

Salmestone Primary School

College Road, Margate, Kent CT9 4DB

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has established a culture of high expectations, of both pupils and teachers. As a result, significant improvements have been secured in the quality of education provided by the school.
- The headteacher has developed a strong leadership team. Leaders at all levels are skilful and motivated. They provide staff with high-quality support that has significantly strengthened teaching throughout the school.
- The multi-academy trust (MAT) provides effective support. Leaders and governors have benefited from the guidance and challenge provided.
- Leaders ensure that pupils enjoy a varied and interesting curriculum. Most pupils now make strong progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Nevertheless, more pupils need to achieve the expected standards for their age at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In all subjects, they take great pride in their work, which is neat and well presented.
- Teachers now plan work that more accurately matches pupils' starting points. They provide pupils with helpful and perceptive guidance on how to improve. However, sufficient challenge is not routinely provided for the most able pupils. As a result, these pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils show respect for adults and their classmates. They are polite, friendly and welcoming. Pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. As a result, these pupils make rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is because teachers plan learning tasks that closely meet their needs.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start to their education. Teachers plan provision well so that children thrive in the nurturing environment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - continuing to strengthen the progress of pupils, particularly those in key stage 2, so that larger proportions achieve the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6
 - ensuring that teachers' planning provides sufficient challenge for the most able pupils, so that more achieve the higher standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school has seen many changes in leadership over recent years. These changes caused some turbulence and challenge for the school, which led to a decline in pupils' achievement. However, since the current headteacher took up post in January 2017, much improvement has taken place. As a result, the school is now good.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. He has skilfully developed a competent leadership team which has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They are committed to delivering the best possible outcomes for all pupils.
- The MAT is effective at holding school leaders to account. Regular reviews of the quality of leaders' work and the accuracy of teachers' assessments provide high levels of challenge. This ensures that the school stays on track to achieve its ambitious goals.
- Ably supported by the senior leadership team, the headteacher has identified the right areas for improvement. Together, they have taken swift and appropriate actions to address these. This has had a discernible impact on the quality of teaching and learning and the achievement of pupils.
- There has been a sharp focus on improving pupils' outcomes. Leaders have accurately identified aspects of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics that need to improve. Leaders have provided effective training and support for teachers. As a result, pupils in all key stages, including disadvantaged pupils, are making rapid progress.
- Through the delivery of a well-planned coaching and mentoring programme, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher have provided the school's middle leaders with strong professional development. The success of this programme has consequently enabled middle leaders to support class teachers in delivering high-quality learning for pupils.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) effectively leads the provision for pupils with SEND. She helps teachers to identify the specific needs of pupils and ensures that the right support is put in place. The SENCo regularly monitors pupils' progress to evaluate the effectiveness of provision. Pupils with SEND benefit from sound guidance in class, given by designated teaching assistants. Additional intervention for these pupils impacts further on the progress they make. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders use the pupil premium appropriately to help disadvantaged pupils overcome barriers to learning. There are specific interventions in place to support this group of pupils, enabling them to benefit from a broad range of opportunities. These include a pastoral programme to develop pupils' social and emotional resilience. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make the same good rates of progress as their classmates.
- Leaders regularly monitor the impact of the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium. Pupils are able to attend a wide range of sporting clubs, such as football, cross-country running, dodgeball and gymnastics. As a result, sport, particularly competitive sport, has seen a rise in popularity. This has had a positive impact on pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare and also on pupils' outcomes.

- Most parents and carers who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the work of the school. Many recognised the improvements that the current school leaders have made since 2017. One parent commented that 'standards of education under the new headteacher have risen incredibly.' Many parents also reported that their concerns are now listened to and dealt with quickly.
- A small minority of parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed negative views of the school, particularly with regard to the behaviour of some pupils. Leaders' monitoring indicates that incidents of pupils' inappropriate conduct have reduced dramatically over time. Inspectors observed good behaviour from pupils during lessons and breaktimes.

