

Inspection of Waterringbury Church of England Primary School

147 Bow Road, Waterringbury, Maidstone, Kent ME18 5EA

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| Inspection dates: | 1 and 2 July 2025 |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Outstanding |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils embody key qualities such as acceptance exceptionally well at this warm and caring school. The school ensures that pupils not only learn about these crucial values but live them. This is evident in pupils' deep care and consideration for others. Pupils feel secure in sharing their own views but also sensitively consider views that differ from their own. They develop a strong sense of justice and fairness. This helps pupils become highly active citizens in the school and beyond.

Pupils behave well. They show high levels of courtesy to staff and to each other. Pupils work hard in lessons and listen carefully to teachers. As a result, a sense of calm and purpose pervades the school. Staff build positive relationships with pupils. Pupils know that teachers will deal with any concerns they have. This helps them to feel happy and safe in school.

The school has worked hard to raise ambition. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They ensure that pupils have the skills and knowledge they need. This means that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. Pupils become increasingly confident and independent learners. They are generally well prepared for their next steps.

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

The school has undergone rapid improvement since the last inspection. The school has worked swiftly to develop an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils, including those in mixed-age classes. Staff have identified precisely what they want pupils to learn from Reception to Year 6.

Teachers explain learning clearly. They ensure that pupils know what they need to do to be successful. Teachers model key language accurately. As a result, pupils learn the crucial curriculum content and vocabulary they need. Staff generally check pupils' understanding carefully. This means they address misconceptions quickly. However, sometimes the checks made on pupils' writing are not precise enough. As a result, pupils' inaccurate spelling and use of key vocabulary are not always addressed.

The school has prioritised reading. Pupils enjoy daily reading sessions. They discuss the high-quality texts they read excitedly. This starts in early years, where children engage happily with stories and rhymes. High-quality teaching of phonics helps pupils to become confident and fluent readers quickly. Teachers check systematically that pupils know the sounds and letters they need. As a result, they identify any pupils who fall behind swiftly. These pupils receive the help they need to catch up. Books are carefully matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. This helps them to practice their reading independently.

Staff identify pupils' individual barriers to learning accurately. This helps them adapt learning effectively for those pupils who need additional help. As a result, the vast majority of pupils, including those with SEND, learn all the curriculum content they need. A small group of pupils with historic gaps in learning follow a curriculum to consolidate

their key skills in some subjects. However, this curriculum does not introduce pupils to new content swiftly enough. This means that these pupils are not narrowing their gaps in learning.

Pupils' work shows they build on the skills and knowledge they learn over time. For example, pupils recall prior learning on the Mayans when writing about Anglo-Saxon societies. They clearly identify how societies have similar structures. Pupils write accurately in a variety of styles. They develop increasingly sophisticated use of grammar and language.

The school's work on personal development is exceptional. The curriculum expands far beyond the classroom. This includes very well-designed activities to deepen pupils' understanding of the curriculum. For example, pupils plan and host an annual arts festival to share their learning in a range of subjects. Pupils also develop their skills and talents through the excellent array of clubs on offer. These opportunities benefit every child in the school deeply. The school has prioritised pupils' physical and mental health. Pupils develop strategies to manage their emotions through the excellent work of the pastoral team. These strategies help them to manage their feelings effectively.

The dedicated staff team works in the best interests of pupils. The training and support leaders offer help staff carry out their skilled work. Governors contribute strongly to the life of the school. They ensure they know the school well. They use this information to offer high levels of challenge and support.

Pupils love learning. They concentrate well and listen carefully to teachers. The school tracks behaviour and attendance carefully. This allows it to identify pupils who may need additional help to behave well and attend more. The school is doing all it can to reduce absence for those with the lowest attendance. This work is effective. Pupils attend more frequently as a result.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum that a small group of pupils with historic gaps in knowledge follow is not effective enough in addressing these gaps. As a result, these pupils do not catch up quickly enough. The school should ensure that the curriculum for pupils with gaps in their knowledge helps them catch up effectively.
- Some of the checks on pupils' spelling and transcription are not precise enough. As a result, pupils' knowledge and spelling of some subject-specific vocabulary are variable. This means that pupils do not always use this crucial technical language accurately. The school must ensure that staff have the expertise to check on pupils' spelling and use of key vocabulary accurately and consistently.

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

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| Unique reference number | 118632 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10379802 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 154 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Christian Ball |
| Headteacher | Debbie Johnson |
| Website | www.wateringbury.kent.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 7 and 8 March 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. |

Information about this school

- Wateringbury Church of England Primary School is a voluntary-aided Church of England school. The most recent inspection of its religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in December 2023. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place within eight school years.
- The school currently uses no 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 the school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the headteacher as well as with other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also held phone conversations with representatives of the diocese and local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspector 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors spoke to staff and pupils during the inspection and took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- 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

Gavin Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Cole

Ofsted Inspector

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