

Littlebourne Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Littlebourne, Canterbury, Kent CT3 1XS

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and governors are united in their vision to create a school community that is focused on ensuring the care and well-being of all pupils. Christian values sit at the heart of the school's vision and work to promote equalities is strong.
- The headteacher has managed a period of staffing instability effectively. Where outcomes had declined, they are now improving. Pupils make good progress.
- Leaders have the support of parents and carers to improve the school further.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use questioning effectively to develop pupils' understanding.
- Governors have not evaluated the impact of the pupil premium funding. This means that they do not have an up-to-date understanding of the effectiveness of the spending.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is interesting and challenging. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that progression in pupils' learning is carefully planned for in all subjects.
- Standards of attainment in mathematics had declined over time. Pupils are now making improved progress as a result of stronger teaching.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. This is an inclusive school that is focused on ensuring the well-being of all pupils.
- Pupils in the early years make a strong start to their time in school. Effective teaching results in them making good progress and they benefit from an interesting and engaging curriculum.
- Teachers usually provide work that meets pupils' needs. However, tasks occasionally do not challenge pupils to achieve as well as they could.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils quickly develop the skills they need to read.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that lessons contain sufficient challenge to help pupils make as much progress as possible.
- Ensure that governors check that pupil premium funding is spent effectively, and has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Continue to improve the curriculum by ensuring that subject leaders make sure that progression is carefully planned within subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have high expectations for the quality of teaching. Regular checks by leaders mean that they have a clear view of strengths and weaknesses across the school. The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed.
- The headteacher has provided high-quality support and challenge to teachers to enable them to improve their practice. Teachers feel well supported by leaders. They respond well to training and there is a strong sense of teamwork among the staff. Improvements in the quality of teaching are resulting in better pupil progress which can be seen in pupils' work.
- The mathematics leader has taken effective action to ensure that the teaching of mathematics has improved. She has ensured that the curriculum is planned effectively and has provided challenge and support to staff that has resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching. Pupils are making better progress as a result of this work.
- Leaders and governors are determined that the school plays an important role within the community and contributes positively to life in the village. Pupils benefit from activities within the community that are planned with real purpose. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have recently taken part in a project called 'Love Grows', aimed at linking different generations. They worked with an arts group in a variety of activities that contributed well to community cohesion and forged links between the school and local residents. One pupil described the experience as 'great fun because we got to meet new people and it's good to make friends and know our neighbours'.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and continuing to improve. Pupils benefit from a wide range of trips and visitors to the school. Pupils speak positively about the variety of subjects they learn and the fun in the curriculum. The recent addition of forest school is exciting pupils and making effective use of the school grounds. However, middle leaders are not evaluating the effect of the curriculum on pupils' knowledge and understanding. This prevents them from accurately identifying what is working well and what can be improved.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is a strength of the school. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and the importance of tolerance and respect. When speaking with pupils about equalities, all could recall work in assemblies and personal, social, health and economic education lessons on the importance of treating each other equally. One pupil said, 'It's OK to be yourself here and everyone is treated the same no matter what religion or culture you come from.'
- Sport premium funding is spent effectively. Leaders have used the money well to provide pupils with an increased range of physical activity which now also includes forest school and a wide range of after-school sporting activities that are free for pupils to attend.
- Parents are unanimous in their praise for the school and the work of its staff. Since the previous inspection, a significant number of pupils have joined the school outside of the normal admission window. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive excellent

transition into school and they very quickly feel part of the strong community. One parent summed up the views of many when they said, 'I have found the school to be very welcoming, nurturing and supportive, where all staff go above and beyond to promote the all-round development of each and every child.'

