

St Laurence In Thanet Church of England Junior Academy

Newington Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 0QX

Inspection dates

3–4 July 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong and ambitious leadership. She knows the school well and together with senior leaders has been effective in ensuring that teaching and outcomes are now good.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable. They have correctly identified the strengths and areas for development in their subjects.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers plan interesting lessons that capture pupils' imagination.
- Pupils are adept at solving problems and explaining their answers in mathematics. Teachers plan lessons that challenge pupils well.
- Some questioning by staff challenges pupils effectively. However, the quality of questioning varies, and learning slows as a result.
- There are times when tasks do not consistently stretch pupils fully in their learning, especially the higher-attaining pupils.
- Pupils' writing in subjects other than English is limited, and expectations of pupils' presentation are not high enough.
- The strong relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school and have a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are polite, well behaved and are respectful to one another.
- Safeguarding is effective, and pupils' welfare needs are well met due to the conscientious work of staff, leaders and trustees.
- Trustees ensure that the school uses effectively the additional funding for pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They hold senior leaders to account robustly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers adjust the level of challenge to develop pupils' skills more quickly, especially for higher-attaining pupils
 - staff use questioning more consistently to develop pupils' understanding and further extend learning.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils have greater opportunities to develop their writing skills in different subjects across the curriculum
 - staff have higher expectations of pupils' presentation of their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have developed an aspirational culture among pupils and staff. They have ensured that weaknesses in teaching and pupils' progress have been tackled robustly since the last inspection. As a result, pupils' outcomes have risen because teaching is now good.
- Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. These expectations are now part of the culture of the school, shared by teaching and support staff. Leaders' drive and ambition to secure the best outcomes for pupils have ensured that all at the school are working well to support pupils' learning.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable. They identify the most important actions required to continue to improve standards. For example, the subject leader for mathematics knows how well pupils are doing across the school. This is because she carries out a wide range of thorough checks, including lesson observations and scrutinies of pupils' work.
- Leaders link teachers' performance management targets to improvements in pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They have ensured that these targets and required actions have brought about rapid and sustained improvements. Teachers value the effective opportunities to improve their skills through a combination of bespoke training and observing one another.
- The leader for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities accurately plans how the school will meet the needs of these pupils. She and the teachers and assistant teachers have a good understanding of pupils' needs and any barriers that may hinder their learning. Consequently, this group of pupils makes rapid progress.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their priorities for improvement are appropriate and they review progress towards their improvement plans carefully; the plans are well focused and usually contain precise, measurable targets.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are interested in what they study and gain a strong set of key skills which they practise across a wide variety of subjects and relevant contexts. Pupils talk positively about the range of practical and different learning activities provided within and beyond the classroom.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Displays are used to highlight current themes, for example perseverance. Pupils make thoughtful use of the areas of the school that are set aside for quiet reflection. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They know what is acceptable and what is not. Pupils' successes are celebrated continually. Pupils value and maturely undertake their roles representing their classmates as school councillors, house captains and worship leaders. Pupils are caring, and they are proud of their school community. As a result of leaders' actions, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders spend the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils well. These

pupils make good progress from their starting points. Academic guidance from teachers and teaching assistants in class and in small-group basic-skills sessions is focused well on addressing any gaps pupils may have in their learning. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress.

- Leaders make sure that the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is spent carefully. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities, including golf and archery. In addition, many pupils attend an extra-curricular club. Teachers teach a wide range of sports confidently and effectively because they have benefited from working closely with sports specialists.

