

John Mayne Church of England Primary School, Biddenden

High Street, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8AL

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's determined focus on developing teaching and learning has resulted in improvements throughout the school.
- She is supported well by other leaders who are helping to drive improvements. They monitor progress carefully, ensuring that initiatives are effective.
- The revised curriculum helps to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in an exciting and meaningful way. However, there is scope for further refinement to develop opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their written and mathematics skills.
- Teachers plan lessons that engage pupils. They ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to work together to investigate and develop their ideas.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning. This includes effective support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils are making good progress and are fully included in the wider life of the school.
- In most year groups and across the curriculum, pupils are making good progress. However, not enough middle-attaining pupils attain the higher standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. This is because work is not consistently challenging enough.
- Pupils read well, widely and regularly. They quickly acquire and apply their phonic knowledge to support them in their reading and their spelling.
- Pupils behave well. They move sensibly and safely around the school. In lessons, pupils are independent and well motivated. They develop good learning behaviours, which prepare them well for the next stages of their education.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They enjoy playing, learning and exploring. Children are supported and cared for well by the adults.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils so that more of the middle-attaining pupils attain the higher standards in mathematics and writing, by ensuring that teachers' aspirations are consistently high and that they routinely provide greater challenge for these pupils.
- Refine the curriculum to include more regular and meaningful contexts for all pupils to apply and extend their mathematical and writing skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her arrival in 2016, the headteacher has led the school with uncompromising vision and determination. This has resulted in a considerable change in the culture of the school and aspirations for pupils. She has wasted no time in driving up standards and improving provision. She is well supported by staff and pupils who recognise the impact that her resolve and conviction have had. The school is now well placed to provide the very best education for its pupils.
- The headteacher has developed the wider leadership team well through training and work with the local hub of schools. These leaders are now providing effective support to develop good practice and achieve a consistency of approach across the school. This is underpinned by revised policies in areas such as feedback to pupils, which are consistently applied by staff.
- The English and mathematics leaders have had a positive impact on raising attainment through a clear focus on developing spelling, reading, number fluency and reasoning. They monitor the impact of their work well through reviewing pupils' books, analysing pupils' progress data and holding regular meetings with staff. Leaders deliver staff training and attend relevant training themselves. They moderate their work effectively both internally and through engagement with the local hub.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) has developed detailed and effective support plans. These are regularly reviewed and refined and help to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points.
- The school is at the heart of its community. The school has a strong relationship with the church and has other connections with the community through the wide range of local visits and visitors that contribute to the school's curriculum. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils runs like a 'golden thread' through the school. Assemblies link to school values and support pupils in understanding how to apply these values to their everyday lives and model the school's vision of 'inspire and achieve together'.
- The curriculum has recently been revised. Plans are thorough and provide exciting opportunities for learning. Pupils develop an understanding of their local community and the wider world alongside core skills, such as historical chronology and appreciation of the work of different artists. The curriculum is extended well through interactive displays. For example, during playtime pupils were inspired to independently explore artistic patterns seen in the work of the artist Andy Goldsworthy, recreating these patterns using natural materials.
- The curriculum currently includes some opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their mathematics and writing skills in a meaningful way, for example through the school's popular gingerbread house challenge. However, work in pupils' books shows that these opportunities are not yet developed as well as they could be. Leaders acknowledge that the curriculum needs further refinement so that pupils can more

routinely and regularly apply their skills.

- Leaders know that some parents and carers have had concerns about the many changes at the school, particularly in relation to staffing. They appreciate the importance of continuing to engage with and reassure parents.

Governance of the school

- Following a period of restructuring, during which governors were supported by a national lead governor, the governing body now has the skills and focus needed to hold leaders to account. In doing so, governors use a wide range of information and demonstrate a secure understanding of the school's performance data.
- Governors share the headteacher's vision of a high-performing school at the heart of its community. They visit the school regularly to check on areas of particular interest and to ensure that they are well informed.
- Governors have completed all the necessary safeguarding training. They discharge all of their statutory duties effectively and have completed a skills audit to guide them when appointing any new governors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Adults know pupils very well and have good relationships with them. This means that any changes in pupils' behaviour or any worries are quickly identified, shared and supported. When a little extra help is needed from time to time by children and their families, needs are accommodated and supported wherever possible. In this way, pupils get the help and support they need to stay safe. Where further support is needed from other agencies, referrals are timely and support is regularly reviewed.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including online. Regular curriculum opportunities extend pupils' knowledge of e-safety. For example, Year 6 pupils led an assembly sharing their learning of online safety with other pupils.
- All necessary employment checks are in place. Safeguarding training is regular and covers all the required areas. Records and documents are detailed and stored securely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan interesting lessons, which actively engage pupils in their learning. They encourage them to investigate and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of areas. For example, in an effective Year 6 lesson on healthy eating, pupils explored a range of different types of rice and the dietary value of rice. A group of pupils cooking rice learned about safe food hygiene, while others researched rice dishes from around the world using recipe books.
- In most classes, teachers' good subject knowledge and insistence on the correct spelling, punctuation and grammatical conventions, alongside a drive for writing

stamina, are resulting in pupils' well-crafted work. Expectations are high, and pupils' written vocabulary is rich and well chosen.

