

Inspection of St Georges CofE (Aided) Primary School

Chequers Road, Sheerness, Kent ME12 3QU

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Howard Fisher. This school is part of Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Annie Wiles, and overseen by a board of trustees.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud ambassadors for their welcoming and inclusive school. They show impeccable manners, politely welcoming all, as they open doors and greet everyone with a smile. Mental health and well-being are prioritised. Pupils speak with delight and enthusiasm about how much leaders and staff care about them. If they have any worries, help is never far away. For some, this involves valuable time in 'The Nest' for nurture support. Others enjoy learning breaks or play therapy with caring and knowledgeable staff who help them to get back on track. Compassion and forgiveness ensure a fresh start every day in this caring and kind community.

The school has high expectations for every pupil to do their best. Despite this, in 2023, key stage 2 pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing was much lower than the national average. The school has taken robust action to address this, and current pupils' achievement is more secure. Pupils are fulfilling the school's high ambitions in calm and happy classrooms.

Meaningful leadership roles, such as playtime buddy and computing ambassador, help pupils to thrive with responsibility. The new 'eco council' aims to boost environmental awareness at school. Pupils love singing, and relish opportunities to perform. The residential trip is a highlight for pupils in Year 6.

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

Reading is at the heart of this school. Starting in early years, the teaching of phonics is consistently effective. Children learn sounds and enjoy reading precisely matched books to develop their skills. Staff encourage them to practise language with frequent recall activities throughout the day. The school gives pupils valuable one-to-one support if they need extra help. Pupils learn to become fluent and confident readers. The impressive school library and book fairs promote the joy of reading. Pupils from across the school are proud to become 'reading dragons'. They make recommendations and inspire their peers to enjoy and celebrate a wide range of books.

The curriculum has been designed with precise knowledge from early years to Year 6. Pupils become confident mathematicians, writers, and scientists as they move through the school. Subjects including computing and music are particularly successful, reflecting breadth and ambition for all. Professional development is prioritised by leaders and trustees. This helps to ensure that teaching is effective across classes. Pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive impressive support. Leaders show expertise and compassion to remove barriers for all, working with teachers and families to identify needs. Some pupils benefit from specific help for conditions such as autism or dyslexia. For others, provision is pastoral, showcasing the well-being expertise and compassion in the school. Transition into early years gives children a flying start to school life. Throughout the school, staff get to know families well and parents speak highly of how well the school communicates and 'goes the extra mile'.

Published key stage 2 outcomes in writing and mathematics were lower than usual last year, but leaders have taken effective steps to address misconceptions and keep pupils on track this year. A few subjects are less well developed than the strongest. Despite recall activities being introduced, pupils do not always precisely recall knowledge long term across the full breadth of the curriculum. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that pupils learn and remember key content successfully in every subject.

Behaviour is excellent and learning time is never lost. The exemplary conduct seen across the school reflects a positive and inclusive environment that enables pupils to thrive. Persistent absence has improved as a result of tenacious work by leaders and staff. Attendance is now higher than the national average.

Pupils learn about cultural events such as Chinese New Year. A wide range of clubs help pupils to stay healthy and active. Disadvantaged pupils are well represented because leaders are passionate that nobody misses out. Visitors, such as the police community support officer, help to prepare pupils for modern Britain. Pupils understand and promote equality, diversity and inclusivity.

Leaders are inspirational, compassionate and successful, always leading by example. They embody the school values every day, showing deep care for pupils, families and staff. Teachers share skills and knowledge across the trust, and leaders give their expertise to help other schools. Teachers who are early in their careers benefit from excellent mentoring. Trustees and governors fulfil statutory duties expertly and diligently. Using wisdom and compassion, they provide superb support and challenge. Staff and pupils feel valued and love their school. One parent represented many when saying, 'All staff at St George's are kind and approachable. The support our child receives is amazing, and we couldn't ask for more.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Since the pandemic, the school has continued to review and improve the curriculum. A few subjects are less well-embedded than the strongest. This means that pupils may not learn key content securely across the whole curriculum. The school must ensure that teaching enables pupils to learn and remember essential knowledge long term across every subject.

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	142372
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296430
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	401
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governors	Abi Oniye
CEO of trust	Annie Wiles
Headteacher	Howard Fisher
Website	www.st-georges-sheppey.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Canterbury. The school was rated good in its most recent section 48 inspection in November 2021.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.
- The school offers a before-school club, overseen by the trust, and an after-school club, overseen by an external provider.

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, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher/special educational needs co-ordinator, early years leader, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with a representative from the Diocese of Canterbury.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' work in music, and spoke with groups of pupils about their learning across the wider curriculum.
- 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 a range of pupils to learn their views about the school.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of parents and took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Oliver Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Owbridge	Ofsted Inspector

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