

# Yalding, St Peter and St Paul Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Vicarage Road, Yalding, Maidstone, Kent ME18 6DP

## Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well, personally and academically. They are rightly proud of their achievements, including in subjects such as music and physical education (PE).
- This is a very reflective school. The successful promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength. It makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development and behaviour, which are good overall.
- Warm relationships, a thoughtfully designed environment and effective teaching get children quickly off the mark in the Reception Year.
- By the time pupils reach the end of key stage 2, they attain well in reading, writing and mathematics, compared with national averages. In recent years, the proportion of the most able pupils reaching the higher standards, by the end of Year 6 has markedly improved.
- Leaders and governors have been successful in their aim of linking learning in different subjects more closely. In particular, pupils have a range of meaningful opportunities to write, especially in history.
- Notable strengths in the current senior leadership are moving the school securely in the right direction. Current leaders and governors are ambitious and determined to make the school the best it can be.
- The headteacher has high expectations of the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have secured improvements and effective teaching overall. They know where variabilities remain and continue in their determination to eradicate these.
- Although pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects, the quality of their learning and work is better in some subjects than others. Subject leaders are starting to take a bigger role in the improvement strategy, but many are relatively new to role.
- Typical of their aspirations for the school, senior leaders have identified many pertinent ways in which they wish to improve it. However, these are not always prioritised well enough to ensure that the relatively small team focuses sharply on the things that will make the biggest difference.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure the best possible quality of education for pupils by:
  - ensuring that the curriculum develops pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills well across all subjects
  - securing high-quality teaching across classes and subjects
  - strengthening subject leadership
  - sharpening leadership at all levels so that the most important priorities are identified incisively.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders have a clear and realistic view of the school's context and sufficiently high expectations of what pupils are capable of as a result. Their self-evaluation is accurate, rational and grounded in reliable evidence. Leaders use this well to identify areas to improve across the school's work.
- The headteacher is precise and confident in her evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. She articulates clearly what she expects to see during lessons and why. Leaders provide a careful balance of support, encouragement and challenge to help teachers rise to these expectations.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a notable success story. This is a very reflective school. Pupils think deeply about a broad range of topics and things, including their own well-being. High-quality enrichment, through visits, creative activities, themed days and specialist teaching, provides pupils with exciting and memorable experiences. Pupils deepen their understanding of British values through many of these opportunities. For example, their learning about and respect for other religions is enhanced through visiting other places of worship. Pupils experience democratic processes in school and enjoy links with a school in Gambia.
- The curriculum enables pupils to make good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Leaders have reorganised the curriculum to suit the mixed-age classes, and make it interesting and relevant. There is evident richness in the content of some of the curriculum. Examples include the use of Shakespeare to link English and history teaching, exploration of the concepts of cause and effect in history, and investigative science. However, leaders have not planned well enough how subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills will be developed across the school in all subjects.
- Supported by the wise spending of the sport premium, leaders have been creative and successful in the development of sports and staff's expertise in PE. This has had a positive impact in raising pupils' physical activity and engagement levels, including in competitive sport for older pupils. Leaders are mindful of making sure developments are sustainable. Recently, leaders and governors have rightly tightened checks of the difference their use of the funding is making by including performance measures in their plans and evaluations.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic about the initiatives they are leading. For example, the English leader has been successful in leading efforts to raise the profile and value of reading. Subject leaders are starting to have a greater role in helpful activities, such as observing in class. This should help them gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the provision in their subjects. However, many subject leaders are still relatively new to their roles.
- The special educational needs coordinator provides effective leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). He keeps a close oversight of the progress pupils with SEND make, and they achieve well.