Governance of the school

- Governors share the commitment and ambition held by leaders and regularly visit the school. They bring a range of appropriate professional skills and expertise to the school that equip them well to fulfil their roles. They know the school well and have managed changes to leadership and staffing effectively.
- Governors are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent and support leaders in ensuring that it is targeted correctly. However, they are not fully aware of the impact of the funding. This has contributed to an overly optimistic view of pupil outcomes in the past.
- Governors are reflective and review their structure and organisation to ensure that they are effective and have sufficient members to fulfil their duties. They access appropriate training and support to allow them to provide challenge and support to the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupil welfare is at the heart of the school's work. The strong culture of safeguarding in the school results in pupils being safe and secure. Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training and they audit the impact of this. This information is used to design further training so that staff are skilled in identifying any safeguarding concerns and taking appropriate steps to support pupils and their families.
- Leaders keep detailed records of their work to keep pupils safe. Employment checks on new staff are thorough. Governors provide effective monitoring of the school's safeguarding work.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They can confidently identify adults they would speak to if they needed support or had a concern and trust adults to help them. The curriculum supports pupils' understanding in an age-appropriate way. For example, in Year 6, pupils are taught how to use public transport safely in preparation for their transition to secondary school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Following the previous inspection, the quality of teaching varied as a result of staffing turbulence. Recently, the quality of teaching has improved, and it continues to do so.
- Teachers care about the pupils in their classes. They have established clear routines that result in classrooms that are calm and orderly. Pupils are able to learn well because there are few distractions or disruptions. They work well together and support each other in their learning.

- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' achievements. They use questioning effectively to check what pupils understand and to develop their knowledge further.
- Most learning is planned effectively to allow pupils to make good progress. However, there are occasions when tasks lack challenge and pupils spend too long waiting to make a contribution to the lesson.
- Assessment information collected in mathematics and English is used well to identify where pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), require increased support. Additional adults in the classroom are used effectively to help pupils with SEND progress with activities that are carefully matched to their needs.
- The quality of pupils' writing has improved since the previous inspection. Recent improvements in the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling mean that pupils write with more accuracy. Teachers regularly provide pupils with the opportunity to edit and improve their work. However, this mainly focuses on vocabulary and sometimes there is a lack of challenge for pupils who also need to consider other ways that their writing can improve.
- The teaching of reading, including phonics, is effective. During the inspection, pupils were heard reading with confidence and expression. In phonics lessons, pupils benefit from staff who clearly and accurately pronounce the sounds in words and correct pupils when required. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have enthusiastically embraced the new books that they are able to borrow from school and the majority enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Teachers plan learning that is interesting and relevant to pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote thoughtful pieces on the impact of global warming and the effect it may have on them. In Year 3, a pupil recounted in detail how she had learned to make a three-dimensional map of the United Kingdom in a series of lessons linking design and technology and geography. These interesting learning opportunities result in pupils being motivated to learn and keen to increase their knowledge. However, teaching in foundation subjects is not always planned in a sequential way and, consequently, prior learning is not always built upon.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils feel valued, listened to and respected. They appreciate the efforts of staff to help them learn, stay safe and thrive in school. Pupils are polite and welcoming to each other and to visitors to the school.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer and the majority of pupils attend at least one club. Leaders have ensured that disadvantaged pupils benefit from these opportunities and their attendance is tracked carefully and support offered to increase their participation.
- The well-being of pupils lies at the heart of the school's work. Pupils explained how the school provides opportunities for them to learn about mental health and ensure that

they are healthy, physically and mentally. A pupil in Year 6 described how relaxation, meditation and breathing exercises helped pupils to relieve stress and feel positive about themselves.

