

Sturry Church of England Primary School

Park View, Sturry, Canterbury, CT2 0NR

Inspection dates 27–28 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Inspirational leadership at all levels is a key factor behind this outstanding school's success. It is the driving force that has raised standards and improved teaching.
- The headteacher leads her team with passion. Checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are rigorous and effective. Close links with the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust and the leaders of the other schools ensures expertise is shared widely to improve the school further.
- Pupils achieve standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 that are consistently above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Consistently good teaching with much that is outstanding enables all pupils to make excellent progress. Newly qualified teachers quickly develop their skills, because they receive high-quality training and support.
- 'Catch up, stay up' is the motto for ensuring pupils do not fall behind. Immediate assessments of pupils' understanding during lessons lead to quick catch-up sessions later that day. Pupils' progress is accelerated as a result.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons because they are exciting and make them think. They concentrate well and work very hard at all times.
- Pupils feel very safe. They display excellent manners, are polite and work well together. Parents agree their children are well looked after.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points. Meticulously planned work effectively meets their needs and leaders carefully track their progress.
- Outstanding specialised staff support pupils who may have difficulty in maintaining good behaviour. As a result, incidences of poor behaviour have declined over time and are infrequent.
- Children in the Reception classes make rapid progress in an attractive and exciting setting. Children flourish and become confident learners who are well prepared to move into Year 1.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted strongly through a broad range of subjects, trips and visits. The school's values of compassion, respect, truth and friendship are at the forefront of everything they do.
- Governance is outstanding. An excellent understanding of the school enables governors to challenge leaders effectively. The board of trustees and the local governing body work well together to maintain the very high standards of achievement and teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups, during 21 observations of lessons or part lessons. The majority of these were undertaken jointly with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and leader for the early years provision. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils in Year 1 and Year 6 reading and made shorter visits to classes and the nurture room.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils to find out their views on behaviour and their learning. They also talked informally to pupils in and around the school and during lessons.
- Inspectors examined pupils' books in a range of subjects to check the progress and quality of learning over time.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and chief executive officer of the academy trust. Inspectors also held discussions with subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and the early years provision leader.
- Inspectors met informally with parents at the end of the school day to gather their views. They also considered the 64 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of the 43 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body for the school and a member of the board of directors for the academy trust. A phone call was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation. This included records of the checks made on teaching made by leaders, information on safeguarding procedures and the school's plans for improvement. Inspectors analysed the information on the progress and standards of current pupils, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and samples of the governing body minutes.

Inspection team

Penny Spencer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alison Botarelli

Additional Inspector

Richard Barnes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group.
- The school converted to an academy in November 2012. It is the sponsor academy for the Stour Academy Trust. When previously inspected in 2010, under the same name, it was judged good.
- Approximately a third of all pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after); this is above average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is lower than average.
- Children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The school has a breakfast club and after-school provision managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher of the previous school is now the Chief Executive Officer of The Stour Academy Trust. The current headteacher has been in post since the academy formed in 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teachers have high expectations and a consistent approach to the presentation of work, in pupils' books, to reflect the high standards in Years 5 and 6.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, leaders and staff work tirelessly to ensure every pupil achieves the very best they can. Every pupil and member of staff is valued as an individual and supported to achieve highly. Talents are nurtured and encouraged, creating an exciting and highly effective learning environment for all.
- An extensive programme of monitoring activities to check the quality of teaching enables leaders to plan individual support and effective training programmes. Teachers value this highly and express how much it helps them to improve their practice.
- Teachers are held fully accountable for the progress their children make. Leaders make sure teachers' pay and performance are closely linked to improved pupils' progress and higher standards. Newly qualified teachers receive excellent professional training through the Academy Trust. As a result, they quickly develop into confident practitioners.
- Subject leaders are very effective in their roles. They contribute significantly to school improvement by analysing assessment information, checking the quality of teaching and examining work in pupils' books. Leaders are chosen for their expertise in a particular area and may be based in other schools within the Trust. However, they work alongside the teachers within each school to develop their skills and ensure continuity of practice. The school develops teachers in a similar way, to grow into future leaders and ensure excellence is maintained.
- Procedures to check and measure pupils' achievement are rigorous. Analysis of these assessments is detailed and enables leaders and teachers to address any inconsistencies quickly. The school makes good use of this information to plan training for teachers and provide specific extra support for pupils.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used very well. It has a positive impact on closing the gap between the standards they reach compared with other pupils nationally. Careful assessment of pupils' needs ensures they receive appropriate support to enable them to succeed. This expenditure is carefully analysed by leaders and governors to make sure it being used to the best possible effect.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop computing, musical, artistic and sporting skills through the exciting range of topics. Excellent displays around the school showcase pupils' artistic, mathematical and literary talents, across many subjects.
- The school makes very good use of the additional funding for primary sport. A specialist teacher works with the school, developing teachers' skills and creating opportunities for competitions and tournaments. Pupils enjoy the wide range of sports on offer and the take-up of clubs is high.
- The school tackles any issues of discrimination well. It promotes equality of opportunity very successfully, as seen by the high standards reached by all pupils.
- The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development strongly. The highly positive and supportive atmosphere that runs through the school enables pupils to grow and develop in confidence. British values are promoted well and sit firmly with the school's own values of compassion and respect for all. The highly effective school council develops an understanding of democracy amongst pupils of all ages. Social and personal skills are developed strongly through a rich programme of trips, residential visits and opportunities for pupils to perform or compete in front of an audience. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school has maintained good links with the local authority since becoming an academy. The authority provides very light-touch support to this outstanding school. Governors access their training when needed, to ensure their skills are regularly updated.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met and exceeded. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures. There are thorough systems in place for checking that staff are suitable to work with children.

