

# St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Mount Pleasant, Aylesford, ME20 7BE

## Inspection dates

20–21 January 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher, ably supported by committed teachers and a determined governing body, has brought about rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. As a result, the school is now good and improving.
- Governors have developed their skills through effective training. They understand the challenges and provide very effective support to leaders.
- Progress for all pupils has accelerated, especially in mathematics and reading. Standards at the end of Year 6 have risen and are above average.
- Teachers use very effective questioning skills to develop and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class. Exciting activities engage and encourage children to become independent learners. Opportunities for them to develop their early writing skills are very good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and want to do their best. Relationships between pupils and adults are strong.
- Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They say behaviour is good and has improved. This view is echoed by most parents who feel their children are well looked after.
- Subject leaders play an increasingly important part in improving the quality of teaching. Good quality training and support are increasing the effectiveness of recently appointed leaders.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs make good progress because the school clearly identifies their needs now. Activities and additional support are carefully matched to their needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and achieve as well as other pupils in the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is an inconsistent approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) in the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. This slows progress for some pupils.
- Newly appointed leaders are not yet fully engaged in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Progress in writing is not as rapid as it is in mathematics and reading. Handwriting skills are not taught consistently. As a result, work is often difficult to read and progress slows.
- Attainment in Key Stage 1 is not yet reflecting the accelerated progress made by pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all year groups during 11 observations of lessons or part lessons. Almost all the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or literacy leader.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books across all subjects to establish the progress and quality of work over time. She listened to some pupils read.
- The inspector met a group of pupils to find out their views about behaviour and their learning. She also talked individually to pupils during lessons and around the school.
- The inspector gathered the views of parents during the inspection. In addition, she took account of the 59 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed the 13 responses from the staff questionnaires.
- Meetings took place with the newly appointed headteacher and the interim headteacher. The inspector held discussions with the subject, early years, and special educational needs leaders. She met with governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's plans for improvement, external reports on the school's effectiveness and records of the checks on teaching made by leaders. She analysed information on the attainment and progress of current pupils. She also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding and samples of governors' minutes.

## Inspection team

Penny Spencer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Peter's is smaller than the average-sized primary school, but growing. There is one class for each year group.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after) is below average. In some year groups there are either no pupils or only one or two. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend full time.
- There is a private nursery on site which is not subject to this inspection.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There have been considerable changes to the leadership team, including the governing body and teaching staff, since the previous inspection. An interim headteacher led the school from September 2013. A substantive headteacher took up her post two weeks before this inspection.