- Pupils' sense of social responsibility is well developed. They have opportunities to fundraise for local and global charities. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 worked on a project based on their awareness of pollution caused by plastic. They spent time researching how to reduce waste and presented their findings to the school in an assembly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- During lessons, pupils behave well. For the majority of the time, they listen carefully to teachers and cooperate well together. Reward systems are understood by pupils and contribute to the good behaviour in the school. On occasions, when pupils are not sufficiently involved in their learning, they lose interest and stray off task.
- Pupils who attend breakfast club enjoy a positive start to the day and choose from a range of interesting activities to enjoy. The well-organised lunchtime helps pupils behave well and makes good use of the large school grounds. Pupils spoke positively about Zone 5, where they can go if they need extra adult support during lunch.
- During the inspection, pupils were observed making mature choices about their behaviour and being considerate to the needs of others. For example, a group of pupils who were playing football on the playground before school moved their game so that they did not get in the way of parents and younger children.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and parents recognise the importance of good attendance. Leaders monitor attendance levels carefully and provide support to families when required. Attendance rates are above national averages for all groups of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over time, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, together with staffing turbulence and high pupil mobility, have led to variable rates of progress and attainment. The leadership team has successfully improved pupil outcomes by ensuring that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards of attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 had been declining over time. The school's latest internal assessments show that pupils in the current Year 6 are making better progress than previous cohorts and attainment is rising. Work in pupils' workbooks and observations in lessons confirm the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- Small cohorts mean that making comparisons on the performance of groups of pupils with national averages is not always possible. However, leaders recognised the need to ensure that disadvantaged pupils made stronger progress. They have taken effective steps to put appropriate support in place so that these pupils are making better progress.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has fluctuated over time. As a result of improvements to the teaching

of phonics in Year 1 and strong practice in the early years, a greater proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard in 2019 than has been the case in previous years.

- The breadth of the curriculum results in pupils developing a secure base of knowledge that prepares them well for their transition to secondary school. More work is needed to ensure that pupils build successfully on their prior learning in all subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Teachers plan and deliver a curriculum that is well matched to the needs of pupils. Teachers use assessment information and feedback from the children to carefully adapt provision so that it is interesting and challenging. As a result, children make good progress from starting points that are broadly in line with national averages. They are well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Teachers' energy and enthusiasm rubs off on the children and, as a result, they are keen and inquisitive learners. Staff model new learning clearly for children and help them make links to what they already know. When learning about money, children were excited to discover that there are not any three or four pence coins and used their knowledge of numbers to systematically investigate which other coins there were.
- Children feel safe and secure in their classroom and eagerly take part in the interesting activities that are available to them. Children who had been learning about endangered species were enthusiastically making their own red squirrels and discussing how they could care for them. The cooperation between children is a strength of the early years and results from the high expectations and clear modelling of staff.
- Phonics is taught well. Children make good progress in learning their letter sounds. They enjoy using the knowledge of sounds in their writing. A group of pupils showed great concentration when they were using sound frames to generate words that they then sorted into real and made-up categories. When working independently, children are keen to involve writing in their play, using their knowledge of letters and sounds.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and welfare requirements are met fully. Staff training is up to date and procedures for recording and reporting concerns are clearly understood. Pupils learn how to stay safe when playing. An example of this was observed in the mud kitchen when children were using real tools with care to make mixtures. Communication between staff is strong and information is shared effectively so that pupils are well cared for.
- Parents expressed positive views about the quality of care and teaching that their children receive. Information about the children's learning is shared regularly with parents through an online tool. Parents are grateful for the opportunity to attend regular celebration assemblies where children show off their learning in class.

School details

Unique reference number	118657
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10088190

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Stanley
Headteacher	Mrs Stella Byrne
Telephone number	01227 721671
Website	www.littlebourne.kent.sch.uk
Email address	office@littlebourne.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 September 2015

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased from 66 to 99 since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are taught in same-age and mixed-age classes.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportions of pupils who have an education, health and care plan and those with SEND are above the national averages.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school is designated as a Church of England primary school in the Anglican Diocese of Canterbury. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in January 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. All observations were carried out with a member of the school's leadership team.
- During visits to lessons, the inspector spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' books across a range of subjects to evaluate the progress pupils are making in English, mathematics and the wider curriculum.
- The inspector met formally with a group of pupils to discuss their experience of school. Many other pupils were spoken to informally around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and subject leaders. In addition, the inspector met with representatives of the governing body and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documents and information, including the school development plan; checks on the quality of teaching; curriculum plans; minutes of governors' meetings; and behaviour and attendance records. The inspector also looked at arrangements and records for safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of the 26 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the 20 written comments from parents. He also held informal discussions with parents.

Inspection team

James Freeston, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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