

# Inspection of St Alphege Church of England Infant School

Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1DA

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Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are welcome at the school. They are integrated fully into every aspect of school life. This is recognised by parents, who told us, 'When I drop my son off, I just feel every muscle relax because I know he's so well cared for.' This starts with the warm greetings that pupils receive from staff at the gates in the morning and continues throughout the day. This positivity is reflected in pupils' exceptionally strong attitudes to school.

Pupils' behaviour is superb. They are notably thoughtful and considerate. The strong personal development provision is reflected in their mature attitudes. Pupils have a strong sense of understanding spirituality and faith. This is supported by carefully chosen experiences that pupils love, such as trips to local places of worship and theatre performances. Consequently, pupils discuss race, gender and equality topics with exceptionally open-minded views and awareness of others. The close community feel of the school is rooted in a true sense of open acceptance.

Pupils achieve well. They are highly engaged in learning and relish the curriculum's ambitious themes and topics. They feel empowered by the knowledge they gain and are enthusiastic about their learning journey.

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

Children have the best possible start to school in Nursery and Reception. Staff have carefully identified key learning and skilfully adapt it to meet the needs of all pupils. Children build ambitious knowledge over time that prepares them strongly for Year 1. They develop exceptionally strong language and attention skills. Children use these skills to maintain warm relationships with others. The adults in Reception and Nursery are expertly trained. Their interactions with children are of the highest quality and promote excellent learning. As a result, children achieve exceptionally well.

The school has a detailed and ambitious curriculum. This is carefully sequenced to support all pupils' learning of the content over time. For example, in history, the local area study is built from Nursery onwards, with trips and by exploration through art and music. Staff carefully adapt the curriculum to provide meaningful learning for all pupils. As a result, pupils who are disadvantaged, including pupils with SEND, achieve positive outcomes.

The support for pupils with SEND is steadfastly strong across the school. Adults follow the planned curriculum consistently well. The school provides staff with timely and effective training. This means that lessons match the planned curriculum, and activities are well designed. Pupils produce high-quality outcomes in subjects such as art. They told inspectors, 'I feel tingly when I get to explore in art.' The school has identified how it wants to help pupils remember knowledge over time, but this is

not yet fully effective. Pupils' recall of key knowledge across the wider curriculum is not yet as strong as it could be. Pupils achieve in line with national averages in published outcomes at the end of key stage 1.

The reading curriculum is taught effectively and consistently. Staff strongly promote a love of reading. Adults read to pupils daily, drawing from carefully chosen and diverse books. Adults teach reading effectively and ensure that weaker readers are strongly supported. Pupils read books that contain the sounds they have learned. As a result, pupils develop accuracy and fluency and develop into passionate and confident readers.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are exceptionally strong. Behaviour at breaktimes and in class is highly positive and inclusive. Pupils feel safe and heard by adults if they have any worries. There is no disruption of learning, and from Nursery onwards, pupils maintain positive relationships with adults and other pupils. The school has been particularly effective in supporting pupils who are disadvantaged to improve their attendance.

The personal development of pupils is a driving force across the school. The school uses a highly inclusive approach that results in exceptionally high participation from disadvantaged pupils. The wider personal development provision links thoughtfully to the curriculum. Staff teach concepts such as mortality, faith and differing family structures sensitively and effectively.

Leaders across the school share an unswerving ambition for inclusivity. They are well trained and engage positively with external agencies. Governors uphold their statutory duties and provide timely and important challenge. Staff workload and welfare are well considered by the school. Staff and parents work superbly together for the benefit of pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects, staff do not precisely check pupils' understanding. This means that pupils sometimes develop misconceptions or gaps in learning. The school should ensure that staff teach the most important knowledge and skills and routinely check that pupils' understanding of the key content across the curriculum is secure.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118659
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296270
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paula Trewin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Thomas-Friend (Executive headteacher) Jacqui Spinks (Head of school)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-alphege.kent.sch.uk">www.st-alphege.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 February 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Canterbury.
- The school is part of the Coastal Alliance Co-operative Trust led by the Executive headteacher.
- The school's most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools under section 48 of the Education Act took place in March 2020.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. The inspectors also met with members of the local governing body and representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design, and physical education. For each deep dive, the 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. The inspectors also spoke to pupils in lessons and during playtime and lunchtime.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, the school improvement plan and minutes of governors' meetings.
- The inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- 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 inspectors spoke to parents and considered their responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspectors took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- Pupils were met with throughout the inspection to gather their views about the school.

### **Inspection team**

Toby Martlew, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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