

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



16 December 2019

Mr Daniel Smith
Headteacher
Maidstone, St John's Church of England Primary School
Provender Way
Grove Green
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 5TZ

Dear Mr Smith

Subject inspection of Maidstone, St John's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 5 December 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. The findings do not change the overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding from the last section 5 inspection.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for a no formal designation inspection of schools. The inspection was carried out to enable Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to better understand the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

Main findings

You have recently reviewed the curriculum provision. Leaders and teachers are currently embedding a revised history curriculum that sequences knowledge across history topics and year groups. Consequently, history provision for pupils is improving. The subject leader for history has worked hard to embed new curriculum plans. Teachers now clearly understand what pupils should learn about when studying history.

Teachers are committed and passionate about teaching history. They have strong subject knowledge and have embraced the new curriculum plans. Teachers provide pupils with demanding activities and have high expectations of pupils. In early years, pupils get off to a good start in learning about the past. Expert teaching in

early years stretches children's understanding of the past. This means that pupils are well prepared to start studying history in key stage 1.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are ably supported in history. Staff skilfully help these pupils to access information and participate in activities. The curriculum is ambitious for pupils with SEND. Pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans are involved in deciding, with staff, how they participate in activities and how they develop their learning.

Teachers plan varied and demanding opportunities to extend pupils' thinking about historical events and improve their use of subject-specific vocabulary through extended writing. For example, Year 2 pupils produced a pamphlet about the Fire of London that included facts about how the fire started and why it spread quickly. Year 5 pupils wrote about Anglo-Saxon jewellery, where they explained that types of jewellery signified the high status of the person wearing it.

Within the history curriculum, there are a wide range of significant past events, people and eras. Leaders have planned out the factual knowledge that pupils need to acquire in history by the end of each topic. However, the history curriculum does not yet support pupils in connecting historical events or eras so that they build secure knowledge of changes over time. Consequently, pupils do not fully understand how historical concepts, such as monarchy or democracy, have developed within and across the historical periods they study.

Evidence

During this visit I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader, the subject leader for history and a group of teachers to talk about the history curriculum. I visited lessons in the early years, Year 4 and Year 5. I met with two groups of pupils to talk about their learning in history. I evaluated work in pupils' books. I scrutinised curriculum planning.

Context

Maidstone, St John's Church of England Primary School is an above-average-sized primary school. There are 438 pupils on roll. Most pupils are White British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The proportion who are disadvantaged is below the national average. The proportion with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with an EHC plan is slightly above the national average. Nearly all pupils join the school at the start of the early years and stay until the end of Year 6. Staffing at the school is stable.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham
Her Majesty's Inspector