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

- Improve teaching so more is typically outstanding, and progress in writing matches that of other subjects, by:
  - developing a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the school, to ensure all pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2, make rapid progress in their reading and writing
  - developing the skills of all staff in teaching pupils how to write neatly and quickly
  - ensuring all teachers have consistently high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work.
- Improve the skills of all subject leaders, but especially those who are new to their posts, by:
  - developing their skills in checking the quality of teaching and learning through observations and work scrutiny.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governing body have led the school successfully through a long and difficult period of change. Their relentless determination to improve teaching and raise standards has been critical in rapidly improving pupils' progress and attainment. The interim headteacher is working closely with the newly appointed headteacher to ensure a smooth change over.
- Immediate observations of teaching and learning by the new headteacher are maintaining improvements. Observations during the inspection showed teachers using improved questioning techniques they had gained during visits to outstanding schools the previous week. Regular checks on teaching, coupled with challenging targets for teaching performance linked to teachers pay, have been successful in improving the quality of teaching. Leaders are ambitious for continued success and improvement.
- Middle leaders make an increasingly positive contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning. They are developing their skills in observing teaching through effective training and good support from more experienced colleagues. Action plans are precise and sharply focused on key priorities. However, the impact of this work is yet to show in pupils' achievement. As a result, leadership is not outstanding. Good use is made of developing partnerships within the local school collaboration to provide opportunities for training and professional development. Teachers check and evaluate assessment information with colleagues to ensure it is accurate and to validate their judgements.
- The local authority now works closely with the school to improve teaching and achievement. Training opportunities for teachers and governors have been successful in improving skills and understanding.
- School improvement plans focus precisely on the key priorities. Leaders make regular checks to ensure actions are successfully raising achievement.
- Leaders analyse information on pupils' progress and attainment thoroughly. Leaders and teachers make good use of this information to meet the needs of pupils. For example, the rates of progress for boys have accelerated because of targeted teaching and improved resources.
- Leadership of the early years is strong and children get off to a good start. Close links with the nursery on site ensure good communication. School staff use nursery assessments effectively when children move into the school.
- The school's new curriculum now provides a wide range of learning experiences. Trips to places of interest enhance children's learning. They ensure pupils get a broader view of life in modern Britain than might be typical for the area in which the school is situated. Within topics, the school has established new opportunities for developing writing, and pupils enjoy using their mathematical skills to solve problems in a range of situations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. There are very effective links with the local church and community. Tolerance and respect for others are key features of the school's values, and pupils and staff have excellent relationships. New resources are enabling pupils gain valuable experiences in music, art and computing.
- Additional funding effectively supports the small, but growing, number of disadvantaged pupils. Carefully targeted support ensures these pupils have access to high quality teaching and can take part in wider curricular activities, such as trips and residential visits. They achieve well as a result. This shows that leaders promote equal opportunities well and discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
- Leaders use additional funding for sport creatively to good effect. The school hall now has a suitable floor for gymnastics and additional equipment is ensuring all pupils can take part in a wider range of sports, including mountain biking. Pupils enjoy more opportunities to enter sporting competitions through membership of the local school consortium. Leaders' checks show more pupils taking part in clubs and so increasing their health and fitness.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive good support. The new special educational needs leader accurately assesses their needs. What the school provides matches closely to these needs and access to professional expertise is used efficiently. Parents are very happy with the progress their children are making as a result of these improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have developed their skills substantially and are a strong force for change. They fulfil their statutory and other duties well. Governors, especially the Chair, worked closely with the interim headteacher to ensure the school improved rapidly, despite many difficulties. The governing body has been instrumental in the appointment of the new headteacher and are confident in their ability to work together to move the school towards outstanding. Detailed and comprehensive training ensures governors have a good understanding of how the school's performance compares to other schools

nationally. Governors understand how to interpret the assessment information on pupil progress and standards and how to link that to the performance of teachers and the quality of teaching. They ensure procedures to manage the performance of teachers reward good teaching and tackle any underperformance. Governors keep a close check on how the school spends additional funding. They examine the assessment information for disadvantaged pupils closely, ensuring the wise spending of funds.

- Safeguarding procedures are strong and the school meets all statutory requirements.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning that enable them to learn well and make good progress. They are keen to improve and enjoy the opportunities to work alongside each other during lessons. Pupils of all ages were keen to show the inspector their work and how much they had improved. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because improvements are yet to have a sustained impact on their achievement.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. They report that instances of bullying are very rare and they know what to do should anything occur.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in the playground is very positive. Pupils play well together and are polite to each other and adults. They report that behaviour has improved a great deal and they appreciate the changes that have taken place.
- Older pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. Members of the 'Playground Patrol' ensure pupils are not left to play on their own and help sort out any problems.
- Behaviour records indicate that bullying and behaviour problems are very infrequent. The school deals with incidents appropriately, and parents are involved when necessary. There has been only one exclusion over a number of years.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils understand the dangers that might occur when using the internet or social media. They know who to go to if they are worried or concerned. They are confident that the adults in school will help them and sort out any problems.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors throughout the inspection indicate they feel safe and secure. The vast majority of parents echo this view.
- Procedures for keeping vulnerable pupils safe and for checking whether adults who work in the school are suitable are good. Leaders and governors have had training on safe recruitment practices and understand the risks involved if checks are not rigorous.
- Attendance has improved and is above average. The school rigorously checks on any absence and has enforced strict measures to deter any holidays in term time.
- Safety is not outstanding as recent changes to the procedures for leaving school at the end of the day have yet to become fully embedded, and a very small minority of parents have some concerns.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- Since the last inspection the teaching force has completely changed. Securing improvements in pupil achievement and in their own practice are teachers' priorities. They welcome the new opportunities for training and professional development.
- Teachers encourage pupils to develop their understanding by creating a positive atmosphere for learning where children feel safe to test out their ideas and have a go. They ask searching questions to deepen pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils' progress is accelerating.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Lessons engage pupils in their learning because they are lively and take account of their interests. The introduction of 'boy friendly' resources and a good understanding of the ways in which boys like to learn are accelerating boys' progress in all subjects.
- For example, Years 4 and 5 pupils, but in particular boys, learnt about different types of angles through the effective use of pictures of a fighter jet and photographs of interesting objects around the school.
- The school has identified writing as an area for development. Specific lessons for the development of skills in spelling and punctuation are having a positive impact. As a result, pupils' progress in writing is

accelerating. Recent assessment information indicates that more pupils are working at or above the expectations for their age in all year groups.

