

Inspection of St Mary of Charity CofE (Aided) Primary School

Orchard Place, Faversham, Kent ME13 8AP

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 July 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Louise Rowley-Jones. The school is part of Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies 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), Annie Wiles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sue Butterworth.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a highly inclusive school, where pupils are valued for their individual qualities. The school is ambitious for pupils to do their best academically. From the early years onwards, children work hard and rise to meet these high expectations. The school's values are embedded and understood. For instance, pupils talk enthusiastically about why these are important in life and the ways they can demonstrate them in their learning.

Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful and kind. The atmosphere around school is happy and harmonious. Pupils enjoy spending time with one another in lessons and during active social times. Pupils know the school rules and see these as fair. Pupils are confident that staff will listen and help them to resolve any worries they may have. This helps them feel safe and secure.

Pupils are thoughtful and reflective individuals, who value the education and opportunities available to them. Pupils enjoy taking part in clubs that develop their interests and talents. These include judo, yoga and singing. Pupils relish their varied leadership roles because they make a positive difference to their peers and the school. These include school council, outdoor play and learning leaders and worship leaders, which they fulfil with passion and pride.

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

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. They engage with their learning eagerly. Children explore the early years curriculum through a range of meaningfully crafted activities. For example, children delight in using their phonics knowledge to produce a range of stories and quality writing. This prepares children very well for more complex learning in Year 1. Staff skilfully help children to develop increasing independence, curiosity and resilience in their learning. High-quality interactions with staff help build their vocabulary and check their understanding.

The school is well led. It is resolute in its ambition to act in the best interests for everyone, including for disadvantaged pupils. The school has developed an engaging and ambitious curriculum, beginning in the early years. In lessons, pupils revisit and practise what they already know. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and typically address misconceptions. However, staff do not check pupils' understanding of previously taught essential knowledge carefully enough, in some subjects. This means staff do not always identify where pupils have gaps to help them inform future teaching. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school skilfully identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. Teachers have been well supported to develop detailed knowledge of how to help pupils with SEND access the curriculum successfully. Teachers use this to adapt learning appropriately, when pupils need it. As a result, these pupils achieve well from their individual starting points.

The school has rightly made reading a top priority. Phonics teaching for the youngest children is precise, structured and well delivered. The school closely monitors pupils' progress in phonics. If pupils are falling behind, teachers take swift action to make sure they catch up quickly. For older pupils, the teaching focus is on developing fluency and a deeper love of reading.

Pupils' personal development is integrated within the school curriculum. Pupils take up the varied roles of responsibility to build confidence and leadership skills. They also strengthen pupils' commitment to the school community. A wide range of trips and visits in the local area, such as the library and utilising the train station, enhance pupils' learning further. Pupils develop a strong sense of character and are prepared well for the next stages of learning.

Pupils behave very well. Staff provide compassionate support for pupils, who may struggle with their behaviour. Pupils are taught to identify and manage their emotions effectively. This helps them to develop strong behaviour for learning, and they focus well during lessons. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils listen attentively and try their best.

The school does everything it can to improve pupils' attendance. Proactive interventions support pupils at risk of absenteeism well. The school helps families to overcome any barriers to pupils' attendance. The school knows that improving attendance, especially among its most vulnerable pupils, remains an important priority.

Clear routines and structures provide trustees and governors with reliable information about the school's performance. Leaders, including those at trust level, have a clear vision and know the next steps to improve the provision further. The school is highly ambitious for pupils, staff and the community that they serve. Trustees and governors work effectively with school leaders. They fulfil their responsibilities diligently and provide effective challenge and support to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Checks on what pupils know and remember are not consistently effective. As a result, some learning does not focus sufficiently on addressing the gaps in knowledge that some pupils have. Consequently, these pupils do not learn as well as they could in some subjects. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped to identify and address gaps in essential knowledge, so that pupils can achieve well across all areas of the curriculum.

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	141220
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10379886
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	211
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Butterworth
CEO of the trust	Annie Wiles
Headteacher	Louise Rowley-Jones
Website	www.smcschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 March 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust.
- St Mary of Charity is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Canterbury. The school last received a section 48 inspection in May 2025.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school provides wraparound care through a breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, trust leaders, curriculum leaders and teaching staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. Deep dives included visiting a range of lessons and looking at pupils' work. It also involved talking with staff and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds pupils' knowledge over time. The lead inspector also observed some pupils read to a known adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of trustees and local governing body meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, along with their written comments. An inspector also spoke with parents and carers on the morning of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views about their learning, what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe. Inspectors also talked to pupils about their views on personal development and the wider school curriculum.
- Inspectors met with staff to gather their views on how leaders support them and took account of their responses to the Ofsted online staff survey.

Inspection team

Gareth Flemington, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Parker

His Majesty's 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