- The very small number of disadvantaged pupils has resulted in leaders deciding to target additional funding on an individual, case-by-case basis. Commendably, leaders involve parents and carers in making decisions about how the additional funding could make a difference. Over time, many disadvantaged pupils make similar strong progress as their peers. Leaders are rightly ambitious to help these pupils make even better progress to catch up with their peers, and further reduce any future inequalities that attainment gaps might create.
- Leaders know exactly where there is scope for further improvement. However, although rightfully ambitious, leaders and governors are not ruthless enough in narrowing down which aspects are the most important. As a relatively small team, trying to tackle too many things at once risks diluting the overall extent and pace of improvement.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective. The governing body maintains a suitable dual focus on its statutory functions and duties, as well as supporting and challenging the school's improvement.
- Governors are diligent and committed. They are methodical and thorough in their approach. Governors keep themselves well informed, using a range of helpful information provided by the headteacher and other leaders. Wisely, they supplement the information from the school leaders' perspective with the views of pupils, parents and staff. Regular formal governors' visits help keep them in touch with what it is like to be a pupil at the school.
- Minutes of the governing body's meetings show that governors ask intelligent and sometimes insightful questions in response to their scrutiny of data and other performance information. They demonstrate ambition for the school and its pupils and are not easily satisfied if there is scope for further improvement.
- As well as closely checking how well the school is doing, governors are mindful of their own effectiveness. They use recognised and respected materials to scrutinise their own efficacy and take well-reasoned steps to improve.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's procedures to safeguard pupils are well established and fit for purpose. Governors and leaders have undertaken a systematic and comprehensive audit of safeguarding to ensure that all requirements are met, and that best practice is embedded.
- The designated safeguarding lead is well trained and knowledgeable. Similarly, well-trained staff are vigilant to possible concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being. Staff diligently follow the correct procedures for sharing their concerns. Safeguarding records are suitably detailed. Where necessary to protect pupils, referrals to other professionals and agencies are made and followed up promptly.
- The school's safeguarding policy takes careful account of the latest statutory guidance.

It pays suitable attention to the more recently required elements, such as peer-on-peer abuse and safeguarding pupils with SEND.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching develops pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively across a broad range of subjects, including English, mathematics, history and music.
- During lessons, pupils are usually purposeful and engaged. They are keen to participate in productive and thoughtful discussion with adults and each other.
- Well-deployed teaching assistants provide helpful support to pupils. Teachers make sure that teaching assistants have a useful role to play, according to the tasks in hand. Teaching assistants ask constructive questions to check pupils' understanding, or to reinforce or extend their learning.
- Teachers are largely successful in providing suitable challenge to pupils of different abilities in English and mathematics. From the early years onwards, teachers mostly ensure that they challenge the most able pupils appropriately. Pupils are accustomed to explaining their thinking. Teachers think carefully about the right level of support needed to help pupils learn well, both in terms of resources and in the deployment of additional adults.
- Phonics teaching is effective. Expectations are high. Pupils quickly develop their use of phonics to read well and spell accurately. Pupils with SEND, and those who struggle to learn phonics, are well supported to develop their confidence and security when tackling unfamiliar words.
- The teaching and learning of mathematics are sequenced logically and coherently. The teaching of calculation and number is especially strong. Adults use mathematical apparatus and visual images prudently to develop pupils' understanding of important mathematical concepts. Teachers make sure that these helpful resources are readily available to support pupils as they work. Pupils, including those with SEND, confidently and independently use these to complete tasks successfully.
- Additional small-group and individual-support sessions for pupils with SEND are well targeted, well planned and effective. Leaders and teachers make careful use of assessment to target specific areas that are slowing pupils' progress, or to address specific gaps in pupils' learning. A helpful early emphasis on speech and language is rightly prioritised as an essential bridge to access the rest of the curriculum.
- Teaching is strong in the early years and across a range of subjects beyond English and mathematics. For example, pupils benefit from knowledgeable, enthusiastic and rousing music teaching. Pupils are also highly enthusiastic about their PE lessons.
- Science teaching is more variable in quality. It provides pupils with some suitable opportunities to develop their scientific knowledge and investigation skills. However, it does not develop pupils' reasoning and scientific thinking well enough. These elements of teaching science are sometimes missed altogether or not developed sufficiently to maximise pupils' learning.
- Leaders know well where the variabilities remain, between classes and subjects, that prevent the overall quality of teaching from being better.