■ The governance of the school:

- The local governing body, for each school, is responsible for all aspects of school improvement. It reports regularly to the overarching Board of Directors. Governors who are both school governors and on the board develop a good understanding of the trust's strategic views and how they relate to the school. Detailed reports from the headteacher keep governors fully informed. There are excellent systems in place for governors to ask questions and challenge outcomes, backed up by frequent opportunities for them to examine and check the evidence used by the school. They make very good use of the information they receive on pupils' progress and standards to hold leaders to account.
- Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching, in order to support decisions with regard to teachers' pay rewards. The Board of Directors is responsible for renewing and updating policies and the

governing body ensures these are acted upon by the school. As a result, all statutory requirements are met and rigorously reviewed. Governors check all aspects of the budget, including the additional sports funding, to ensure the school is getting good value for money. They closely examine how effectively the pupil premium funding is used to make sure it is raising standards for those pupils who receive it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are polite and considerate to adults and each other. They are extremely proud to be members of the school community and always help each other to do their best.
- Pupils of all ages have excellent attitudes to learning. They settle quickly to work in lessons and follow instructions promptly. They show a great deal of resilience when tackling challenging tasks and are determined to complete their work. Work is generally of very high quality and there is a developing sense of pride in their presentation as they move up through the school.
- During break and lunchtimes, pupils use the outdoor spaces very sensibly. A wide range of activities are available in the extensive grounds to develop their physical fitness and their social skills of fair play and sharing. The school council is actively engaged in developing activities for times when the weather prevents pupils from being outside. It aims to make those playtimes equally as exciting and productive.
- The development of the reflective garden supports those few pupils who may find playtimes more stressful or challenging. Well-trained adults are on hand to sort out any problems or worries, ably supported by the playground buddies. Incidents of less than good behaviour have reduced considerably as a result.
- Parents are confident that the school looks after their children and supports them to behave well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe, and their parents agree.
- Pupils understand the risks and dangers of everyday life. They are very well informed about the risks posed by unsafe use of the internet and know who to go to if they have any concerns.
- Frequent lessons on road safety, safer cycling and keeping safe when walking to school prepare pupils very well for later life and the move into secondary school.
- Pupils report that bullying incidents are very rare. They are very clear about the different types of bullying because the school spends time teaching them, in a variety of ways, throughout the year. Pupils know exactly what to do if such an incident should occur.
- Detailed records kept of the very few incidents of poor behaviour show they are declining. The recent introduction of a computer program to record details is proving highly efficient in supporting the school to analyse and track behaviour.
- Attendance is above average and improving. The school has rigorous procedures to monitor attendance and ensure parents do not take pupils on holiday during term time.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They plan lessons meticulously to ensure activities are challenging but accessible for all abilities. Good relationships between pupils and the teaching staff enable learning to take place in a friendly but purposeful atmosphere.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, which they use to good effect when developing pupils' understanding. They expect pupils to use the correct mathematical or English terms when responding to questions and they insist on clear explanations. As a result, teachers can quickly assess any misconceptions and rectify them at once.
- The most-able pupils make excellent progress because they are taught well and challenged to reach the highest possible levels. Older pupils have highly developed skills in self-assessment and use it effectively to plan their own next steps.
- Excellent use is made of computer technology to support learning. Pupils share good examples of work, or handy tips and hints, to help each other improve, or to offer further challenge. Teachers also use computer technology very successfully, to support homework and independent learning out of school.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and effective. They work closely with the teacher to support pupils in

groups or individually. They are especially effective in the quick catch-up sessions that pupils access if they get stuck during a lesson.

