

Inspection of a good school: St Katharine's Knockholt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Main Road, Knockholt, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 7LS

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

St Katharine's Knockholt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils offer a warm welcome to their school. They are proud and happy to be at the heart of this close-knit learning community. Relationships between staff and families are warm, respectful and supportive.

Leaders have high expectations for behaviour. Pupils listen well and are keen to engage with the views of others. Pupils treat each other with kindness. They are confident that should any incidents of bullying happen, staff would deal with them effectively.

Pupils glow with excitement when describing their link with a school in The Gambia. They have raised funds to pay for new flooring and sports equipment in the Gambian school. They share letters and video messages with their friends and love hearing about life in The Gambia.

Pupils say they 'push themselves out of their comfort zone' while flourishing at residential trips in Years 5 and 6. Pupils value the annual competition to design and build a go-kart to race against other schools. Through the strong local sports partnership, girls and boys represent the school at swimming, netball, football, cricket and athletics events. Attendance is very high at clubs, including gymnastics before school. Pupils also enjoy wider opportunities such as sewing, gardening, yoga, board games and junk modelling clubs.

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

Pupils are positive about learning, saying that 'teachers always make our lessons fun'. The curriculum is well planned and engaging. Leaders show high ambition for all, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupil is left behind. Teachers use efficient assessments to identify where pupils need individual help. The special

educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) provides training to equip staff with skills to support a range of needs such as dyslexia and autism spectrum disorder. This can involve 'pre-teaching' before lessons start, support during activities or 'boosters' afterwards. Support starts in early years, where staff identify if pupils need help with speech and language or balance and coordination.

In early years, staff have planned an effective phonics programme. Children learn sounds quickly and practice them by reading carefully selected books. Parents are impressed by how well their children learn to read. If pupils find reading hard as they get older, teachers prioritise their support. Staff help pupils decode and blend words until they are fluent and confident. Throughout the school, staff promote a love of reading. Pupils show enthusiasm for stories and non-fiction books, and they are proud to demonstrate their reading skills.

The teaching of mathematics starts well in early years, where children have frequent opportunities to explore numbers. Mathematical vocabulary is well planned and displayed in all classes, helping pupils to understand concepts. Teachers encourage an inquisitive approach to mathematics which helps pupils to improve and embed their skills through investigative work. Books contain high-quality work and evidence of reasoning, where pupils explain and justify their answers to problems. Older pupils show a strong grasp of calculation skills and mathematical concepts.

The history curriculum is well developed. Pupils acquire skills such as debating the reliability of historical artefacts. Younger pupils shared keen knowledge of neolithic and monolithic periods when studying how the earth looked at different times in history. When studying the Victorians, pupils understood how people in Britain were initially concerned about train travel, fearing it was unsafe. Pupils were excited to learn about the Romans and can recall strong historical knowledge.

Leaders have carefully considered an ambitious curriculum, and less experienced teachers have worked alongside more experienced staff. The strongest practice is not yet fully embedded in all classes and subjects. Pupils achieve well, but leaders have identified a group of pupils who made less progress during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with writing.

Behaviour around school is excellent. Playtimes are happy and safe. Lessons are never disrupted. Minor distractions only happen when pupils are over-excited, but this is swiftly dealt with. Pupils meet high standards modelled by staff.

Opportunities for pupils' broader development are diverse. Pupils sing to elderly residents and raise money for charities. Learning is enriched with visits to museums and religious sites. Pupils walk a daily mile and represent the school in a range of sports. Outdoor learning, dance and music experiences ensure that pupils' talents are nurtured and promoted beyond classrooms. Pupils celebrate diversity, welcoming visitors with disabilities to learn about different lives. They enjoy exploring the experiences of artists from different cultures. Pupils were thrilled by a virtual workshop with Lenny Henry.

Staff feel highly valued and well supported by leaders. As a result, well-being is high and workload is well managed, including for teachers at the start of their careers. Governors ask challenging questions to hold leaders to account. Staff, governors and families appreciate the high dedication, expertise and compassion of the headteacher, who leads by example.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff know how to identify risks to pupils because of robust training. Pupils know how to stay safe. They recognise online dangers and how to report them to trusted adults. Pupils learn about healthy relationships in lessons to feel ready for secondary school and life in modern Britain.

Occasionally, families need extra help. When this happens, leaders communicate with external agencies and keep detailed records. Recruitment practice shows diligence. Staff, volunteers and visitors undergo required checks, recorded accurately in a single central record. Governors oversee safeguarding practice to ensure that systems remain effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not yet fully embedded in every subject. This means that pupils may not know and remember their learning securely, for example in design and technology. Leaders should ensure that all foundation subjects are planned with clearly identified knowledge and skills.
- Leaders recognise that some pupils' writing skills have been more adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic than others. As a result, a group of pupils are not achieving highly with their writing. Teachers should focus on developing the skills of these specific pupils to ensure they achieve well.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in February 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	118713
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10211476
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Pickering
Headteacher	Sarah-Jane Tormey
Website	www.knockholt.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Rochester. The school was rated good in its most recent section 48 inspection in January 2018.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read.

- The inspector observed catch-up interventions to learn how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers, support staff and the SENDCo.
- The inspector met six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspector studied documents and records, including the school's single central record and child protection referrals. Inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding lead, staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to the staff questionnaire and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses. The inspector considered written correspondence from three parents.
- The inspector met with pupils to learn their views about the school. The inspector also considered responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector corresponded by email with a representative from the diocese.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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