Inspection of Sturry Church of England Primary School

Park View, Sturry, Canterbury, Kent CT2 0NR

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Michelle Mannings. The school is part of The Stour Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Rachael Howell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Fiona Trigwell.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since January 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this welcoming, nurturing and inspirational school. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that all pupils thrive and flourish in an inclusive learning environment and rise to their high expectations. Pupils have a strong voice in the school and know that their opinions and suggestions are valued. One parent expressed the views of many saying, 'My child is thriving at this school. The inclusive and supportive nature means that my child feels valued and important.' There is an extremely calm and purposeful atmosphere and a culture of high aspirations. A group of pupils agreed that the school, 'helps you reach your dreams'. Pupils demonstrate a genuine love for learning.

Staff know the pupils very well, fostering positive, trusting relationships. Consequently, pupils are confident and happy individuals who feel very safe and well cared for. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. From Reception, children are taught to work together collaboratively. Across the school, pupils are kind and considerate and help each other. Pupils relish any opportunities to take on leadership roles. They make an active and positive contribution to the school community and learn what it means to be responsible, respectful citizens in the wider community.

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

Children get an excellent start to their school life. By the end of Reception, they are very well placed to continue their learning in Year 1. The school has a sharp focus on the development of children's speech, language and communication skills. The learning environment inside and outside very successfully supports the rapid development of early reading, writing and number skills.

Pupils develop as confident, fluent readers. As soon as children start in Reception, they are encouraged to enjoy stories, rhymes and songs. The phonics programme is consistently well taught. Children quickly learn the sounds that letters make and read books that match the sounds they know. Pupils at risk of falling behind are given additional help to keep up. A love of reading is promoted successfully across the school. Adults read aloud regularly in all classes. Opportunities to read are threaded through the curriculum. Pupils are introduced to increasingly challenging, high-quality texts.

The rich and vibrant curriculum ensures that learning builds logically over time and pupils achieve their very best. Pupils are challenged and supported very effectively. Teachers carefully check on pupils' learning and use this information skilfully so that no one falls behind. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have access to the full curriculum and equal opportunities to learn. Effective adaptations, resources and a very skilled staff team contribute to their success. The school sees any barriers to pupils' learning as a challenge and is innovative in finding new and creative solutions.

Discussions with pupils and a review of their current work demonstrate that they are achieving exceptionally well. The published key stage 2 outcomes in 2024 are not representative of the school's current or previous performance. Although pupils'

attainment was about average at the end of key stage 2, their prior attainment was much lower overall than usual. These pupils, therefore, made very strong progress through the curriculum during their time at school. This highlights the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils achieve very well, regardless of their starting points.

Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well in lessons, in the playground and around the school. The school values of perseverance, leadership, aspiration, collaboration, empathy and support are deeply embedded in the school's culture and are lived up to by pupils. The school's persistent work to improve pupils' attendance is paying off. Attendance is now above average.

The personal development curriculum promotes pupils' well-being and develops character, life skills and spirituality exceptionally well. The school is relentless in its drive to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to broaden their experiences beyond their immediate environment and culture. Pupils make a highly valued contribution to the school and local community. They have a very strong sense of acceptance and understanding of differences. Pupils excellent personal skills as well as their academic achievements mean that they are exceedingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Staff, including those new to their careers, feel highly valued and are proud to work at the school. They know that leaders carefully consider their professional development, well-being and workload. There is an exceptionally strong and effective culture of mutual support and teamwork. The great majority of parents are very pleased with what the school offers their children. A few parents commented that they would appreciate even more opportunities to find out how well their children are doing. The trust and the school collaborate seamlessly and outstandingly well. They share an aspirational and ambitious vision for the school. There is no complacency but an unwavering determination to build on current successes and continue to make a positive difference to pupils' lives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Unique reference number	138738
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341723
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Fiona Trigwell
CEO of the trust	Rachael Howell
Headteacher	Michelle Mannings
Website	www.sturry.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 January 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Stour Academy Trust.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2022.
- As a Church of England school, it is part of the Diocese of Canterbury. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in March 2023 and the next one will be within the next five years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other members of the school's senior leadership team, curriculum leaders and other staff, including teaching assistants. They also met with leaders of the trust, known as the Central Team, including the CEO and the chair of the board of trustees.
- An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and in formal and informal groups.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' work, talked to them about their learning in other subjects and looked at their writing books.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents provided by the school, including its own evaluation of its performance and its development plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and spoke to some parents at the gate at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Hylands	Ofsted Inspector
Sam French	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025