- Pupils respond regularly to the advice teachers give when they mark their books. Pupils who spoke to inspectors were convinced the marking helped them improve; inspectors agree. These checks are used successfully to ensure future lessons are planned accurately.
- Children in the Reception classes benefit from good and improving teaching. Teachers use accurate assessments from regular observations to plan challenging and exciting activities.
- The teaching of mathematics is very strong. Pupils have many opportunities to apply their skills in calculation to solve problems. Teachers effectively use mathematics challenges to allow pupils to assess their own starting points during independent working. During a Year 5 lesson, the teacher was observed accurately assessing pupils' understanding, during a warm-up game, to identify pupils who needed further input.
- The excellent teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is enabling pupils to learn to read quickly and accurately. The recent introduction of a regular class reading book is proving highly popular in inspiring pupils to read for pleasure. Activities planned around the book are promoting high-quality writing and developing children's understanding of different types of fiction. Outstanding examples of work, based on the range of books studied currently, are proudly displayed for others to read.
- Highly skilled leaders ensure teachers and teaching assistants understand the differing needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, they are taught well. Detailed use of assessment information ensures work is accurately planned.
- Pupils who have sessions in the nurture group are taught exceptionally well. They develop good attitudes for learning and quickly make accelerated progress in their learning.
- Older pupils present their work neatly and have a well-developed handwriting style. Expectations for younger pupils to do the same are not consistently promoted. As a result, a small minority of pupils' work is difficult to understand or spoiled by unnecessary scribbles. Very occasionally, this affects the accuracy of their calculations in mathematics.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils achieve extremely well throughout their time at school. From broadly typical starting points, children in the Reception classes make excellent progress. By the end of Reception, almost all children achieve at least a good level of development. Building on these high levels as pupils progress through the school ensures that the very high levels of attainment and progress at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are sustained over time.
- Work seen in books, learning observed and assessment information demonstrates that pupils make excellent progress, across all subjects, over time. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The most-able pupils are challenged and supported exceptionally well. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 at the end of Year 2 and Level 5 at the end of Year 6 is above the national average and has been over time. An increasing number of Year 6 pupils achieve at the highest Level 6 in both writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching this standard in writing was double the national average in 2014.
- Because of the excellent teaching of phonics, pupils develop a love of reading. Almost all pupils in Year 1, in 2014, achieved the required standard in the national phonics check. Pupils who read to inspectors used these skills well. They read widely and enjoy the variety of books the school provides.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress. Staff provide carefully tailored programmes of work based on accurate assessments. The special educational needs coordinator and senior leaders monitor the progress and attainment of these pupils closely, to ensure progress is maintained.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve highly. All such pupils in Year 6, in 2014, reached standards in line with all pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, and were less than a term behind in writing. Despite reaching national standards, disadvantaged pupils were approximately a term and a half behind their classmates in writing and mathematics, and in line in reading. Gaps have closed over time and assessment data for the current disadvantaged pupils in all year groups shows gaps continuing to close. The school is using some of the additional funding to ensure these pupils are supported to reach the highest standards and so close the gaps with their peers completely.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- Excellent leadership and management of teaching and learning in the Reception classes have ensured provision for these children has improved since the academy opened. As a result, achievement has improved. Teachers and leaders have the highest expectations for children and know how to develop their skills in a friendly, well-resourced setting. Children are well looked after in a safe and caring manner. As a result, by the time they leave the Reception classes, the children are confident learners and well equipped to move on into Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is excellent. Leaders ably support newly qualified or recently appointed teachers. This ensures the quality of provision is maintained. Teachers and teaching assistants accurately check children's progress and use this information to plan activities that move learning forward quickly.
- Staff establish excellent relationships with parents. The introduction of a 'rising four' programme of visits, and experiences means children are familiar with the school and its routines before they start. As a result, pupils quickly settle into full-time education. Parents told inspectors how pleased they are with the quality of teaching and support.
- Children of all abilities make excellent progress from their starting points. The most-able children do so because teachers plan additional work that matches their needs. Opportunities for children to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills to a higher level are built in seamlessly to the everyday activities.
- Writing skills are developed well. Children have many opportunities to practise and develop their writing through role-play activities both inside and outside.
- The outside space is spacious and well resourced. Provision in all subjects reflects the practice in the classrooms. Teachers provide excellent opportunities for children to develop their physical skills in safe, secure surroundings.
- Children work and play together very well. They quickly develop good attitudes to learning. They concentrate for sustained periods and produce high-quality pieces of work. They help their friends and teachers by tidying up quickly and helping each other.
- Safeguarding procedures are strong. Training in child protection and safeguarding are the same as the main school. Activities are carefully thought through to allow pupils to explore and take risks in a safe, secure manner. Children quickly learn to keep safe, for example when using the outdoor equipment, because staff model good behaviour and monitor the children carefully.

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

Unique reference number	138738
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	449784

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Georgina Glover
Headteacher	Rachael Howell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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