Governance of the school

- Trustees have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They observe first-hand to check carefully on aspects of the school's work identified in the school improvement plan.
- Trustees access training in relation to their specific roles on the governing body to ensure that they maintain their skills and knowledge at a high level. They use their skills to challenge and support leaders effectively at governors' meetings and during their visits to the school.
- Trustees have a good understanding of their responsibilities in checking leaders' work to safeguard pupils. They review policies regularly with leaders to ensure that they are up to date with current legislation and responsive to any issues that arise. Trustees ensure that their statutory duties are fully met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding and care in the school. All staff act skilfully in line with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy. Their training, including in respect of radicalisation and extremism, is up to date. The staff know when and to whom concerns must be reported.
- The family liaison officer takes a lead role in ensuring that staff have a good knowledge of pupils and their families. She works very effectively with outside agencies to get families and pupils the help they need. Any incidents regarding child welfare are recorded and followed up to make sure that pupils in the school are safe and secure.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and are taught ways to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they have specific teaching about how to keep safe online.
- Procedures for vetting staff are rigorous in ensuring that pupils are kept safe from harm.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to focus on developing pupils' knowledge across a wide range of subjects such as history and geography. Teachers plan interesting lessons that develop pupils' curiosity. Pupils have meaningful opportunities to discuss their learning.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively most of the time, planning tasks and activities that build well on what pupils already know and understand. As a result, pupils are making better progress in their learning than previously. There are, however, some instances, evidenced by work in pupils' books, where work set is either too hard or too easy, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils. When this happens, pupils' progress slows.
- Teachers sometimes use questioning well. Teachers question individual pupils and groups of pupils to find out what they need to do to improve their work. Occasionally, teachers do not ask questions that stretch pupils or challenge them beyond their initial response. As a result, pupils' ideas and thinking are not always developed well enough.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. They play a full and important role in teaching and learning. Teaching assistants plan closely with teachers and, consequently, they have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils that they are supporting. Their effective explanations of tasks and strategies support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make good progress.
- The teaching of writing has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have responded well to training. As a result, pupils are challenged to produce well-crafted sentences and they use punctuation well. However, pupils have limited opportunities to write in other subjects to develop their skills further. Staff do not ensure that pupils' presentation is a sufficiently high priority. As a result, work is not always neat and well presented.
- Pupils develop their skills well and are making good progress in mathematics. Teachers make sure that all pupils apply their mathematical skills to solve problems and give reasons for their answers. Pupils' work shows how teachers have moved pupils on from simple, recorded answers to giving full explanations for their mathematical thinking. Teachers' support and challenge to pupils help extend and deepen their knowledge and skills. This leads to strong gains in their learning.
- The teaching of reading is good. Younger pupils draw on their secure knowledge of phonics to tackle unfamiliar words. Pupils who struggle with reading are well supported in their learning and read words with determination and increasing accuracy. Older pupils are challenged well to unpick the meaning behind a wide range of texts and read fluently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Leaders have developed an aspirational, supportive and celebratory environment that builds pupils' confidence well. One parent commented about the impact of the school's work, saying: 'My child is brimming with confidence.'
- Staff provide strong pastoral care. There is a clear and effective emphasis on pupil welfare. Pupils stated that they trust adults and feel that they can talk to them if they are worried or anxious. They said that this is helpful as it allows them to express how they feel and what help they may need. Consequently, pupils' physical and emotional well-being is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are eager to talk about their work and their school. Pupils are aware of how to be successful in their learning and improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy attending the school's breakfast club and after-school club. They happily take part in different activities and enjoy a healthy breakfast with their friends. Adults organise purposeful and active play with different groups of pupils on the field in the after-school club.
- Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibilities and make contributions towards the running of the school. For example, pupils hold various responsibilities as sports leaders and school council representatives. They enjoy and appreciate the trust placed in them in these leadership roles.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils have a good grasp of the different forms of bullying. They say that it happens rarely and, if it does, adults step in to address it quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff manage behaviour well and provide effective and close support to a small number of pupils who sometimes show challenging behaviour.
- Pupils' conduct around school and during lesson time is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and very aware of the behaviour procedures in the school. On the occasions when standards of behaviour fall below expectations, adults intervene subtly and quickly, and pupils respond accordingly.
- The very positive relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, make pupils eager to work hard together, do their best and be self-disciplined. These firm relationships mean that pupils are keen to make positive contributions to school life.
- Pupils are keen to attend school regularly and on time because of the attention adults give to making school enjoyable. Leaders follow up absences in a supportive but firm way. For example, the school's leaders arrange for the school minibus to collect pupils to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Persistent absence is in line with the national average, as is pupils' overall attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress has improved significantly and is now strong. Across the school, pupils are making more rapid progress in reading, mathematics and writing than seen

previously. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education. However, progress is stronger in reading and mathematics than in writing, and expectations of pupils completing well-presented work are not always high enough.

- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. This is because provision for these pupils is carefully planned to meet their needs. Differences between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers are diminishing rapidly.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the barriers to learning that the pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities may have. Careful plans to overcome these barriers ensure that the very large majority of these pupils make good progress.
- The most able pupils achieve well but do not make sufficiently rapid progress because they are not consistently provided with activities that fully challenge their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Outcomes in mathematics are good. Strong teaching enables pupils' mathematical skills and understanding to develop rapidly. Teachers plan challenging real-life and problem-solving tasks that test pupils' skills well.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. The teaching of skills such as deduction and inference is good so that pupils understand and enjoy reading. Pupils use their phonic knowledge to help read unfamiliar and complex words. The most able pupils read with expression and enthusiasm and use their reading skills to enhance wider learning across the curriculum, for example when researching current issues.
- A scrutiny of books from pupils in different year groups demonstrates that writing has improved since the last inspection and pupils' progress is good. However, pupils have too few opportunities to write longer pieces of work in wider subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	138592
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10046565

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Maria Blackburn
Headteacher	Michelle Palmer
Telephone number	01843 592257
Website	www.stlaurencejuniors.co.uk/
Email address	office@st-laurence-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 April 2016

Information about this school

- St Laurence In Thanet Church of England Junior Academy is an average-sized junior school. Pupils are taught in two classes in each year group.
- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club, which are managed by the school.
- A very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is close to average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.
- The school works very closely with its sponsor, the Diocese of Canterbury.
- The school also works closely with the Broadstairs, Ramsgate, Ethos, School Improvement Company and the Ramsgate Achievement Partnership.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons across a range of subjects. During visits to lessons, the inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils and the inspectors talked informally with pupils around the school.
- The inspectors listened to some pupils read and talked with them about reading. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors met regularly with the senior leadership team. Inspectors met with the safeguarding leaders and the lead teachers for English, mathematics and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The lead inspector met with trustees and a representative from the Diocese of Canterbury, and had a telephone conversation with the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of school performance, school development planning and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also reviewed the minutes of meetings of the trustees and information relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- An inspector met with parents and carers before the school day, and the inspection team considered the 32 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of the responses by staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector

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