- Good phonics teaching ensures that pupils can use their phonic skills appropriately to support their reading. Pupils read well and for a range of purposes including problems, texts and recipes. Pupils read fluently showing an awareness of both the story and the way punctuation is used.
- The school's recent focus on using a wide range of mathematical practical equipment and resources has contributed well to pupils' learning. Pupils are supported effectively to develop a depth of understanding and to enable them to become confident and skilled mathematicians. In mathematics, pupils demonstrate sound computation skills. They demonstrate an ability to solve problems and apply mathematical reasoning. Pupils are confident in selecting the most appropriate methods to solve problems and can check their answers, for example by using inverse operations.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and effectively deployed in supporting small groups and individual pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, the pupils they work with are able to access the learning and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils collaborate well with each other and have a myriad of opportunities to articulate their ideas and reasoning. They enjoy their work and the relaxed, but purposeful, relationships with the adults who teach and support them. A focus on developing learning skills has helped pupils to become independent learners using the mantra 'brain, book, buddy, boss' to help them solve difficulties. In developing these learning behaviours, pupils are being well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Work is mostly well matched to pupils' needs and supports their good progress. However, some pupils, particularly the middle-attaining pupils, are sometimes set too much work that they can already do. This means that they sometimes do not have enough time to access the challenge elements of the lesson to extend their thinking and move on to higher levels. Teachers' expectations of these pupils are not always high enough to extend their skills sufficiently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils play an active role in both the life of the school and the wider community. For example, pupils lead assemblies on e-safety, operate PowerPoints, scribe during assembly and represent the school at the remembrance service in the church.
- Pupils get along well together. Pupils who spoke to the inspector and completed the pupil survey feel well supported and cared for by adults. They are confident that they could approach adults with worries or friendship difficulties and that their concerns would be acted on.
- Pupils are encouraged to be healthy and active. They told inspectors that they enjoy a wide range of sports clubs. In breakfast club and during lunchtime, pupils eat healthily,

telling the inspector that while they enjoy fruit and vegetables their favourite school meal remains the 'yummy fish and chips'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move sensibly and calmly around the school. The few pupils who find it difficult to behave are effectively supported by adults and the school's clear routines. In this way, any disruption is kept to a minimum.
- Pupils are motivated to learn and understand their responsibilities as learners in the classroom. They listen to their teachers, work well with each other and try their best. They are proud of their work and their school.
- Most pupils attend school regularly and levels of absence are similar to those found nationally. However, there are some groups of pupils, notably disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, whose attendance is not yet as high as it should be. Leaders are taking every reasonable action to address this.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Work in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. Their work is typically at least in line with the expected standards for their age and often it is above the expected standards.
- Leaders now moderate the school's assessments of pupils' work both within school and in the wider school's locality group. This is so that leaders are able to make sure that these assessments are accurate. This information confirms that most groups of pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points across the curriculum. Additional funds are used appropriately to support their needs, and plans and pupils' progress are regularly reviewed.
- In the 2017 end of key stage 2 assessments, the proportion of pupils that attained the expected standard in mathematics was below the national average. Leaders have responded swiftly by analysing results and making some curriculum adjustments. Most current pupils across key stage 2 are now attaining at least the expected standards in mathematics.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils that attained both the expected and the higher standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2, was similar to the national average. However, a lower-than-average proportion of pupils attained the expected standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Following the school's review of spelling and prompt action, most current pupils are now attaining at least in line with expected standards in these areas.
- Pupils attained well in the 2017 Year 1 phonics screening check. Phonics is taught systematically across key stage 1. Pupils apply their knowledge confidently when reading and writing.
- While the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards is close to or above the

national average, leaders acknowledge that not enough middle-attaining pupils reach these higher standards, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start the Reception Year with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress across the curriculum and, by the end of the year, the proportion of children who attain a good level of development is above the national average. Children's good start in the early years means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who attained a good level of development dipped slightly. Leaders reviewed provision and addressed this issue so that current children are making good progress from their starting points.
- Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to play, explore and apply their learning in the classroom and outdoors. The environment is exciting and stimulating. During the inspection, children were engrossed in water play, skittles, a small-world glitter tray and a popular role play cafe.
- Staff are highly skilled at questioning children to check their understanding and develop their thinking. They build effectively on play experiences. For example, seeing a group of children playing with balls, a teaching assistant helped set up a game throwing the balls into buckets. In this way, skills are developed and play extended.
- Relationships are warm and nurturing. Staff model kind and caring relationships and children demonstrate these in their own interactions, playing and working well together. On the odd occasions when things do not go so well, for example when children were disappointed to learn from other children that the role play cafe was closed, staff intervene gently and appropriately so that harmony is quickly restored.
- Despite leadership and staffing changes, the staff team members work well together to ensure that assessments of children cover a broad spectrum of learning. Observations and assessments are now more closely linked to children's next learning steps.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors feel that their children are happy, safe and making good progress. They appreciate the regular, shared sessions with the Nursery and the home visits prior to their children starting school. These have helped their children to have a smooth transition into the early years. While parents have been provided with some useful information to help support their children's learning, leaders are aware that some parents would like to know more about the school's approach to teaching phonics.

School details

Unique reference number	118662
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10046841

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	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Sullivan
Headteacher	Sharon Lewis
Telephone number	01580 291424
Website	www.john-mayne.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@john-mayne.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 February 2014

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since 2016. There have recently been many staff changes. The governing body has reconstituted and the new chair of governors was appointed in July 2017.
- The school is smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2017, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Children in the early years are taught in a mixed-age class with children from Year 1.

- The school provides a daily breakfast club and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the governors, staff and leaders and had a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser.
- I reviewed a range of documentation including development plans, notes of adviser visits, minutes of meetings and pupils' progress information.
- I observed pupils around the school and in their classes, and visited all classes at least twice during observations undertaken with school leaders. I looked at pupils' books, and spoke to them about their work.
- I took account of parents' views through the 47 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I considered the 13 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- I also met with pupils to gain their views of the school and took into account the 93 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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