

Inspection of Folkestone, St Martin's Church of England Primary School

Horn Street, Folkestone, Kent CT20 3JJ

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 February 2025

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

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 April 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils delight in attending this caring school. They are happy and safe. Children in the early years thrive in a vibrant and engaging environment. Pupils form very positive relationships with staff. Pupils are proud of their school. They lead tours for new parents and speak positively about what the school offers. The school celebrates pupils' talents. Pupils perform music and drama to their families, both in school and at local theatres.

The school is ambitious for the achievement of all pupils. The school's ethos that 'no child will be forgotten; no stone will be unturned' is reflected in a desire for every pupil to succeed. Pupils develop a rich body of knowledge across the curriculum. High-quality work is celebrated throughout the school corridors. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive support that empowers them to learn alongside their peers.

The school fosters a positive and respectful culture. There are clear expectations for behaviour, and pupils respect this. As a result, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy spending time with one another. They play joyfully at breaktimes. Older pupils care for younger pupils, creating a friendly and caring environment. Pupils assigned as anti-bullying ambassadors look after others who are upset.

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

Leaders are highly effective. While there is more to be done to strengthen the quality of education, leaders diligently identify and act on the improvements needed. They support teachers to gain the knowledge needed to deliver the curriculum very well. The school ensures that teachers develop the knowledge and expertise that they need. Leaders work alongside teachers to reflect on and refine the way that they teach. The school supports teachers extremely well to manage their workload. This enables teachers to focus their time on pupils' learning.

The school provides an engaging curriculum that meets the needs and interests of pupils well. The school regularly reviews the curriculum to ensure that it engages pupils and that they develop the knowledge and skills they need. The curriculum develops pupils' cultural awareness. For example, pupils learn about artists and musicians from broad cultural backgrounds. The curriculum begins in the early years and links meaningfully to what pupils learn in key stage 1. This ensures that pupils gain the knowledge needed when they transfer to Year 1.

Teachers ensure that pupils gain the mathematical and reading knowledge needed to succeed. Children in the early years have an exceptionally positive start to their education. Activities support children to explore their knowledge and captivate their interest. Reading is prioritised. Teachers select texts that broaden pupils' reading and interests. Pupils who have fallen behind in their reading are supported to catch up swiftly. As a result, pupils gain the knowledge needed to become confident, fluent readers. Teachers enable pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge across a range of subjects. For example, pupils

use graphs in geography and science workbooks. This helps pupils to connect what they learn in mathematics to their wider subject knowledge.

Teachers use a range of strategies to embed what pupils learn. Teachers skilfully use questioning to check what pupils know and address any misconceptions. They model the use of key vocabulary and encourage pupils to talk about their learning. Teachers identify the needs of pupils with SEND diligently. They swiftly put in place support to enable pupils to succeed. Teachers provide meaningful adaptations in class. As a result, pupils learn confidently alongside their peers. Teachers support pupils to review their own written work. This helps pupils to strengthen their understanding of how to write for different audiences. However, teachers do not routinely check that pupils apply the key vocabulary learned in some subjects. This means that some pupils do not always embed what they learn.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in class. They listen to the adults and to one another. They are courteous and calm when moving around the school. They swiftly respond to adult instruction. The school is diligent in challenging poor attendance. The school has a secure understanding of the reasons for poor attendance for each child. They use this information to support families to make improvements in their child's attendance.

The school's offer for wider opportunities is fulsome. Pupils experience trips out of school and visitors to the school. These opportunities link meaningfully to the curriculum and enhance what pupils learn. For example, pupils learned about the role of being a museum curator before their visit to an art gallery. This gave purpose to the visit and introduced pupils to future careers. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is catered for well. For example, pupils engage in fundraising and consider global awareness during World Kindness Day. Pupils also learn about what it is like to live in modern Britain. They are aware of current issues that impact on their community and the wider world.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers do not ensure that pupils rehearse the use of vocabulary learned in their written work. This means that some pupils do not gain a secure understanding of the key vocabulary and concepts being learned. Teachers need to ensure that pupils use the vocabulary outlined in the school's curriculum in their written work so that they embed what they learn.

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	118675
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341507
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anita Ellerby
Headteacher	Liz Carter
Website	www.stmartinsfolkestone.com
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 April 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school. A section 48 inspection to evaluate the religious distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school took place in October 2023.
- The school is part of the Federation of St Martin's and Seabrook CEP Schools. The headteacher, Liz Carter, is executive headteacher at both schools in the federation. There is one governing body, which oversees both schools in the federation.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club on site.
- 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. 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the governing body, other leaders and a range of staff at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and design, geography and physical education. 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.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors spoke to staff and considered the views of staff and pupils in the staff and pupil surveys. The inspectors spoke to pupils and parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kate Owbridge

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