

Inspection of Tunstall Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Tunstall Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1YG

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Tunstall Church of England Primary School is underpinned by values of 'friendship, kindness, perseverance, service, forgiveness and truthfulness'. These are lived out by pupils especially well. Pupils love the 'star values' award badges.

All staff have high expectations of pupils, and pupils rise to meet these exceptionally well. Pupils are proud to attend their school and to contribute to making it successful. They actively contribute to their school through a variety of leadership opportunities, including being members of the 'lighthouse team', 'Makaton Masters', 'leading lights' and as members of the school council.

Behaviour is calm, including during social times. Pupils move purposefully between lessons, keen to get going with their learning. In this highly inclusive school, pupils talk confidently about why it is important that everyone is valued. They offer their own contributions to making their school better. In the words of one pupil, 'We just enjoy being together'.

Pupils feel safe in this school, and bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that, were it to happen, it would be dealt with quickly by staff. There are warm and supportive relationships between staff and pupils across the school. Pupils know how to report any concerns or worries that they have.

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

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have planned a highly effective curriculum right from the early years, which is well considered and maps out what pupils need to know. When constructing their curriculum, leaders have considered very carefully the way that the knowledge and skills in each separate subject build over time, weaving these expertly through topics. They ensure that pupils not only retain what they have learned in each subject, but also make strong and informed connections between their learning. Pupils build a secure body of knowledge and can talk about their learning confidently, applying it in a variety of new contexts. This leads to all pupils achieving exceptionally well, including in end-of-key-stage assessments.

Expert staff teach reading very effectively. Leaders ensure that this is delivered consistently well across all groups. Staff provide clear and deliberate teaching, which is matched to pupils' needs. This helps all pupils to develop into confident readers. For those who struggle with reading, there is additional support, which is precisely matched to pupils' needs and is highly effective. Books and stories are celebrated throughout the school. Pupils relish the range of books they read and listen to and develop a passion for reading.

In lessons, teachers use precise questioning and other methods to gauge what pupils know. This is exceptionally strong. Right from the early years, staff encourage pupils to think and consider deeply. In the early years, like elsewhere in the school, there are warm and positive relationships between staff and children. Leaders identify pupils with additional needs quickly and ensure that these needs are met precisely. Staff are quick to adapt activities so that all pupils succeed.

Children in Reception respond very well to the clear routines in place. They work well together and engage happily in a range of well-thought-out activities. They are increasingly independent and able to apply what they have learned over time. They are well prepared for their next steps. Adults model clear communication with ambitious vocabulary and, as a result, children are especially confident and articulate when talking to one another and visitors.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. In lessons, they are focused and engaged. They are quickly absorbed in their learning and are keen to show what they know. Pupils demonstrate especially kind and thoughtful behaviour to one another during play times and around the school.

Leaders are continually reflective and take careful steps to refine their offer for pupils while also considering staff workload in their plans. This is evident in the work to further the personal development of pupils beyond the classroom. For example, all pupils have been learning a form of sign language, and this is woven through school songs and prayers. Pupils take their leadership responsibilities seriously. They talk with pride about maintaining their school site, including tending the plants in the spiritual garden, and they discuss how older pupils take care of the younger pupils when using the bike track.

There are strong links with the local community. Pupils help to lead local church services, and the monthly 'community lunch' sees older members of the local area joining the school. At these events, pupils demonstrate their learning by, for example, reading to the older members of the community. Pupils engage with the wide range of clubs readily, and pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged benefit significantly from the vast array of opportunities available.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding at the school. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. Leaders ensure that all staff have the relevant training to help them identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff know their pupils well and are swift to report any concerns. Governors ensure that leaders take the right steps to check that adults are safe to work in the school. Staff liaise effectively with external agencies and ensure that pupils and their families get the help they need.

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.

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

Unique reference number	118735
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10267995
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Gregory
Headteacher	Rebecca Andrews
Website	www.tunstall.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Canterbury. It received its last section 48 inspection in 2016. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also held telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, science and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to adults they knew.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held meetings with safeguarding leaders, the governing body, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised the single central record and checked safeguarding records.
- The inspection team took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes. They also considered external reports of the school from the local authority.
- The team spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of parent/carer and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Clarke	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam French	Ofsted Inspector

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