

St John's Church of England Infant School

4 New Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 6RH

Inspection dates

12–13 June 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's aspiration for all pupils to achieve well is successful in motivating improvements across the school. Her clear vision for pupils' learning and well-being is at the core of everything the school does.
- The well-designed curriculum successfully inspires pupils' learning across a broad range of subjects. As a result, pupils work hard because they are interested and keen to learn.
- Effective teaching ensures that most pupils make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics. However, the most able pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils write for different purposes. Skilful teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress. However, some pupils do not yet reliably use their knowledge of phonics well enough when they write.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school's Christian values successfully permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils are thoughtful and respect each other's differences.
- Pupils are kind and friendly. Daily routines are well established and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school and enjoy talking to visitors about their learning.
- Adept additional support ensures that the many pupils who join the school at different points throughout the year settle in quickly. Consequently, these pupils typically make swift progress from their starting points.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils flourish because they feel safe and secure.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language make strong and often fast progress in their learning. This is because the additional support they receive is carefully matched to their needs. However, disadvantaged pupils do not make the accelerated progress they need to catch up with others from their typically lower starting points.
- Despite impressive improvements, some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, do not attend school regularly enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that a higher proportion of the most able pupils achieve greater depth of learning in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that a higher proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard in writing and phonics at the end of key stage 1
 - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make even faster progress so that they catch up with others.
- Further improve rates of attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, so that they improve rapidly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's strongly held ambition for all pupils to achieve well is shared by staff. Her vision to keep pupils at the heart of the school's improvements is captured in the school motto, 'a small school with a big heart'. Pupils, staff and the majority of parents are full of praise for the school. A parent explained: 'I believe everyone at St John's genuinely cares for all the children and this makes a very special environment for all.'
- Senior leaders' unremitting focus on improving pupils' outcomes is successfully guiding improvements throughout the school. Leaders ensure that learning provides most pupils with the skills and attitudes to succeed. As a result, pupils are highly motivated to learn. A parent summed this up, saying her child has 'blossomed' since attending the school.
- Leaders successfully support staff to continuously improve their work. Staff that responded to the staff survey unanimously agreed that they are proud to work at the school and they feel well supported. Helpful training and individual guidance effectively enable staff to refine their skills.
- Proficient leadership in English and mathematics has improved teaching in these subjects. Consequently, pupils' progress has improved.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' learning is inspired through an interesting and exciting curriculum. Leaders place a particular emphasis on making sure that learning is meaningful and relevant to the pupils' needs. For example, pupils explore geography by getting to know their local area, visiting the park and making maps of the local community. These experiences particularly support the many pupils who move into the area and join the school throughout the year, helping them to settle in quickly.
- Leaders make strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy a wealth of experiences that enable them to understand and respect each other's differences. For example, a bright and cheerful display in the school hall celebrates the 19 different cultures represented in the school. This helps develop tolerance and respect, and prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy regular visits from the local priest to lead their worship sessions and learn about the Christian faith.
- Leaders use the national sports premium funding well to improve the quality of physical education teaching and increase pupils' participation in sporting activities. Boys and girls both enthusiastically participate in clubs and activities, such as the dance club. Pupils have also enjoyed success in sporting competitions with other local schools.
- Leaders make sensible use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know pupils well and skilfully provide the additional support they need. Leaders regularly review the impact of their actions and change them promptly if they are not having the desired outcomes. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving rapidly from their starting points.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language is strong. Leaders understand these

pupils' needs well. Thoughtful deployment of additional support ensures that pupils receive effective support to boost their success.