- Despite these improvements, poor handwriting and presentation skills are holding back some pupils' progress. The teaching of handwriting is variable across the school and there is a lack of a systematic approach. Poorly presented work sometimes masks the improvements in content and spelling made by pupils. As a result, teaching is not outstanding.
- The teaching of phonics is variable across the classes, especially for the younger pupils. Teachers do not follow a consistent approach, which leads to slower progress for some pupils. Work is not always at the right level.
- Pupils understand the comments made by teachers when marking their work because there is a consistent and easily understood system. They have regular opportunities to respond and improve their work, which they state helps them move forward or gives them additional challenge.
- Well planned activities in the Reception class engage children and make learning exciting. Children make good progress as result.
- There is an effective deployment of teaching assistants and additional adults. They have high expectations and support pupils successfully. Specific training for those who support disabled pupils or those with special educational needs contributes very effectively to the progress and well-being of these pupils.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class from broadly typical starting points. They develop good skills in reading, writing and number. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is above average.
- Standards across Key Stage 1 have declined over the past few years. In 2014, attainment was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the assessment information for current pupils indicates a reversal of this trend. Progress is accelerating and standards are rising. Pupils' work scrutinised during the inspection and observations during lessons back up this information securely. All groups of pupils are improving because of the improved teaching and more rigorous assessment.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 improved considerably in 2014 and are above average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. Information for current pupils in Key Stage 2 shows the school is maintaining and building upon these improvements. Work scrutinised in books shows evidence of accelerated progress in all subjects and for all groups. Progress in writing is catching up with that of mathematics and reading.
- The most able pupils make good progress because the work they receive is highly challenging. More pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 are working at the higher levels than previously. The most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently created algebraic formulae to solve problems.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read well. They stated how much they were enjoying the new reading books provided by the school. Despite the inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics in Reception and Year 1, standards in the Year 1 phonic check are rising and are above average.
- The small number of pupils eligible for additional government funding do well and make good progress. There were too few pupils in 2014 to comment upon. However, across the school, they generally make progress and achieve in line with all pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because the school identifies their needs accurately. Comprehensive records and individual learning plans ensure support carefully matches their requirements.
- Achievement is not outstanding because, despite improvements in writing, poor presentation and handwriting are preventing some pupils from reaching their full potential.

### **The early years provision** is good

- The Reception teacher provides a stimulating, vibrant nurturing place in which to learn. The children's interests and ideas lead well planned lessons and activities. Teaching assistants support the teacher well. They actively engage with children to support their learning and development.
- Their learning engrosses the children. They use their imagination to explore and develop ideas. For example, a group of children used a wide variety of equipment to repair and decorate the play house outside because 'we're builders'.
- The recent acquisition of wet weather clothing and wellington boots means children can access the outside space safely in all weathers. Even though it was very cold and raining, children were

enthusiastically exploring the properties of ice and creating a variety of pictures to decorate the fence.

- Opportunities for children to develop their writing skills are excellent. For example, during the inspection, pupils wrote invitations, made lists, labelled parcels and made signs for the building site.
- Children know how to behave well. They know how to keep themselves safe and they follow instructions and rules quickly. They work well together and treat equipment and resources with respect. For example, two boys carefully worked together with a very long measuring tape to measure the room. They made sure they did not interfere with any of the other children on the carpet.
- Staff encourage parents take an active part in children's learning. They contribute to learning experiences and assessments. They feel welcome and are confident the adults look after their children well.
- Strong links with the onsite nursery prepare children well for the move into school. Teacher assessments are regular and comprehensive. They build up an accurate picture of progress and prepare children well for the move into Year 1. Good communication between teachers maintains children's progress.
- Early years provision is not outstanding because the teaching of phonics is inconsistent, slowing progress. In addition, children become confused and learning is hindered because some additional staff members do not always pronounce letter sounds correctly.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118617
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	453633

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	151
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Etherington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Craig
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17–18 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01622717335
<b>Fax number</b>	01622717235
<b>Email address</b>	office@stpetersaylesford.kent.sch.uk

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