation in the quality of the classroom areas to promote reading. Older pupils discuss authors' choices of vocabulary and structure effectively to develop their comprehension, inference and retrieval skills.
- In mathematics, there is an agreed approach to teaching across the school. This approach makes learning fun for pupils and the impact on pupils' achievement is evident.
- There is a continuing focus on aspects of mathematics such as pupils' mental recall of multiplication tables and division. Pupils in Year 4 thoroughly enjoyed 'beating the clock' in a 'times table challenge'.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to reason and explain their thinking to increase the depth of their mathematical skills. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were engrossed in their learning about number sequences. They responded extremely well to a high level of challenge for all abilities and an expectation to use correct mathematical vocabulary to explain their thinking. As a result, they made very good gains in their mathematical knowledge and depth of understanding.
- Work in books shows that pupils make good progress in their learning. They respond well and productively to teachers' comments which they say help them to improve their work.
- Teachers happily share their expertise and learn from each other in a strong, supportive culture within the school and through working with other schools in the trust. There is an expectation that they will enhance their skills to provide the best for pupils.
- Pupils also work well together and learn from each other. Their good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning help them discuss their opinions and listen to others, even if they do not always agree with them. These positive learning and personal skills are not always fully exploited to give pupils more opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and be more involved and resourceful learners.
- Within the overall good quality of teaching and learning, leaders are aware that there is some variation in the quality in some classes. Successful strategies seen elsewhere are not consistently used and pupils' achievement is not as high as it could be. This is

mainly, but not exclusively, because the same high level of challenge for pupils of all abilities, but particularly the most able, is not always evident. Leaders are actively challenging these weaker aspects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop as confident and self-assured individuals. They are very friendly, polite and caring to each other, staff and visitors to the school. During lunchtime, pupils' concern, without any adult prompting, that an inspector had enough to eat and water to drink was typical of their caring, kind attitudes.
- Pupils demonstrate their adherence to the school's values of respect, responsibility and resilience. They are respectful of each other and adults, have excellent relationships and genuinely care for each other. Pupils described to inspectors how 'even though we are a Christian school, we respect our friends who believe in other things'. Staff are good role models for pupils and pupils learn to respect everyone because they said they feel respected by adults.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their achievements. One Year 1 pupil enthusiastically informed an inspector, 'I'm so proud of myself because I can double, and two doubled makes four.' Pupils are smart in their appearance and help to make sure their classrooms and other areas in the school are neat and tidy.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are interested in all that they do, which helps them make good progress.
- Good support is provided for pupils' social and emotional development as well as their academic achievement. Pupils who may be vulnerable and their families are identified and supported sensitively and effectively. Pupils with specific medical needs are also supported well to make progress.
- Pupils are safe in school and said that they feel safe. They learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations in and out of school, including using the internet safely. Older pupils are good ambassadors for e-safety and give presentations to younger pupils to promote this.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They clearly understand why bullying is not acceptable and the different forms it can take. They have confidence in their teachers to sort out any problems should they arise. Pupils say there is always an adult to share any concerns with and they know they will be listened to and helped.
- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, feel their children are happy at school and almost all agree that their children feel safe and are well looked after. One parent wrote: 'All staff are friendly, helpful and honest towards parents and are committed to helping the children grow both personally and emotionally as well as academically. Both of my children have always felt safe, listened to and happy to go to school each day.'
- Pupils who attend the breakfast or after-school club receive a safe, happy, healthy and

sociable start or end to the school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is mostly good and this supports pupils' good progress. Teachers' expectations of behaviour in lessons are generally high and pupils know what is expected of them.
- Pupils listen carefully to teachers and each other and want to learn. Pupils are usually attentive, concentrate well and work hard. They mostly follow instructions quickly and there are very few interruptions to learning during lessons. Occasionally, when pupils do not have sufficient challenge or their learning time is not used well, they are less attentive, sometimes drift off task and lose their focus on learning.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in the playground, at lunchtimes and during times when the whole school gathers together. They are courteous and well mannered. Pupils demonstrate tolerance and understanding of the few pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour. Mostly, however, pupils successfully manage themselves, for example when taking turns on the climbing equipment in the playground.
- A very small number of pupils feel that sometimes behaviour in the playground is 'a bit rough', but that staff always sort this out should it happen.
- A large majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved. Almost all staff agree that pupils' behaviour is good and that leaders support staff well in managing behaviour.
- Most pupils attend school regularly and attendance is a little above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, however, is slightly below that found nationally. Leaders work hard with families and external agencies where attendance issues persist and keep careful records to track the attendance of individuals and groups. As a result, although differences remain, the attendance of these groups has improved. Staff also work hard to improve the punctuality of a small number of pupils who are persistently late.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standards for their ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2016 was above that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although 2017 national figures for key stage 2 attainment remain provisional, there was an increase in the school's figures for 2017, showing that more pupils reached the expected standards than in 2016.
- The school's assessment information and work from last year seen in pupils' books indicate that pupils in most year groups and classes made good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Some pupils made very rapid

progress from their starting points. Progress was, however, a little uneven across classes and year groups.