Governance of the school

- Governors are ambitious for pupils to succeed. They actively commit to delivering their vision for pupils to achieve the very best outcomes.
- The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively. Governors regularly visit the school and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They challenge senior leaders appropriately and therefore help secure the many improvements in the school.
- Governors have wide-ranging skills and expertise. They take a helpfully strategic approach to the recruitment of new governors, proactively securing specific skills and knowledge to strengthen their work.
- Governors ensure that funding is used wisely to maintain or improve provision for pupils. For example, a recent external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding is being used to sharpen governors' oversight of the progress and outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders diligently ensure that all necessary checks are made when recruiting new staff. Records are detailed, accurate and well maintained.
- Helpful training and regular updates ensure that staff are clear about their role in keeping pupils safe. Staff are always vigilant, and know what they have to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare.
- Site safety is managed well by leaders and governors. Regular checks help to keep the premises safe and secure. A recent external audit has helped to improve site security even further.
- Staff skilfully provide timely support to pupils and families who are experiencing difficulties. Leaders successfully establish positive relationships with parents, which enables them to offer appropriate help when needed. Many parents are highly appreciative of the support they receive to help with their children's learning.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers' high expectations for pupils' success ensure that pupils typically work as hard as they can. Pupils listen attentively and produce work of a good standard most of the time. As a result, the vast majority of pupils throughout the school make strong progress from their starting points.
- Across the curriculum teachers plan interesting activities to inspire pupils' interests. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning. Adults use praise highly effectively to motivate pupils and develop their resilience to keep trying even if they find something tricky.

Consequently, classrooms are positive and nurturing learning environments.

- Teachers use secure subject knowledge and proficient questioning successfully to develop pupils' skills and knowledge in English and mathematics. For example, in mathematics, pupils were learning to interpret information from a graph. Effective questioning enabled the teacher to check and enhance pupils' mathematical understanding.
- Teachers ensure that pupils quickly use their developing phonic knowledge when they read. Learning is carefully structured so that pupils learn to recognise increasingly difficult blends and letter combinations. The impact of this can be seen in pupils' confident use of their phonic knowledge to tackle unfamiliar words successfully when they read.
- Teachers provide most pupils with a wide range of motivating experiences to encourage them to write. Across the school pupils respond by writing for many different purposes, such as to report on an event or create an imaginative story. Teaching inspires pupils to take great care with their handwriting and presentation. However, pupils do not reliably apply their knowledge of phonics when they write.
- Teaching is effective in meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those who have SEN and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' individual needs to plan their learning and support carefully. Additional adults support pupils' learning effectively.
- Interesting teaching in English and mathematics successfully enables most pupils to make good progress in these subjects. However, this is not always the case for the most able pupils. Sometimes, activities are too easy for these pupils and they do not make as much progress as they could.
- Teaching across the wider curriculum provides rich opportunities for most pupils to develop good skills and knowledge in a range of subjects. For example across the school, pupils thoroughly enjoyed a topic on the 'Great Fire of London'. Pupils enthusiastically located Pudding Lane on a map of London, made models to explore the construction of timber-framed houses, baked bread and found out about the fire service.

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 happy, confident and polite. For example, the 'Michael Manners' poster displayed at lunchtime successfully reminds pupils to be courteous to staff when selecting their meals. Pupils are keen to talk to visitors about how proud they are of their school. There is a positive, open culture in which pupils are eager to learn new things and comfortable to discuss how they feel.
- Pupils say that they feel safe because adults help them to feel safe. Pupils say that they do not have any concerns about bullying, and know who to talk to if they are worried about anything. They say that pupils are friendly towards each other most of

the time and that adults quickly resolve any problems if they arise.

