

Inspection of Nonington Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Nonington, Dover, Kent CT15 4LB

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Every pupil is made to feel that they are a valued member of the school community. Pupils are individually known and nurtured. They feel safe and secure at school.

The headteacher is working to ensure that all staff maintain consistently high expectations of what pupils at this school can achieve. Significant progress has been made, but there is further work to do. Pupils are developing more resilience and are beginning to take pride in what they achieve.

Behaviour has been transformed. Classrooms are settled and calm. Pupils understand the clear expectations. The headteacher has trained staff so that they understand what might be causing some pupils to struggle with behaviour at school. This means that staff can get to the root of the difficulty and bring about positive long-term changes in behaviour where this is needed.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities they get to work together as a whole school. Older pupils enjoy helping younger pupils and children in Reception. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about World Book Day, where all classes came together for a reading for pleasure session.

Parental confidence in this school is continuing to grow. They recognise the commitment of the headteacher and her determination to provide pupils with the best possible education.

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

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has worked to redevelop the school's full curriculum offer. She has established effective and collaborative working partnerships with two other local schools, and subject leaders are shared across all three schools. Ambitious and well-sequenced curriculums for each foundation subject have now been introduced. Curriculum leaders have carefully considered, in relation to each curriculum subject, what pupils will learn in early years to prepare them for subject-specific study at key stage 1. However, overall, the curriculum for early years lacks coherence. Children in early years do not have a consistently positive experience of learning.

Staff have been provided with training to develop their subject-specific expertise across the foundation subjects. However, teachers still lack confidence and expertise in implementing the school's curriculum. In some lessons, it is not clear what teachers intend pupils to learn. As a result, pupils are not building their knowledge and understanding in some foundations subject as well as they should be.

The headteacher recognises that over time, pupils have not been achieving well enough in reading. In particular, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have not been taught to read effectively. To address this, the headteacher introduced a new phonics programme in January 2022. Most staff have

been trained to deliver this programme. Children in Reception and pupils in key stage 1 are now making better progress towards becoming fluent readers. Books that children read match the sounds that they have learned. However, older pupils who have struggled to learn to read do not get sufficient practice reading books that match the sounds they have learned. The wider reading curriculum remains in development. Not all pupils have developed positive attitudes towards reading, and many pupils do not read widely and often.

There is a clear and well-sequenced curriculum in place for mathematics. For pupils in key stages 1 and 2, this curriculum is delivered well. These pupils are making progress in mathematics. Children in Reception do not receive a well-planned curriculum in mathematics; therefore, they are not securing the knowledge and understanding they need to be ready for key stage 1.

This school has a truly inclusive ethos. Every pupil is welcomed and quickly made to feel a part of the Nonington community. The special educational needs coordinator is skilled at identifying when a pupil might have SEND. Staff have been very well trained to understand and meet the needs of pupils with SEND so that they can successfully learn in the classroom.

The headteacher has worked closely with the diocese to develop a set of core values: wisdom, hope and trust. They reflect the school's Christian character and are incorporated into all aspects of school life. Leaders hope that by raising the profile of these attitudes and bringing them to life for pupils they will raise pupil aspirations, provide hope for the communities these pupils sit within and contribute toward pupils' preparedness for life in modern Britain.

The school is well led by the headteacher. The partnerships she has developed with two additional schools are providing additional capacity to develop the school's curriculum and to share expertise. The governing board is knowledgeable and committed. They support the headteacher but also ensure they verify and challenge. Together, the headteacher and governors have a clear vision and ethos for the school. The local authority and the diocese provide ongoing support to the school. They recognise the determination and commitment of the headteacher and have high levels of confidence in her leadership.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Those responsible for safeguarding know their community well. All staff are trained to recognise when a pupil might be at risk of harm or being harmed. There are systems in place to enable staff to raise their concerns. Vulnerable pupils are carefully monitored over time. Those responsible for safeguarding refer appropriately to external safeguarding partners. Where necessary, safeguarding leaders challenge those external partners to ensure that pupils get the right help. The school follows safer recruitment procedures and manages allegations about adults effectively and appropriately.

The school supports pupils effectively with their mental health and well-being. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and how to seek help from adults if things do go wrong. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and consent at an age-appropriate level.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all teachers have good subject knowledge of all the subjects that they teach, including in early years. This means that teachers are not consistently presenting subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion effectively or implementing the curriculum as leaders intend. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are supported to develop good subject knowledge of all subjects and age ranges that they teach so that they can effectively deliver the school's intended curriculum.
- The curriculum in early years is not coherently planned and sequenced to enable children to develop detailed knowledge and skills across the seven areas of learning. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum for early years is coherently planned and sequenced, and staff are trained to be able to implement it effectively.
- Reading provision, outside of the phonics programme, is not underpinned by a rigorous and sequential reading curriculum that aligns fully with the national curriculum. The school curriculum needs to be carefully planned to provide frequent opportunities for pupils to read a broad range of texts and genres that are progressively more demanding and challenging. Pupils' love of reading needs to be further developed.
- Struggling readers in key stage 2 do not have sufficient opportunities to practice reading and re-reading books that match the letter and sound combinations they know, both at home and school. Leaders need to ensure these opportunities are provided daily. They need to work with parents to ensure that parents understand the importance of, and how to support effectively, reading at home.
- Persistent absence of a small group of pupils remains too high. As a result, these pupils do not fully benefit from the education, and wider opportunities, that this school offers. Leaders need to continue their work to reduce persistent absence.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	118688
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10227336
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	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Brian Jacobs
Headteacher	Victoria Solly
Website	www.noningtonprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post as interim headteacher since January 2022. She took up the post as substantive headteacher the day before this inspection. She was formerly the head of school and was appointed to that role during the pandemic.
- The school is federated with Goodnestone Church of England Primary School. The school has a memorandum of understanding in place with a third school that enables all three schools to work collaboratively on curriculum development and to share subject leadership capacity across the schools.
- A new chair of governors of the federated board was appointed in November 2021.
- This is a Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection was in March 2016. The school is due its next inspection; however, inspections have been delayed by the pandemic.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- There are three mixed-age classes within the school.
- The school is not using any external alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of governors, and representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, religious education and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils reading and talked to pupils across the school about their love of reading.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about a range of additional national curriculum subjects and the curriculum for early years.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. Throughout the inspection, inspectors considered and checked the culture of safeguarding within the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans, the local authority's notes of visits and minutes from recent meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning, what behaviour is like at school and whether they felt safe at school.
- Inspectors reviewed 10 responses to the staff survey and eight responses to the parent survey, including the free-text comments that parents made. Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers at the start of the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Margaret Coussins

Ofsted Inspector

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