Governance of the school

- The Thanet joint local governing body provides strategic guidance and challenge to senior leaders. Members are involved in the school's self-evaluation and visit the school regularly to check on the improvements being made.
- With support from the MAT, the local governing body (LGB) has become increasingly effective since the previous inspection. Governors now have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the priorities for improvement. Minutes of the governing body's meetings show clear evidence of challenge, holding school leaders to account for their work.
- Governors bring a range of skills and experiences to their roles. They take their governance responsibilities seriously and are committed to ensuring the rapid improvement of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Adults receive regular training and updates about safeguarding to ensure that they can keep pupils safe. Safeguarding policies and procedures are well embedded, and adults have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. As a result, adults are confident to report any concerns they may have about pupils. The designated safeguarding leads are swift in making referrals to other agencies when required. This ensures that pupils and their families receive the help they need in a timely manner.
- Historically, overall attendance has been significantly lower than the national average. Similarly, persistent absence has been higher. Currently, overall attendance is good. This is due to leaders' work to improve communication and support for the most vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Governors ensure that the school meets its statutory safeguarding requirements. Regular checks are made to ensure that the necessary safeguarding procedures are in place and that all pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved greatly since the previous inspection. Leaders' expectations of teachers are unwaveringly clear. Leaders' chosen methods and approaches for teaching are impacting positively on pupils' learning. Evidence can be seen in the significantly improved progress that most pupils are now making.
- Senior leaders' expectations are that the quality of teaching and learning should be consistently high. They ensure that teachers receive regular training to support them with this. As a result, pupils respond well to classroom routines and teachers' high expectations. Leaders and teachers are determined to eradicate the legacy of underachievement and low expectations of previous years.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use assessment information effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills in English and mathematics. Mostly, teachers plan tasks that meet the needs of their pupils. However, the most able pupils are not always adequately challenged in English and mathematics. As a result, the progress of this group of pupils is not strong enough.
- Teaching assistants provide high-quality support for pupils. They encourage pupils to apply their knowledge, giving just the right amount of help so that pupils solve problems independently. Teaching assistants are skilled in using a range of strategies to guide pupils when they become stuck. This is particularly effective in supporting pupils with SEND.
- Teachers' planning for foundation subjects enables pupils to develop subject-specific skills, for example in science, art and the humanities. Consequently, pupils enjoy these subjects and produce work of a good standard.
- Teachers plan a wide range of stimulating lessons which engage pupils in their learning. Using the school's chosen approach, pupils enjoy exploring the 'Big Question' that starts each new theme. For example, the current 'Big Question' for Year 6 is 'Is Seeing Believing?' Pupils have delighted in exploring this question. They have been immersed in a range of challenging texts, helping to inspire their writing. The creativity of teachers' planning engages pupils' interests. This is leading to more pupils achieving the expected standards for their age.
- Teachers employ a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. This ensures that pupils apply their phonics knowledge to both reading and writing. When required, additional support is provided to help pupils develop their phonics knowledge and skills. Leaders regularly check pupils' progress to ensure that no one falls behind. As a result, current pupils make good progress in phonics.
- There is a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts well. They plan clear sequences of learning that include opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills in problem solving and reasoning about number. Work in pupils' books shows that they are beginning to develop a deeper understanding in many areas of mathematics. As a result, most pupils are now making strong progress. However, to avoid the most able pupils undertaking tasks that are too easy, teachers need to ensure that their plans result in appropriate, consistent challenge for this group of pupils.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders place great importance on developing pupils' social and emotional resilience, as well as their academic achievement. A dedicated member of staff is trained to support pupils' well-being, which the pupils talk very favourably about. This ensures that pupils' confidence and self-esteem are nurtured, helping them to concentrate more fully on their learning.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school because they know that they are able to talk to any adult if they have concerns. Pupils understand what bullying means and say that it rarely happens in their school. On the occasion that bullying does take place, pupils report that teachers are quick to listen to them and take appropriate action.
- Pupils talk about the many ways in which the school teaches them to stay safe, for example 'stranger-danger', road and beach safety and how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils' sense of responsibility is promoted through the school's values: community, inspiration, perseverance and achievement. Pupils are proud to wear their values badges, which are awarded for displaying these values in school.
- Leaders have created a number of opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility. Pupils in all year groups take their 'Pupil Leadership Team' roles seriously and enjoy working with leaders to make decisions to improve aspects of their school. Year 6 'Play Leaders' meet regularly with the headteacher. Currently, they are working on the improvement of breaktime equipment. Pupils value these opportunities and take great pride in carrying out such roles.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. However, this has not always been the case. Historically, there have been large numbers of pupils excluded from the school because of their inappropriate conduct. The number of exclusions has dramatically reduced over the last two years. This academic year, no pupils have been excluded.
- Leaders have established effective strategies to promote good behaviour. These strategies, which pupils respond positively to, are implemented consistently throughout the school. The school's behaviour logs indicate that incidents of disruptive behaviour are now rare.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They conduct themselves in a calm and orderly manner when moving around school. At breaktimes, pupils interact well together and include each other in their games. When directed by adults, pupils stop playing and enter the building sensibly. Pupils line up quietly in the dining hall for their lunch. Their polite manners and conversation during lunchtime create a positive atmosphere in the dining hall.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, in the end of key stage 2 assessments, Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. Leaders and teachers have been quick to take precise and appropriate action to strengthen the progress of all pupils in English and mathematics. As a result, rates of progress have increased significantly across the school. Current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are now mostly working at the expected standards in English and mathematics.
- In key stage 2, there has been an upward trend in pupils' progress from their key stage 1 starting points, over the past two years. In 2018, pupils' progress in reading and writing was in line with the average rate of progress nationally. However, pupils' progress in mathematics was not as strong.
- In key stage 1, the proportions of pupils who achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics increased in 2018. This reflects good progress from low starting points. However, the proportions of pupils achieving greater depth were smaller than the national averages for the higher standard.
- In key stage 1, pupils make rapid progress in phonics. They apply their phonics knowledge to reading and writing with skill and confidence. In key stage 2, dedicated sessions are given to the development of handwriting and spelling. This enables most pupils to make good progress in their reading and writing skills. The school's chosen approach to reading ensures that pupils in all year groups are exposed to high-quality literature. This has helped to improve pupils' skills in both reading and writing.
- In all year groups, the progress of most pupils in writing is exceptionally strong. Over time, pupils become more proficient at writing at length and develop greater accuracy in their use of grammar and punctuation. As a result of high expectations and good teaching, pupils develop a wide, rich vocabulary that they apply skilfully in their writing.
- Leaders' work to bring about improvements in mathematics has resulted in strong progress being made by most current pupils. Pupils are increasingly confident when applying their understanding of number to solve complex, multi-step problems. They are developing their confidence to explain their mathematical thinking and reasoning about number.
- The school's assessment information indicates that disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates. Work in books confirms that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Historically, the most able pupils have not made the progress that they should by the end of key stage 2. This has resulted in smaller proportions of pupils achieving the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite improvements, scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the progress of this group is still not strong enough. Teachers do not routinely provide the most able pupils with appropriate challenge.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years provision with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. This is particularly the case for children’s communication and language skills. Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes know their children well. Through well-planned activities, children make strong progress in all their areas of development. Historically, outcomes at the end of Reception have been lower than national averages. However, current pupils are making rapid progress from their low starting points.
- Leadership in the early years is strong. Adults are skilful at identifying the specific needs of individual children. This ensures that children rapidly develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning. As a result, children get off to a good start in their education.
- Children are immersed in a vibrant, language-rich environment. Adults develop children’s vocabulary by encouraging them to talk about their activities and describe the things they see around them. In the Nursery, a ‘sound button’ is available by each activity, which develops children’s listening skills. In Reception, areas of learning and resources are clearly labelled and provide questions to challenge children. These strategies enable children to begin to link meaning with sounds and written words. Adults model language well. This means that children, particularly those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching of phonics in early years is a particular strength. In Nursery and Reception, teachers plan phonics activities that are highly engaging. For example, children in Nursery enjoy playing ‘phonics bingo’, while children in Reception challenge themselves to sound out difficult words and write them in sentences on whiteboards. As a result, children are motivated and keen to learn. They try hard to apply their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to read and write unfamiliar words.
- The whole-school focus on reading and writing is evident throughout the early years provision. Children apply their phonics skills to a range of writing activities in appropriate ways and engaging tasks. Their writing is celebrated and displayed around the classroom. Teachers ensure that there are lots of opportunities for children to read. During the inspection, children were observed reading with adults and enjoying themselves in the comfortable and inviting book corners.
- The environment is organised into themed areas that offer stimulating activities. Children enjoy learning about number in the mathematics area, which is well resourced with a range of manipulatives to support children’s mathematical thinking and understanding. Children make progress because adults intervene quickly to address misconceptions.
- Adults have high expectations of children, and relationships are strong. Children are motivated and apply themselves well to the tasks set. This is because teachers plan activities that are interesting, varied and engaging. The most able children are challenged effectively; for example, in Nursery, children work on their own with an adult to complete writing tasks. The early years leader ensures that disadvantaged children and those with SEND are very well supported. As a result, all children make strong progress.

