

Inspection of St Katherine's School & Nursery

St Katherines Lane, Snodland, Kent ME6 5EJ

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Ray Lang. This school is part of the Coppice Primary Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Chatley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Carole Hardy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are joyful and proud of their aspirational and welcoming school. From Nursery to Year 6, everyone learns to live the school's values of respect, resilience, responsibility, community, compassion and excellence. These values have inspired excellent behaviour, which helps most pupils to meet the school's high expectations for all. Some pupils find it hard to manage their emotions. The school offers extensive pastoral care to help them, including therapeutic support in the wonderful nurture room.

The school has high ambitions for all pupils' achievement. Everyone is united in the vision to continually improve the quality of education provided. As a result, pupils are supported to achieve consistently well.

Pupils thrive and enjoy an extensive range of leadership roles, including 'well-being warriors' and 'community ambassadors'. They make a tangible difference to the life of the school. Pupils learn about the wider world by welcoming visitors such as drummers from Ghana. 'Aspiration Alley' showcases the impressive personal development in the school. Pupils understand healthy relationships and learn about a wide range of faiths and cultures. They study modern Britain through well-designed lesson and assembly activities. Pupils celebrate diversity and are keen to challenge prejudice or inequality. Pupils feel safe, special and valued. They appreciate how leaders and staff always help them.

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

Leaders and trustees share a vision for this school to be aspirational and inclusive. These aims are fulfilled with impressive consistency across this thriving school. Parents say that behaviour and learning have dramatically improved since the new headteacher started in their post. Leaders are highly inspirational, compassionate and effective. Staff are happy and proud to work here. They are well supported. Trustees and governors meet their duties with tenacity and diligence. Harnessing the shared expertise across the trust, the school is outward-facing, reflective and continually seeking ways to improve pupils' experiences.

Staff ensure that pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities are strongly supported. The school uses expert knowledge to diagnose any concerns. Everyone works together to put effective support in place, such as targeted help for groups or individuals. Parents appreciate how well the school keeps them informed about this extra support. Partnership work with a local special school reflects the inclusive culture, benefiting pupils in both settings.

Phonics is taught effectively from early years, and the love of reading is blossoming across the school. Pupils learn to read fluently and with expression. Support for catch up, individually and in small groups, targets the sounds which pupils are struggling with. Books are matched to sounds that pupils know, ensuring appropriate practice. Pupils love the diverse range of texts in the impressive school

library. Teachers read books which enlighten pupils' imaginations. The charitable 'book nooks' ensure that everyone accesses high-quality books, and reading ambassadors promote reading wonderfully.

The curriculum is well designed with high ambition. As a result of effective professional development across the school and trust, staff's subject knowledge is strong. The consistent approach to teaching begins impressively in early years. In both Nursery and Reception, staff provide opportunities to enrich vocabulary, communication and emotional development. Pupils achieve well in key stage 1 and are being well prepared to succeed as they move through the school and beyond. The school's high expectations were not reflected by published test outcomes in 2023, which were lower than national averages in key stage 2. However, inspirational leaders are driving standards higher, with all staff engaged and working tenaciously to help pupils achieve consistently well. Recall activities help pupils to recall and connect their knowledge. Staff's checks of pupils' understanding involve instant feedback. This often works well, but sometimes teachers do not sharply identify pupils' misconceptions. This means that pupils may not learn key content accurately. Leaders know this and have plans in place to ensure that checks of pupils' understanding are more precise and effective.

Everyone plays their part to ensure impressive behaviour. Relationships are supportive and positive. The school's environment is calm, happy and orderly. Learning time is never lost, as pupils consistently rise to meet the high expectations of staff. Pupils love their school. Nurture spaces, pastoral experiences and outdoor learning provide valuable well-being boosts to help everyone manage their feelings.

The provision for personal development is first class. Talents are nurtured through trust-wide sports events and musical performances in settings from a local care home to a national arena. Support for families is exceptional. Leaders are passionate in their ambition to ensure equity of opportunity. Their actions ensure that nobody misses out. Pupils love the trips, visits and experiences that widen their world experience through the school's 'See Beyond Snodland' approach.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not consistently identify and address pupils' misconceptions precisely. This means that pupils may not learn and remember key knowledge long term. The school must continue to strengthen its approach to assessment so that staff make effective use of information to inform future teaching and help all pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147591
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296460
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	484
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Carole Hardy
CEO of the trust	Mark Chatley
Headteacher	Ray Lang
Website	www.stkatherineskent.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher started their post in September 2023.
- The school is part of the Coppice Primary Partnership multi-academy trust.
- St Katherine's School and Nursery converted to become an academy in November 2019. When its predecessor school, St Katherine's School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be requires improvement overall.
- The school currently does not use any alternative providers.
- The school offers a before- and after-school club, overseen by the school.
- There is a Nursery for three-year-old children.
- The school shares its site, and collaborates with, the satellite provision of Five Acre Wood School, a foundation special school.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, subject leaders, early years leader, teachers, support staff and the teaching and learning leader from the trust.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer, chair of trustees, trustees and governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, history and physical education. For deep dives, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to a range of pupils read. The inspector observed catch up interventions to learn how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors evaluated responses to the pupil survey and spoke with pupils during lessons and breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke to a sample of parents and took account of their responses to Ofsted Parent View and free-text responses.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Louise Lythgoe	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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