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are positive. They typically take pride and care in their work and its presentation. Pupils' growing self-confidence, self-assuredness and attitudes to learning are a work in progress but developing well overall. Their strong personal development means that, as they grow, pupils are increasingly self-sufficient in their breaktimes, although adults are readily available to observe, listen and sort out any concerns that arise.
- A mark of the school's effective safeguarding and strong pastoral care is that pupils feel safe in school. They like having the support of trained peer mediators who, in turn, are clear about their role and limitations. Peer mediators report that they are not needed often but are glad to help when they can. This is one example of the wide range of responsibilities pupils can aspire to hold. Other pupils are proud to be sports ambassadors or school council representatives.
- Pupils can describe a range of ways to keep safe, including important principles of keeping safe online. They are respectful of each other's similarities and differences, and well informed, at an age-appropriate level, about diversity in modern Britain. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and report that it is dealt with well should it rarely occur. The school's records support this view.
- The breakfast club provides a civilised and positive start to the day for those who attend. Pupils' positive behaviour and caring relationships, including with staff, create a pleasant atmosphere.
- Pupils have sufficient understanding to make positive and informed choices about healthy lifestyles. They have a good knowledge about healthy diets. Pupils engage enthusiastically with the opportunities to exercise at breaktimes, for example by playing basketball. Those who prefer a slightly quieter time socialise or play the table-top games on offer.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's recently refined behaviour policy is based on a culture of forgiveness, helping to promote pupils' moral development. Pupils and parents believe that the refreshed behaviour system has worked well in improving behaviour. The school's records back this up. Pupils, parents and staff report that behaviour is usually good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are polite and friendly. Their behaviour in the dining hall is orderly and creates a positive and social atmosphere. Pupils behave well in assembly. In lessons, pupils typically behave well and engage with interest and enthusiasm.
- Sometimes, pupils' excellent learning behaviours contribute very well to their

achievement. For example, in some classes, pupils sustain focused concentration for prolonged periods. Many pupils independently select and use helpful resources to complete tasks and have purposeful conversations about their learning with their peers. Where teaching does not meet the range of pupils' needs as effectively, a small minority of pupils lose focus and stop concentrating or working. While this seldom disrupts the class, it does limit their own achievement.

- Pupils' regular attendance reflects their enjoyment of school. Recent attendance figures are much better than the national averages and current attendance continues to be very positive.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils make strong progress from starting points in Reception that are broadly in line with age-related expectations overall. Taking results at the end of Year 6 over the past three years into account, pupils' combined attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been well above the national average. Although the proportion achieving the expected standard dipped in 2018 for cohort-specific reasons, the proportions reaching the higher standards show a strongly improving trend over three years.
- Outcomes in reading are particularly strong. Pupils have very positive attitudes to reading. Last year, a very large majority of pupils met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils use these phonics skills well to tackle unfamiliar words until they become confident, fluent readers. Older pupils engage thoughtfully in meaningful discussions about rich and challenging texts. The three-year-average reading attainment score is in the top 10% nationally.
- Pupils' writing is generally of a good quality for their ages. Strong progress is evident in most classes across the school, including for lower-attaining pupils. Pupils develop their ability to organise and structure their writing well. They use an increasing variety of sentence structures and are increasingly able to sustain and organise their ideas through longer pieces of writing. Pupils are motivated by the meaningful writing opportunities in history.
- Pupils achieve well across a wide range of subjects. In music, pupils sing tunefully and with feeling. When playing instruments or clapping rhythms, they listen carefully, repeating patterns accurately and using musical dynamics. They develop firm foundations in computing, including in programming and control technology. The school's records show that some pupils are enabled to exceed recognised expectations for their ages in PE.
- The most able pupils make similarly strong progress as their peers. The evident depth to some learning means pupils make insightful links, particularly with the literacy-based elements of the curriculum. Pupils possess a detailed knowledge of the scientific elements of how sound travels, linked with their learning in music. In 2018, the proportion of pupils that reached the combined higher standard, in reading, writing and mathematics was nearly three times the national average.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress. They respond well to the extra support they are given, whether this is in class or in additional support sessions. An early focus on



