

St Katherine's School

St Katherine's Lane, Snodland, Kent ME6 5EJ

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not successfully addressed weaknesses in teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too generous. As a result, inconsistencies in teaching are not consistently challenged well by leaders and remain across the school.
- Teaching does not meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils do not make sufficient progress in key stage 2 to reach the standards expected at the end of Year 6, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Frequently, teaching does not sufficiently challenge pupils in their learning. This is particularly true for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Assessment procedures introduced in September 2016 are not completely secure because teachers' judgements are not consistently accurate.
- The leadership team does not have a consistently demonstrable impact on raising standards. Improvement plans do not focus sharply enough on improving the skills of leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- Since joining the school in September 2016, the headteacher has achieved a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Following a period of substantial school underperformance, the headteacher's actions are bringing about significant improvements.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. Children make good progress and most leave Reception well prepared for Year 1.
- Improvements in teaching at key stage 1 have resulted in outcomes that are above the national average at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. Pupils behave well and display good conduct in class and around the school.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding pupils is a consistent and effective priority for all staff.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders at all levels by ensuring that:
 - they are consistently clear about school priorities and understand precisely what needs to be done to bring about rapid improvement
 - their skills are sufficiently developed so that they can fulfil their roles with consistent effectiveness
 - performance management ensures that all leaders are accountable for leading rapid and secure improvements.
- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in key stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, including the most able, are appropriately challenged
 - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to apply their fluency skills in problem-solving and reasoning tasks, in order to deepen their understanding in mathematics
 - ensuring that pupils read books that challenge them sufficiently.
 - making sure that the teaching of reading and mathematics systematically develops pupils' skills
 - ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are reliably accurate.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following an extended period of significant instability and underachievement, the headteacher has successfully secured a range of improvements in the school. However, the quality of teaching remains too variable.
- Not all leaders have the necessary skills and expertise to support the headteacher in her endeavours to make rapid improvements. Some leaders are overgenerous in their evaluations of the quality of teaching and the amount of progress pupils are making. Similarly, some leaders lack insight into the precise actions that are needed to make improvements.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly. However, their evaluations are not always accurate. As a result, weaker teaching does not improve rapidly.
- Leaders introduced a new system for assessing pupils' achievements in 2016. However, some assessment was not accurate and pupils' progress was not tracked reliably. As a result, in 2017, fewer Year 6 pupils than leaders expected reached or exceeded national standards in reading or mathematics.
- Leaders and staff proactively support the headteacher's vision for the school. All staff work collaboratively to ensure that pupils receive a wide range of learning opportunities and are well cared for. Relationships at all levels are highly positive.
- The headteacher swiftly identified areas of weaknesses and is addressing these effectively through precise and targeted actions. As a result, outcomes in the early years and key stage 1 have improved. However, it is too early for these improvements to impact sufficiently well on key stage 2 outcomes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress because the inclusion manager carefully monitors their learning. The school provides strong provision for nurture. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive the support they require in order for them to make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is promoted effectively. Helpful assemblies enable pupils to consider their feelings and those of others. For example, during the inspection, pupils were exploring how to be a good friend in assembly, and this theme extended well into classroom learning. In a Year 2 personal, social, health and economic education lesson, pupils enthusiastically debated what 'top five' character traits were needed to be a good friend.
- Pupils have a sound understanding of fundamental British values. They experience democracy by making a fair decision and voting, for example for house captains and sports council members. The 'e-safety crew' take their responsibilities to keep themselves and their classmates safe online very seriously.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and provides a wide range of learning opportunities for pupils. Topics are well planned and engaging. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. However, the quality of pupils' work in their topic books is not

consistently good.

- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support pupils both within and outside the classroom. Teaching assistants are deployed to provide appropriate support to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their classmates. Funding is also used effectively to provide disadvantaged pupils with additional sporting opportunities and the benefits of the breakfast club. Well-resourced nurture provision supports the most vulnerable pupils well.
- Sports funding is used effectively to encourage physical education and participation in a range of sporting activities. Leaders plan carefully to ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of resources in order to develop their fitness and sports skills.
- The local authority has provided school leaders with useful support, training and advice. Advisers work closely with the headteacher and know the school well. However, support was slow to start this term, despite the disappointing outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors are committed to the school and take their responsibilities seriously. They recognise and support the many positive changes that the headteacher has made since her appointment. However, they are not complacent and hold leaders stringently to account for the continuing improvement of the school. For example, minutes of meetings provide clear evidence of governors challenging leaders about the disappointing outcomes in key stage 2 in 2017.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are fully compliant with requirements. They prioritise pupils' welfare and uphold a strong culture of vigilance in order to keep pupils safe.
- All adults are trained regularly, and new staff receive helpful safeguarding information as part of their induction. Training also includes the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Staff are clear about the school's procedures to report concerns. The designated safeguarding leaders are skilful in ensuring that these concerns are reported to external agencies when necessary. The headteacher is proactive in ensuring that external agencies follow through referrals in a timely way.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable. Teaching does not meet the needs of all groups of pupils consistently well or challenge them sufficiently. As a result, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects are not

always developed rapidly enough.

- Scrutiny of pupils' books showed that, typically, teaching is starting to help pupils to catch up but it is not yet strong enough to fully overcome previous weaknesses in achievement, particularly in key stage 2.
- When teaching is stronger, well-planned activities enable pupils to develop and deepen their skills and understanding. However, inconsistencies in teachers' assessments of pupils' progress mean that this is not yet reliable across the school.
- The teaching of reading is improving, and is helping pupils who have fallen behind to catch up to where they need to be. Pupils enjoy reading and make good use of the wide range of texts available to them. The most able pupils read with fluency and expression. They are accurate and confident in their discussions about their reading. However, some of the most able pupils are not reading books that provide adequate challenge. In addition, some lower-ability pupils are not taught well to recognise the simple words they need to rely upon.
- The teaching of mathematics is not consistently good. Scrutiny of pupils' mathematics books shows that pupils are not given consistently effective opportunities for mathematical problem-solving and reasoning. Where the teaching of mathematics is effective, teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to develop and deepen their skills through problem-solving and reasoning activities. As a result, some pupils do make stronger progress. The teaching of writing has improved considerably across the school. Pupils' writing is stimulated by interesting texts, and teachers support pupils well to improve and develop each piece of writing.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed by teachers and provide effective support for pupils' learning. They ask probing questions to help pupils, which guide and challenge them appropriately. This often helps pupils to complete tasks successfully.
- Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and manage this well. As a result, classrooms are calm and purposeful, assisting pupils' progress during lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school provides a warm and nurturing environment for pupils. For example, pupils were recently involved in deciding upon the new school values, which house captains encourage and support their teams to follow.
- Most pupils in the school are confident to talk to adults and happy to talk about their work. Staff encourage this confidence, providing many opportunities in lessons and assemblies to reinforce pupils' self-esteem. For example, pupils reported how they are beginning to be more confident to challenge themselves in their own learning during lessons.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They feel confident in the care they receive from all members of staff and know who to talk to if they are worried or have concerns.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare but, when it does happen, adults are quick to deal with it. Pupils report enthusiastically about how the 'e-safety crew' support safety

online around the school.

