

# Inspection of Stelling Minnis Church of England Primary School

Bossingham Road, Stelling Minnis, Canterbury, Kent CT4 6DU

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	<b>Good</b>

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive in the caring, nurturing environment of this small village school. They enjoy coming to school, where everyone is included and encouraged to do their best. Pupils are happy and value the friendships they make during their time here. There is a close-knit feel and a real sense of belonging. One parent said, 'In the morning, it's like dropping them off with family'.

Pupils show extremely high levels of respect for each other, adults and their environment. The school values of 'love, respect and perseverance' are at the heart of everything it does. All staff know all of the pupils very well and there are positive, trusting relationships. Pupils know that they can share any worries or concerns they may have. They feel listened to, safe and secure.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They enjoy all the opportunities the school offers them, including the forest school and sport activities such as archery. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite and friendly. Pupils believe that bullying is incredibly rare and that any issues are dealt with effectively.

Pupils rise to teachers' expectations to flourish, personally, socially and academically, and become the 'shining stars' of the school's vision.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Pupils learn well in a broad range of subjects through an engaging curriculum. The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children get an outstanding start to school in Reception. They demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning through high levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment. Children listen intently and respond positively to adults and each other. They are developing their resilience to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.

There is a strong focus on reading throughout the school. Early reading skills are taught well by teachers and trained teaching assistants. The new phonics programme is well organised and structured. It begins as soon as children start in Reception. Children quickly learn new sounds and enjoy their learning. They read books that match the sounds they know, using their phonics skills well to help them read unfamiliar words.

The enjoyment and love of reading is encouraged right from the start. Pupils develop as confident and fluent readers. Teachers introduce them to a wide range of high-quality texts, which they enjoy discussing. Any pupil who finds reading more difficult, including pupils with SEND, is well supported to catch up quickly.

Across subjects, teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain new content well to pupils. They engage pupils in purposeful discussions. Teachers carefully

check pupils' understanding and use this information to inform their teaching. There is a strong focus, which starts in Reception, on developing and enriching pupils' vocabulary. Teachers ask probing questions to help develop pupils' language and thinking skills. They help pupils remember what they know, to build on new learning. For example, pupils could draw on their prior knowledge of ancient civilisations to help them compare and contrast the Mayan civilization. The mathematics curriculum builds successfully on what children learn in the early years.

However, leaders' high expectations for pupils' learning are not always fully realised. Sometimes, teachers do not help pupils to build and develop their skills in enough depth. Work is underway to refine the curriculum and for subject leaders to ensure that changes are embedded securely and consistently.

Leaders worked successfully to ensure that pupils could catch up with any gaps in their learning as a result of COVID-19. They gave more time to the English and mathematics curriculum. There is now the same breadth and balance in the curriculum as there was prior to the challenges of COVID-19. Leaders are using a new system to check pupils' progress carefully and make sure that no individual or group of pupils is falling behind.

Pupils are good ambassadors for their school. They talk about it with great pride. Pupils value the space they have and resources such as the Reflection Garden, where, they say, 'We can go and sit and think'. They experience a wide range of visits, visitors to school, special events and activities in and out of school. Pupils enjoy their leadership roles, such as school council members, eco council and the charity committee. They are proud of what they do and take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils are very understanding of difference, saying, 'It's okay to be different and have different needs'.

Staff feel well looked after and supported by the leadership. There is a strong sense of teamwork. Staff are unanimous in their view that they are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' well-being and safety are priorities for everyone. Leaders make the necessary checks on staff before anyone starts working at the school. All staff are trained effectively. Staff know pupils very well and can quickly identify signs that a child may be at risk of harm. They know the procedures to follow if they have a concern. Any necessary action is taken swiftly, including involving external agencies when appropriate. Procedures for attending to pupils' medical needs are rigorous and robust. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including wearing reflectors provided by the school in the dark winter months.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' high expectations for pupils' learning are not always fully realised. The most important knowledge pupils need to learn is not always selected or organised with enough precision, depth and challenge. This means that while pupils achieve well, they could build and develop their skills even more effectively to know and remember more across the curriculum. Subject leaders need to monitor refinements to the curriculum, which are already underway, to ensure that changes are embedded securely and consistently.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118681
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227103
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	84
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Maxine Blades
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Gray
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stelling-minnis.kent.sch.uk">www.stelling-minnis.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Stelling Minnis is a voluntary controlled primary school with four classes. Children in Reception are taught in one class. There are two year groups in each of the other classes.
- The school's previous section 48 inspection of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England school took place on 14 November 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also met with a representative

from the local authority and spoke to a representative from the Diocese of Canterbury on the telephone.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum planning in some other subjects and observed some pupils reading to their teachers or teaching assistants.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Inspectors met with groups of pupils and spoke to a range of pupils in and out of lessons.
- Inspectors considered a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the effectiveness of the school, the school's improvement plan and information about pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding, checked the single central record of recruitment checks, safeguarding records and documents. Inspectors also talked to staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including the written responses. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Shields	Ofsted Inspector

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