- Leaders ensure that children are kept safe. Adults have regular safeguarding training and there are appropriate numbers of staff who have had paediatric first-aid training. All statutory welfare and care requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	138438
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10053299

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Roger Silk
Headteacher	Nigel Planting
Telephone number	01843 220949
Website	www.salmestone-tkat.org/
Email address	finance@salmestone-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	6–7 July 2016

Information about this school

- Salmestone Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group from Reception Year to Year 6.
- The early years provision comprises one Nursery and two Reception classes. Children attend Nursery part time and Reception full time.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children looked after by the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average.
- The current headteacher has been in post since January 2017.
- The school is part of The Kemnal Academies Trust's Thanet division. A regional executive director has oversight of the five primary schools in this division of this large

MAT. The MAT works closely with school leaders, providing effective challenge. Regular evaluations of leaders and the quality of teaching and learning are undertaken to check that the school is improving rapidly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Many of these visits were carried out with senior leaders. Inspectors also evaluated pupils' work in a range of subjects, listened to a group of pupils read and reviewed the school's assessment information.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons, met formally with a group of pupils and spoke to pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes to gather their views on the school.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of the school's documents and policies, including behaviour and attendance information, records of visits carried out by the MAT, minutes of the governing body's meetings and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the MAT and held a discussion with the chair of governors. Members of the inspection team held meetings with a range of middle leaders. Inspectors considered 36 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including six free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to a parental survey conducted on behalf of the school.

Inspection team

Luisa Gould, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Shields	Ofsted Inspector
Sean McKeown	Ofsted Inspector

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