- In 2016, overall progress between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 was not significantly different from that found nationally in reading but it was stronger and significantly above national figures in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have put in place a robust system for tracking pupils' progress from their starting points. They regularly identify the strengths, weaknesses and next steps to improve outcomes for individual pupils and different groups.
- In 2016 and 2017, there were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 to comment in detail on their progress and attainment. During 2017, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in all other year groups making expected progress was similar to that of others. As with other pupils, there was some variation across the classes. There were differences in the proportion of this group of pupils who reached the expected standards compared to others in the school but these differences are diminishing compared with previous years.
- Leaders are keenly aware that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made slower progress from their starting points than others in 2017. Effective actions are in place this year to carefully track the progress of this group and to ensure that they receive high-quality teaching and support to catch up.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress. The proportions that reached greater depth in learning by the end of Year 2 or higher standards by the end of Year 6 in 2016 were below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2017, however, there was a marked increase in the proportion of pupils achieving higher standards in both key stages. At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards was close to the provisional national figures in reading and mathematics and above the provisional national figures in writing.
- Leaders have correctly identified that there are times when the most able pupils, as well as pupils of all abilities, are not challenged sufficiently to make the progress they are capable of and expectations should be higher.
- The proportion of pupils that reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above average for the past three years. The few pupils who do not reach the expected standard are given effective support so that they quickly catch up in Year 2.
- The impact on pupils' achievement in reading, which has been a focus for the school, is evident. Leaders have successfully enhanced pupils' love and enjoyment of reading. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the online reading approach through which they can keep track of their own achievements and targets. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of high-quality reading material and develop a range of strategies to help them read with fluency and understanding.
- Pupils' increasing skills in and stamina for reading are having a positive impact on their writing skills as they have a growing sense of what will keep a reader engaged and motivated. Opportunities to write in subjects other than English help pupils to understand that successful writing requires different features depending on the

purpose of the work.

- Pupils make good gains in mathematics. There has been a focus on promoting pupils' enjoyment of mathematics, making mathematics fun and developing pupils' reasoning skills to deepen their mathematical understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that are often below those typical for their age, particularly in aspects of their physical development, reading and numbers. Children, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in all areas of learning and catch up quickly. Children are well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- The number of children starting at the school has increased significantly over the past two years, bringing to the school challenges to meet the needs of the children. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been above that found nationally for the past three years.
- The early years is well led and managed. The experienced and skilled leader has an accurate view of the strengths in the provision and the areas for further development. She is also the leader of Year 1 and this ensures that there is a smooth transition from the early years and children build on their achievements. Assessments are made during the children's first few weeks at school. The leader is ensuring that these assessments are robust so that children's progress can be accurately tracked and inform the next steps for development.
- There are good systems for getting to know the children and their families before children start at school so that there is a smooth start for children and parents. There are continuing links with parents so that home and school can work together to support children's learning. All the necessary steps are taken to support any children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- During the inspection, the children were still spending just the morning in school and having lunch, prior to attending on a full-time basis. Children happily explore their new environment and quickly learn the routines and expectations. Children's well-being is paramount and all staff make a strong contribution to ensuring that children settle quickly and feel safe, secure and nurtured.
- Staff create a calm, purposeful, busy atmosphere. Children are engaged, happy and curious. They play happily together, sharing and talking kindly. In a short space of time, children are already developing confidence and are encouraged to be independent.
- The stimulating learning environment, inside and outside, is designed to support all areas of learning. The outdoor learning space has just been created and provides a wealth of opportunities to play and learn. Rules are quickly and sensitively established, such as waiting in turn for a bike and sharing equipment.
- Children move freely between activities and enjoy the practical activities such as making a den and being imaginative in the castle role play area.
- Teaching and learning are good. Adults engage children well in learning activities,

which are well planned to match the needs and interests of the children, and enable good relationships to be established.

School details

Unique reference number	141579
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10036926

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust
Chair	David Rosenthal
Headteacher	Amy Chitty
Telephone number	01474 365737
Website	www.st-botolphs.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@st-botolphs.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Botolph's is larger than the average-sized primary school, with a rising roll as it moves to a two-form entry school. Currently, there are two classes in each year group in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5, and one class in Year 6. There are three classes in Year 2 as the school took on an additional class in Year 1 last year to help alleviate the need for local places.
- There is provision for the early years in two Reception classes, which children attend full time after the first two weeks of the term.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with the next largest group from Black African backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is below

average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides a daily breakfast and after-school club.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St Botolph's Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in December 2014. When its predecessor school, St Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be requiring improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in all classes and examined work in pupils' books. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and listened to some pupils read. They observed pupils in the playground and at lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, senior leaders and other staff with key leadership responsibilities. Meetings were held with governors and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including: leaders' checks on the school's performance and the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 67 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 34 written responses. They also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day and received one letter. Inspectors took account of 40 responses to the questionnaire for staff and 198 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Sue Reid	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Donovan	Ofsted Inspector

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