- Through the school's Christian values of faith, love, kindness and respect, pupils learn to be considerate and thoughtful. Pupils enjoy exploring, through a variety of interesting experiences, what these values mean. For example, the school is linked to a local charity for homeless people. Pupils learn about how the charity supports people and how they can help.
- Many pupils move into the area and join the school at different points throughout the school year. These pupils and their families are warmly welcomed and soon feel part of the school community. Well-planned individual support enables pupils to settle in quickly so they can focus on their learning.
- Pupils learn well how to keep themselves healthy, for example by eating healthily and understanding the importance of exercise. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and activities that nurture effectively their physical and emotional well-being. For example, many pupils attend the breakfast and sports clubs, and enjoy singing in local musical events.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and are interested in their learning. They listen respectfully to their teachers and to each other. Pupils concentrate well most of the time, and respond promptly to their teachers' instructions. As a result, classrooms are calm, and this helps pupils to stay focused on their learning.
- Pupils conduct themselves well when moving around the school. At breaktimes they play happily with one another and share equipment responsibly.
- Pupils' attendance is improving rapidly. Leaders proactively monitor pupils' attendance, and work closely with the parents of pupils who do not attend school regularly enough. Disappointingly, despite this positive approach, attendance figures remain just below those seen nationally, particularly in respect of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders' decisive actions to improve teaching have been instrumental in raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics.
- By the end of key stage 1, most pupils achieve well in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in English and mathematics was broadly the same as that seen nationally.
- Pupils make consistently good progress in phonics, and typically achieve well. Most pupils in Year 1 achieve the expected standard in the national phonics screening check, although the proportion that did so in 2017 was below the national average. Current pupils are making good progress, including those in Year 2 that need to catch up.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books

demonstrates that many pupils make fast progress from their individual starting points. This is particularly evident in their writing. Nevertheless, work in current pupils' books shows that not enough pupils are working at the expected standard in writing in key stage 1.

- Work seen in disadvantaged pupils' books shows that these pupils make the same good and rapid progress as others. However, despite these impressive rates of progress these pupils are not making the accelerated progress they need to catch up with others from their typically lower starting points.
- Pupils achieve well across the wider curriculum. For example, effective teaching enables pupils to develop secure scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils' science books show them successfully making predictions, carrying out simple experiments and drawing accurate conclusions.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points because they receive carefully planned and effective additional support.
- While the most able pupils enjoy their learning, they do not consistently achieve the greater depth of understanding of which they are capable, in English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get a good start to their education because the teaching and the curriculum are well matched to their needs. Leaders have high aspirations for children's achievement and their well-being.
- Many children join the early years setting with skills, particularly speech and language skills, which are weaker than is typical. However, despite these lower starting points, children quickly make progress. By the end of Reception most children with lower starting points have caught up with others because they are taught well. As a result, children are well prepared for their move to Year 1.
- Children enjoy learning through a broad range of interesting and exciting activities, both indoors and outside. Adults use their deep knowledge of the children and skilful questioning to extend effectively children's thinking and understanding. For example, outside, children were seen using large cardboard boxes to build a pirate ship. The adult adeptly extended the children's imaginative play, challenging them to solve problems, such as by asking what they should do if the boat starts to sink.
- Children's early reading, writing and mathematical skills are successfully developed. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed exploring a seaside-themed story and went on to write lively letters to a mermaid. They posed thoughtful questions such as: 'How do you breathe underwater?' Another group of children used their mathematical skills, carefully counting seashells and proudly accomplishing simple addition.
- Relationships between children and adults are extremely positive. The environment is nurturing, and children actively care for and help each other. Children's achievements are noticed and warmly celebrated. As a result, children behave well because they feel proud and successful.
- Disadvantaged children, those who speak English as an additional language and those

who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress because adults swiftly identify their needs and ensure that they receive the right support. Staff work effectively with external agencies to ensure that children's individual needs are met. Parents appreciate the work that staff do to support their children.

School details

Unique reference number	142157
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10046691

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Vince Maple
Headteacher	Jo Collman
Telephone number	01634 844 135
Website	www.medway.org.uk/schools/st-johns
Email address	collj054@mastacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized infant school.
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- There is a breakfast club that is managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning throughout the school. All observations were carried out with the headteacher. A sample of pupils' workbooks was also examined.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- The inspector met with the chair of governors.
- The inspector met with pupils to discuss their views about the school, and heard some of them read. One pupil responded to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector met with a representative of Medway Anglican Schools Trust (MAST).
- The views of parents were taken into account by considering the four responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also spoke informally with parents at the start of the second day of the inspection.
- The views of 15 parents and pupils, obtained through the school's own recent survey, were also considered.
- The inspector considered the views of staff by analysing nine responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector scrutinised documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Safeguarding procedures were also reviewed.

Inspection team

Claire Prince, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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.

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