speech and language is extremely helpful in enabling pupils to access the rest of the curriculum.

- Despite higher attainment in English and mathematics, pupils' attainment in science is broadly average. Similarly, outcomes are not consistently strong across the foundation subjects. For example, pupils' learning is much stronger in history than it is in geography.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The Reception teacher knows each child in her class extremely well. Assessments of children's capabilities are grounded in a broad range of systematic formal and informal assessments. She goes to great lengths to make sure that she knows as much as possible before the children even start, so that no time is wasted once they do.
- Intelligent use of this comprehensive assessment promotes children's good progress, including for the most able children and children with SEND. Although there is a wide range of abilities each year, and variability between cohorts, overall, children start with the range of knowledge, skills and understanding that is typical for their age. By the end of Reception Year, the proportion reaching the good level of development that signifies children's readiness for Year 1 is consistently higher than the national average.
- The effective promotion of children's early literacy skills is prevalent throughout the provision. The teaching and learning of phonics are suitably prioritised. Children enjoy phonics and try hard to use their strongly developing phonics skills to spell and read each other's writing. They make good progress in learning to write, and their achievements are displayed proudly and encouragingly throughout the environment.
- There are plentiful opportunities for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. During the inspection, the current 'dinosaurs' theme, strongly evident in the teaching and environment, captured children's interests well. An imaginative range of tasks supported children's development in various ways, including encouraging their creative development and honing their fine motor skills.
- Adults' close attention to children's interests helps transfer these to a range of purposeful learning activities, both inside and out. Good-quality resources and a carefully and attractively arranged environment supports learning and behaviour well. The outdoor area has been thoughtfully designed to add to the rich natural resources and varied terrain.
- The teacher's interactions to support and extend children's learning as they play are well judged and effective. Teaching assistants are less skilful at extending children's learning during sessions when children choose their own activities. Occasionally, children are not suitably engaged in purposeful or productive activities or suitably challenged as a result.
- As with the rest of the school, leaders have a realistic and uncompromising view of the effectiveness of the early years provision.



## School details

Unique reference number	118638
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10084272

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Grace
Headteacher	Sarah Friend
Telephone number	01622 814298
Website	<a href="http://www.yalding.kent.sch.uk">www.yalding.kent.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@yalding.kent.sch.uk">headteacher@yalding.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25 November 2008

## Information about this school

- This is a Church of England voluntary controlled school. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's ethos and collective worship was on 10 February 2014.
- Due to the maximum number of pupils the school is permitted to admit in each year group, some pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The early years provision is for Reception children only. There is no provision for two-year-olds.
- There have been significant changes of leadership at all levels since the previous Ofsted inspection, including several changes of headteacher. At times, there have been interim rather than substantive headteacher arrangements for leading the school.
- The school offers a breakfast club.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes at least once to gather evidence about what it is like to be a pupil at this school. Many of these observations were carried out jointly with a senior leader.
- The inspection team reviewed pupils' work extensively across different subjects. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors had discussions with pupils, parents, staff, leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of the school's documentation and records was reviewed, including those relating to safeguarding.
- The inspection team took account of the 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 21 written comments. Inspectors also noted the points raised in a letter from a parent and correspondence from the chair of governors.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school throughout the day, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. An inspector attended a whole-school assembly.

## Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Wibroe

Ofsted Inspector

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