- The vast majority of parents report that their children are happy and safe at school. Most feel that their children are well looked after.
- Leaders and teachers successfully encourage positive attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils take their learning seriously and apply themselves well to the tasks set for them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in class and during playtime. They move around the school in an orderly fashion. They demonstrate courtesy and consideration towards each other, to adults and to visitors to the school. The majority of pupils interact happily during the well-organised playtimes.
- Staff promote good behaviour in class and manage pupils' needs effectively. As a result, poor behaviour is rare and learning is infrequently interrupted.
- The vast majority of parents report that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils are given plentiful opportunities to take on responsibility and they do so with a sense of pride and appropriate seriousness. At playtimes, the older pupils play with and help the younger pupils in the school.
- Senior leaders work closely with families to improve pupils' attendance when necessary, and rightly challenge holidays taken during term time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been lower than that seen nationally for the past two years. In 2017, key stage 2 pupils' progress was significantly below national averages. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reached or exceeded age-related expectations at the end of Year 6 was considerably below average.
- Although pupils' reading outcomes in Year 6 improved marginally in 2017, the gap widened between the achievement of pupils in the school and Year 6 pupils nationally. Nevertheless, pupils' reading is improving and the school's assessment information suggests that most pupils are making steady progress. The proportion of Year 2 pupils who reached or exceeded expected standards in 2017 was above the national average.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who achieved or exceeded the expected standard in mathematics was significantly below the national average. In addition, mathematics outcomes in key stage 2 in 2017 were lower than in 2016 and the gap widened further between pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. However, in 2017, pupils' mathematics achievement in key stage 1 was above the national average.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is not yet strong enough in key stage 2. This is because teaching sometimes lacks sufficient challenge. In 2017, fewer pupils achieved the higher standards in reading and mathematics than were seen nationally. This was also the case in grammar, punctuation and spelling. While school assessment

information shows that the achievement of the most able pupils is improving, more work is needed to ensure that they make rapid progress across the curriculum.

- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 did not achieve as well as others nationally in reading, writing or mathematics. However, leaders are ensuring that disadvantaged pupils have access to a wide range of relevant additional support, for example speech and language programmes and extra teaching of phonics and reading. The school's assessment information indicates that, as a result, disadvantaged pupils are making improving progress, which is now similar to other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress across the school. This is because their needs are accurately met and high-quality support is provided for them.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed. Staff receive high-quality training. This enables them to successfully provide exciting learning opportunities which capture children's imagination. Leaders' evaluation of the early years provision is accurate.
- Systems for tracking children's progress are strong in the Nursery and Reception. As a result, teachers are able to plan effectively for the needs of individuals, and most children make good progress. Greater consistency in identifying children's next steps in learning could improve this even further.
- Children enter the Nursery working at a standard typical for their age. The consistently good teaching and provision lead to children making rapid progress in all areas of their learning. As a result, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been higher than the national average for the past two years. This provides children with a secure foundation for learning when they enter key stage 1.
- The learning environment is rich and stimulating. For example, displays around the setting promote the learning that children have achieved in a range of areas. The display of children's 'marvellous moments' in the parents' waiting area helps to build good home-school links. Parents report that they are very happy with the education that their children receive in the early years.
- The outdoor area has a good range of activities for children, which enable rich learning opportunities.
- Adults have high expectations for the children's behaviour. As a result, children follow safety rules and move around the setting sensibly and with ease and confidence. They listen carefully to the instructions given by adults. Adults have high regard for health and safety. Good procedures are in place to ensure that children are kept safe.
- Children demonstrate good relationships with adults and their classmates as they share equipment and interact with each other. Children are happy and self-assured because of the well-established routines that are reinforced by the adults.

School details

Unique reference number	118312
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10041455

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

Type of school	Nursery and primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	620
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	John Edgar
Headteacher	Ruth Powell
Telephone number	01634 240061
Website	www.stkatherineskent.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@st-katherines.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the Department for Education’s definition of a coasting school, based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- St Katherine’s School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended a whole-school assembly. Most observations of learning were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and evaluated a wide range of pupils' workbooks in a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground and in lessons. Inspectors also met with a group of pupils more formally to gather their views.
- Pupils were heard reading and were asked questions about their enjoyment of reading and their reading habits.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the views expressed by 69 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors considered responses from the pupil questionnaire and the school's staff survey.
- During the inspection, a variety of documentation was scrutinised, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, behaviour logs, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors reviewed the recruitment checks made on staff and their suitability to work with children.

Inspection team

Luisa Gould, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Fisher-Pink	Ofsted Inspector
Kusum Trikha	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Shields	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017