

Inspection of Archbishop Courtenay Primary School

Eccleston Road, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6QN

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of the caring and inclusive community in Archbishop Courtenay School. They appreciate leaders' nurturing approach to mutual respect, which develops a sense of belonging. Pupils value friendship and collaboration. They buddy up with new arrivals, so they too quickly feel part of the school community. Pupils feel empowered to help others in this strong community. As a result, pupils are happy, kind and considerate to each other. Bullying is rare and if it occurs, leaders act quickly to address it.

Leaders achieve their expectations through the school values of compassion, aspiration, friendship, resilience and respect. Pupils are motivated to be recognised for upholding these values and gain their own leaf on the 'achievement tree'. These values successfully underpin pupils' attitudes, which means behaviour is calm and orderly right from Reception Year, enabling pupils to concentrate and learn well. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. Pupils are confident staff will address any concerns, which means they feel safe.

Parents value leaders' purposeful and caring approach. A parent reflected these views, saying, 'This is a lovely school, where passion and commitment provide a nurturing and caring environment.'

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. They have successfully developed middle leaders' strong subject knowledge. This is reflected in improved curriculum thinking. Leaders are embedding effective approaches to teaching so that staff explain new knowledge clearly and use thoughtful questioning to identify and address pupils' misconceptions. However, in some foundation subjects, end-of-topic reviews do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge in sufficient detail to enable teachers to unpick what knowledge pupils have secured. In these cases, teachers lack clarity about which key learning pupils need to revisit.

Teachers carefully plan activities for pupils to apply new learning. Staff make effective adaptations which enable pupils with special educational needs/disabilities (SEND) to learn successfully. Staff know pupils well and know how to shape activities to meet their additional needs. Pupils with SEND benefit from the clear expectations and support they receive.

Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy reading and talk confidently about their favourite stories. Pupils routinely listen to teachers reading stories aloud. This begins in early years, where story time enthralls pupils. Pupils read a broad range of texts, which are thoughtfully woven through the curriculum to support learning. There is a robust approach to teaching phonics, with prompt catch-up when needed, which ensures that all children become confident, fluent readers.

Teachers' high expectations are reflected in pupils' focused and respectful behaviour in lessons. Pupils respond keenly to teachers checking that they are 'ready to learn'. Carefully chosen routines, established right from the early years, support pupils well. Consequently, pupils settle to work quickly and with enthusiasm. From early years onwards, pupils confidently follow well-established routines so that no learning time is wasted. Staff are quick to redirect pupils if they lose focus in lessons. Teachers model and instil the importance of considerate conduct in pupils. For example, in early years, children compete to be the quietest class when walking for their lunch.

While pupils who are in school benefit from these high expectations and support for learning and development, not enough pupils attend school regularly enough. Leaders use a range of approaches, which has improved the attendance of some pupils. However, this is not having the desired impact for all pupils. In particular, leaders' work has only just started to improve the attendance of those who are persistently absent. Leaders from the school and the multi-academy trust (MAT) recognise the need to redouble their efforts here.

Leaders provide a broad range of wider curriculum opportunities, which promotes pupils' personal development well. At the heart of this, leaders prioritise character development to equip pupils with essential skills and build their understanding of the world around them. Pupils actively suggest and plan school initiatives, such as an 'International Day' to learn more about different cultures. Pupils appreciate valuable opportunities to learn how to be leaders through roles such as lunch monitors.

Leaders' clear vision and approachable nature have galvanised the hardworking and committed staff. Professional development is valued by staff alongside measures to make sure workload is manageable. However, leaders have not yet embedded a strategic approach which enables middle leaders to monitor and evaluate their curriculums, so that these are fully responsive to pupils' needs. Governors hold leaders to account and work with the MAT to ensure appropriate support for further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide high-quality training so that staff understand the signs and nature of different safeguarding risks, including specific local issues. Staff are vigilant for indicators of potential safeguarding concerns. They use the clear and robust procedure to record and report concerns to leaders.

The experienced designated safeguarding leads promptly report safeguarding concerns to external agencies. They are tenacious in their work to ensure that pupils get the help they need to keep them from risk of harm.

Governors undertake their statutory safeguarding duties and maintain sharp oversight of the effectiveness of safeguarding. Safer recruitment processes are followed diligently.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the outcomes of summative assessment do not support teachers to identify next steps in learning. This means pupils' gaps in knowledge are not addressed effectively. Leaders need to make sure that end of topic reviews allow teachers to accurately check what pupils have learned and use this to inform their future teaching.
- Leaders have not sufficiently addressed low overall attendance and persistent absence through their current approach. Too many pupils with regular absence are missing key learning. Leaders, governors and trustees need to develop a robust approach which secures improved attendance for all pupils.
- Middle leaders are not consistently strategic when reviewing their curriculum impact and implementation. This means that staff do not get the support required and that pupils do not benefit from responsive changes in the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all middle leaders have the knowledge to ensure that their curriculum area is implemented as they intend.

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](#)' 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	139822
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10268264
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Wetherell
Headteacher	Sue Heather
Website	www.archbishopcourtenay.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started in their role in September 2020.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The governing body manages before-school child-care provision.
- The school has some mixed-year-group and some single-year-group classes.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Canterbury. Its last section 48 inspection took place in November 2022.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders and staff. They also met the chief executive officer, trustees, chair of local governing board and governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also listened to pupils read to a trusted member of staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with leaders to review their knowledge, records and actions. The lead inspector also met with members of the local governing body and trustees to discuss safeguarding. Inspectors also reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- To review wider judgements, inspectors spoke to staff and groups of pupils from different year groups. Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms and at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The views of staff, including responses to Ofsted's online staff survey, were considered.
- The views of parents were considered through talking to a group on the gate before school and taking into account responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Phillip Blagg, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alan Derry	His Majesty's Inspector
Marian Feeley	His Majesty's Inspector

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