

Inspection of St John's Church of England Infant School

4 New Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 6RH

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The co-headteachers of this school are Katie Forghani and Nicola Milton. This school is part of Medway Anglican Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Hilary Sanders, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gill Mond. There is an executive headteacher, Joanne Strachan, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils and their families are welcomed into this warm school community. This is evident at the start of each day when every pupil is greeted warmly by staff. Staff know each pupil and their family extremely well. The school's values of faith, love, kindness and respect shine through in the way that staff interact with pupils and the way that pupils learn to interact with each other.

This year, the school has raised academic expectations for all pupils. To enable pupils to learn successfully across the curriculum, the school has rightly prioritised ensuring every child is well supported to learn to read at an age-appropriate standard. This work is having a very positive impact on all pupils' attainment.

Pupils work with their teachers at the start of each year to create a 'class charter' that sets out how the class will behave and learn together. Pupils work hard to follow the school rules. They have high levels of trust in staff to treat them fairly and to help them when they need it. Pupils talk animatedly about the school clubs they attend. They particularly enjoy science club. Parents appreciate that they too are included in the school's club offer and enjoy attending multi-skills alongside their children.

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

Since the appointment of the current leadership team in September 2023, parental confidence in the school has grown exponentially. More and more parents and pupils are choosing to attend the school and the number of pupils at the school has more than doubled since September. The new leadership team recognised that the school's curriculum needed reinvigorating to ensure that all pupils were achieving the best possible outcomes. Clear and well-sequenced curriculums have been introduced for all subjects. On an ongoing basis, the school's curriculum is carefully adapted to take account of pupils' starting points and needs.

The school has rightly prioritised the development of reading and mathematics. The school's approach in these subjects is clear from the start of Reception and throughout the school. The school provides teachers with ongoing training to deepen their knowledge of how to teach reading and mathematics effectively. As a result, in these subjects, teachers explain core learning very clearly and ensure that the activities pupils do help them to learn the curriculum well. Pupils are keen to learn, and value the support that teachers provide. All pupils are achieving well in these subjects. This is not yet reflected fully in the school's outcomes at the end of key stage 1. This is because, historically, a very high proportion of pupils have joined and left the school throughout each year.

While there is now a clear curriculum in place in other subjects to support teachers in understanding what pupils need to learn, the curriculum is at an earlier stage of

development. The school rightly recognises that there is still work to do to ensure that teachers explain learning consistently well and ensure that all pupils build a coherent body of knowledge and understanding across all subjects.

The curriculum for early years is at an earlier stage of development, however. While early reading and mathematics have been prioritised to good effect in early years, in other areas of learning the curriculum is less well-sequenced and organised. As a result, not all children are achieving as well as they might in some areas of learning. Despite this, children benefit from warm and positive relationships with staff in early years. As a result of careful support, children's personal, social and emotional development is an area of strength. Children are forming positive friendships and have learned to cooperate in their play.

Pupils behave very well, and the school has an extremely settled feel. Pupils benefit from warm and supportive relationships with staff. Families also feel very well supported by the school.

The school's personal development programme has been carefully developed to take account of the wide range of experiences that pupils have had before joining the school. The school has a clear curriculum to support pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). The school provides additional emotional and well-being support for pupils who need it. The school works to fully include parents in its wider offer, for example by offering parent and child after-school clubs that promote healthy living and an understanding of the importance of exercise.

Those responsible for governance understand the important role the school plays in supporting the local community. Decisions taken by the school and trust leaders are consistently in the interests of the school's pupils and their families. Together, leaders at all levels are working successfully to continue to further strengthen the educational offer that the school provides.

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 areas of learning, the curriculum for early years is not fully sequenced. As a result, staff are not consistently clear about what they intend children to learn through the activities they provide within the early years classroom. The school should ensure that there is greater clarity about what it wants children to learn so that staff can focus their teaching effectively and ensure that every child is well prepared for key stage 1.
- In some foundation subjects, the implementation of the curriculum is at an earlier stage of development. The school is in the process of ensuring that teachers have

strong subject knowledge, can explain learning clearly and know how to design activities that support the intended learning. The school should continue this work to ensure that, across the subjects, all pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

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	142157
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10296422
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gill Mond
CEO of the trust	Hilary Sanders
Headteacher	Joanne Strachan (Executive Headteacher)
Website	https://www.stjohns.medway.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher and co-headteachers were appointed in September 2023. The leadership team works across St John's Church of England Infant School and another school within the multi-academy trust.
- The school is a Church of England school within the Diocese of Rochester. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was in November 2019.
- 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.

- 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 executive headteacher and the co-headteachers. The lead inspector met with representatives of the school's local governing board and the board of trustees, including the chair of the board. The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the Diocese of Rochester.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, 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. For the reading deep dive, the lead inspector listened to pupils reading. Early years was included within all deep dives. Inspectors discussed the curriculum for early years and some other subjects with leaders.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour and attitudes throughout the inspection and discussed the school's analysis of pupils' behaviour and attendance with leaders.
- Inspectors considered personal development through all deep dives. They met with leaders to discuss the school's personal development programme, including the curriculum for PSHE and relationships education. Inspectors talked to pupils about PSHE and other aspects of the school's personal development programme.
- 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.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Emma Law

Ofsted Inspector

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