Inspection of Lady Joanna Thornhill Endowed Primary School

Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5EA

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 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 enjoy attending this cheerful and caring school. They are happy, and they are safe. Pupils enjoy reading and sharing their learning with Maddie and Wolfie, the school dogs. Pupils form very positive relationships with one another. Older pupils buddy up with younger children, forming genuine friendships across the school. Playtimes are joyful. Pupils use a variety of equipment that encourages them to explore their imagination through play. They are confident and develop their individual interests and talents well. For example, pupils relish dance lessons in the school's dance studio and enjoy cooking in the kitchen classroom. They learn to play the ukulele in the music curriculum, and some perform in one of the school's rock bands.

The school has high expectations for pupils. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in what they learn. They take pride in their work. They learn the knowledge and skills needed to succeed across most subjects well.

Pupils are courteous and behave well. They are respectful of adults and one another. They have a clear voice in the school. For example, pupils elected as subject champions work with teachers to refine the curriculum. Pupils contribute to the welfare of others through charitable work.

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

The school provides an ambitious and engaging curriculum. The school's 'head, heart and hand' model ensures that the curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils well. As such, pupils develop their knowledge, skills and enjoyment of learning successfully.

Leaders are highly effective in addressing the improvements needed to strengthen the quality of education. They ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise needed to deliver the curriculum well. Governors are diligent. They check that the school acts on the improvements needed. While there have been a lot of refinements to the curriculum, leaders support staff to manage the workload well. This enables staff to focus their time in class.

Children in the early years achieve exceptionally well. They are highly motivated to learn. Children show high levels of self-control. They are keen to explore challenges with interest and confidence. Children learn how to read simple words and gain a clear understanding of number. Well-crafted play activities help children to secure knowledge that they learn in the classroom. This prepares them well for the transfer to key stage 1.

Pupils develop their reading and mathematical knowledge and skills well. Older pupils read widely and often. Teachers support pupils to develop the skills needed to become confident and fluent readers. Pupils who struggle or fall behind with their reading are supported well to catch up swiftly. Pupils develop their mathematical knowledge well. While some pupils have not gained the fluency in multiplication knowledge in the past, the school has urgently addressed this. As such, pupils are now quickly catching up.

Pupils gain the knowledge needed across most subjects well. They gain detailed knowledge in subjects such as geography and art and design. They produce artwork of exceptional quality and detail. However, sometimes, pupils do not have the opportunity to complete activities in the depth they need. At times, teaching moves on before pupils have had a chance to secure the knowledge they have been taught. As a result, pupils' learning in these situations is not as secure as the school expects.

Teachers carefully check what pupils know and understand. Teachers ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding. Responses to these questions inform teachers where adaptations are needed to support pupils whose knowledge is less secure. Teachers swiftly identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They adjust their teaching to ensure pupils with SEND learn confidently alongside their peers.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They are attentive in class and interested in what they learn. Pupils know that in order to learn, they need to behave well. Staff support pupils with SEND to regulate their behaviour well. The school has high ambition for the attendance of pupils. They support families to improve their children's attendance.

The wider opportunities on offer are fulsome. Pupils have a detailed understanding of human rights. The school's UNICEF Gold award reflects the commitment to the rights of the child. Pupils enjoy a multitude of trips beyond the school and benefit from visitors to the school. These activities develop pupils' cultural awareness, strengthening their confidence and character exceptionally well. Staff go above and beyond to ensure that pupils' needs and interests are accommodated. Pupils learn about their own mental health and speak confidently about the importance of the well-being of their peers. They readily discuss current issues and reflect on environmental issues in the news.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, such as science and history, sometimes pupils do not have the opportunity to complete activities in the depth that they need. This means that knowledge gained is too fragile and some pupils struggle to retain what they have learned. The school needs to ensure that all teachers follow the curriculum structure and sequencing to enable pupils to 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	118706
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341514
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Headteacher	Rachael Foster
Website	www.ladyj.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2015, under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary controlled school. The school does not have a religious character. The foundation of the school is part of the Lady Joanna estate.
- The school is part of the CARE Foundation Trust. This is a cooperative trust of nine primary schools. The school joined on 1 August 2017. This is a collaborative group with no governance or leadership responsibility for this school.
- 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. The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders 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, history and science. 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
Jenny Ashley-Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Eggleton	Ofsted Inspector

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