

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Littlebourne Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Littlebourne, Canterbury, Kent CT3 1XS

---

Inspection date:

8 October 2024

## **Outcome**

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

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

Pupils are eager to come to school and keen to learn. They embrace and enjoy the opportunities the school offers from the early morning breakfast club through to their enthusiastic singing in assembly.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour, to which they willingly rise. Pupils feel safe and secure as they happily go about their daily business. They are confident and courteous. Pupils are encouraged to respect and accept difference. They are warm, friendly and engaging with their friends and visitors alike. Pupils aspire to the school's positions of responsibility, such as 'well-being warriors', and learn to conduct themselves responsibly in any situation.

Pupils try hard with whatever they are asked to do. They rightly take pride in their well-presented workbooks. However, the school knows that pupils should achieve more than they do presently. The new headteacher is already leading helpful steps towards realising these higher academic aspirations for pupils.

Pupils develop a strong understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe, particularly the risks associated with being online. They report that bullying is not an issue. Records show that any concerns are thoroughly investigated and dealt with.

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

The school is calmly continuing through another challenging period of significant changes to staffing at all levels, including governance. The new headteacher has rapidly formed an accurate picture of the school's strengths and where it needs to do more. While the school has ensured that pupils continue to have a positive experience and enjoy school, aspects of the quality of education are more variable than they should be.

Although pupils gain an increasing range of useful knowledge and skills, the school does not promote positive progress consistently well through the curriculum. For example, most younger pupils successfully use the phonics they have learned to read and spell well. However, there is not enough emphasis on checking carefully that all children keep up with their phonics learning from the start.

The school lays the right foundations early for future learning in mathematics. Work in older pupils' books generally shows their continued success, and their clearly presented methods support accurate calculations. Occasionally, pupils have not securely learned the prior knowledge they need to tackle the tasks they are set.

The school has achieved much in establishing a coherent curriculum to cater for the school's combination of single- and mixed-aged classes, but there is more to do. Some subject curriculums are not precise enough about exactly what pupils should learn. Sometimes, tasks do not readily promote the learning that teachers are seeking. At other times, they do not provide ideal opportunities for pupils to practise something and get better.

Teachers typically have good subject knowledge. They usually present new information clearly. Teaching assistants provide helpful support to pupils who need it. They check pupils' understanding and offer encouragement, as well as revisiting and reinforcing important points. More broadly in lessons, there is some effective checking of pupils' understanding, but this is not consistently secure across the school.

The school has a clearly defined strategy for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Individual and group plans for pupils are detailed and specific. The school is well aware that where classroom practice is less secure, this can have a bigger impact on pupils who, for any reason, need the most help.

Staff feel well supported as part of a close-knit team, and the school is mindful of their workload and well-being. The new headteacher has rightly put development opportunities and support for staff among the school's top priorities. Partly due to the circumstances of this turbulent period, different levels of leadership are not as well established or embedded as they could be. This reduces the potential capacity for making improvements.

Despite an overall positive picture of attendance, the school prioritises doing all it can to make sure every pupil comes to school as often as possible. The school analyses reasons

for absence at an individual level to determine the most appropriate response for each family.

Pupils understand well the school's values, which underpin all of its work. Through the curriculum and other activities, the school encourages pupils to develop their individual personalities, resilience and character. It teaches pupils how to cooperate and what it means to be a good 'team player'. Pupils develop good insight into forming and maintaining positive relationships. They are taught how to recognise when something is not right and develop the confidence to go to a trusted adult for help.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school has not precisely identified what pupils need to learn and remember. This means it is not clear what teachers need to emphasise and assess to ensure that all pupils make enough progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that the curriculum clearly identifies what pupils should know and be able to do at each stage in each subject.
- Teachers are not routinely adept at checking carefully what pupils do and do not already know and adapting teaching accordingly. The tasks they choose for pupils do not support the intended learning consistently well enough. This hinders pupils' ability to get better through careful and precise practice. The school should ensure teachers use effective strategies for checking pupils' understanding and use this information to select appropriate tasks to promote pupils' learning.
- In another turbulent period for the school, leadership at different levels is either undeveloped or very new. This means that the capacity for securing improvements to the quality of education is not as strong as it could be. The school should prioritise developing and strengthening leadership at different levels to increase capacity and support the sustainability of any improvements.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded

inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

## **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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118657
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341505
<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>	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Simon Rudland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Hillier
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.littlebourne.kent.sch.uk">www.littlebourne.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England primary school within the Diocese of Canterbury. The school's religious character was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in January 2017. The school is expecting its next inspection of this type during the current academic year.
- A new headteacher took up post at the start of September 2024. The previous headteacher was also different than at the time of the previous Ofsted inspection.
- The chair of governors took up their role in October 2024.
- The school has its own breakfast club and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held extensive discussions throughout the inspection with the headteacher and special educational needs coordinator. These senior leaders joined inspectors during their visits to classrooms.
- The inspection team visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also met briefly with staff and one inspector held a longer discussion with teachers.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The lead inspector met with the new chair of governors, the vice-chair and two other governors. He also met with a representative of the local authority and spoke with the deputy director of education for the Diocese of Canterbury on the telephone.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in the inspection surveys returned by 11 staff. The also took account of the 17 responses submitted to Ofsted Parent View, including all of the confidential additional comments.

### **Inspection team**

Clive Dunn, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz McIntosh	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024