

Cuxton Community Junior School

Bush Road, Cuxton, Rochester, Kent ME2 1EY

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since opening in September 2014, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes have improved significantly.
- The leadership team is ambitious and highly capable. Leaders' support to improve the capacity of teaching staff is excellent.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are a significant strength. Pupils show a zest for learning and work hard during lessons. As a result, classrooms are calm and purposeful.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Throughout the school, pupils show respect and courtesy towards adults and each other.
- Support for the personal development and welfare of pupils is first class. Teachers discuss challenging subjects with pupils with skill and sensitivity. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the performance of the school. They effectively hold leaders to account and carefully check that their high expectations are met.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to guide pupils in their writing. Pupils write well in a range of subjects.
- Pupils read widely and often. Support for those who fall behind with reading is effective. As a result, pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make strong reading progress.
- Mathematics teaching in most lessons challenges pupils. However, in some classes, the level of challenge for the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils is not high enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve mathematics outcomes by increasing the level of challenge for the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The leadership team, ably led by the headteacher, is highly skilled, collaborative and reflective. Leaders have established a culture of high expectation and support for staff and pupils. They have effectively managed significant changes to the school, including federating with the neighbouring infant school. Since opening in September 2014, the school has improved dramatically.
- Processes for developing staff are exceptional. Highly focused appraisal and training systems ensure that all staff are given appropriate opportunities and support in order to flourish. The academy trust's 'associate' programme encourages those with particular skills to work with other local schools, to share their own excellent practice and gain new ideas, which staff implement at Cuxton. Opportunities for growth are open to all staff, including leaders, teachers and support staff. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and support for pupils has improved rapidly.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's performance are accurate, secure and reviewed regularly. Development plans are sharply focused on areas of weakness and have secured significant improvement, particularly in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Rates of pupils' progress in the school have risen significantly.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Pupils receive extra tuition that is closely matched to their learning needs. Leaders keep a watchful eye on these pupils and refine their plans if progress does not match their high expectations. Consequently, the rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils are high for reading and writing. However, the progress in mathematics of the most able pupils is not consistently strong.
- The deputy headteacher skilfully identifies and supports pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Additional funds are used wisely to provide adult support and resources to remove barriers to pupils' learning. Excellent communication with parents and staff, and highly effective support, mean that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make solid progress.
- Sports premium is used judiciously to ensure that teachers have the appropriate skills and understanding to deliver high-quality physical education lessons. Teachers' training needs are accurately identified and specialist instruction and coaching is provided to improve their practice. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular sports clubs on offer, such as rugby, athletics and skiing. As a result, the quality of physical education teaching has improved and a higher proportion of pupils now regularly take part in additional sporting activities
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. There are exceptional opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Highly appropriate links are made between subjects. For instance, Year 5 pupils used their artistic skills to sketch anatomical diagrams of amphibians in science lessons. Year 6 pupils used their understanding of computer science to demonstrate the way that blood is pumped around the human body. Pupils enjoy the exciting and innovative curriculum and achieve well.

- The academy trust is highly effective and provides just the right level of support and challenge to school leaders. The trust's officers rightly recognise the strength in leadership and provide bespoke support and training to develop leaders further. Extensive opportunities to work with, and observe the work of, other schools within the trust have secured, and continue to strengthen, the development of staff at all levels.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is decidedly ambitious for the school, its staff and its pupils. Governors know the school exceptionally well and are highly reflective. They use external reports, parent surveys, assessment information and their own sharply focused visits to set leaders challenging targets to do even better. As a result, the governing body has extensive capacity to identify and effectively challenge the few remaining weaknesses in the school.
- Governors' checks on the use of additional funding are comprehensive and based on secure evidence. Governors receive regular reports on the use of additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and visit the school to check on the progress of these pupils. Governors direct monies shrewdly to gain the greatest impact for pupils. Nevertheless, governors' monitoring of the school's work to support disadvantaged pupils is underdeveloped because governors do not have a sharp understanding of how the money is spent.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Procedures for checking staff, governors and volunteers are robust. Statutory checks are completed for all staff and monitored regularly by leaders and the governing body. Excellent induction programmes ensure that all new staff members are trained and fully aware of the school's safeguarding procedures before their employment commences.
- Staff at all levels are highly observant and well trained to identify and report concerns about pupils. When concerns are received, leaders take swift and appropriate action to protect pupils from harm. School leaders work effectively with a range of agencies to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils and families who are at risk receive the help they need quickly.
- Parents are kept well informed of important local and national dangers. Regular internet safety updates and safeguarding meetings with parent groups support the culture of vigilance, both in and outside of school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Positive relationships between pupils and staff are evident in classes. Expectations of behaviour are high and pupils respond well to teachers' instructions. As a result, pupils are calm, purposeful and enthusiastic about their learning.
- The teaching of writing is of a consistently high quality because teachers have secure

subject knowledge. Teachers guide pupils to apply a wide range of vocabulary and punctuation in their writing. Pupils write well for a range of purposes, often in subjects other than English. As a result, pupils across the school make strong progress, with an increasing proportion attaining at a high standard.

- Teachers support pupils well to read at the expected standard for their age. Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and lower-attaining disadvantaged pupils is used to provide effective, tailored support to help pupils catch up. Schemes, such as 'Buster's book club', reward classes who have spent the most time reading at home. Appropriate support for pupils, combined with a positive culture of reading, has led to a rapid improvement in reading progress.
- Science is taught consistently well throughout the school. Pupils learn how to enquire and use their skills to undertake increasingly complex investigations. For example, pupils in Year 5 carefully explored friction and the effect of air on surfaces using parachutes. Pupils develop a clear understanding of scientific concepts and relate these to the world around them.
- Teachers use effective questioning in class to assess pupils' understanding. They use this information to set work at the right level for pupils, and support and challenge pupils when they need it. As a result, pupils in most classes make sustained progress. In a minority of classes, work is not set consistently at the right level for pupils. In these classes, pupils' progress is slower.
- Mathematics teaching is highly effective in the majority of classes. When this is the case, teachers provide pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, with challenging work that requires them to reason and solve complex problems. Pupils in these classes make rapid progress. In a minority of classes, pupils repeat work that does not challenge them. As a result, the mathematics progress of the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils is not consistently strong.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding
- A highly consistent approach to the teaching of personal, social and health education has had an exceptionally positive impact on pupils' understanding of different beliefs, faiths and lifestyles. For example, pupils are taught, appropriately, about fostering and adoption, lone-parent families and same-sex relationships. As one pupil noted: 'Love is not about race, religion or gender; it is about who the person is and how they treat you.' Pupils throughout the school show high levels of tolerance and respect.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe online. Parents, teachers and pupils are provided with excellent weekly updates, which relay tips on how to use the internet and electronic devices safely. Recent examples have provided useful advice on how to avoid and report cyber bullying. Pupils are confident and extremely knowledgeable about how to stay safe online, at home and in school.
- Pupils are taught to make healthy lifestyle choices. They learn how to relax, and reflect on how to promote positive mental health. Recently, Year 3 pupils wrote to parents to

offer advice on staying safe in the sun. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the link between exercise, nutrition and health.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is planned and taught exceptionally well. Pupils consider and discuss challenging subjects such as politics, extremism and human rights, with sensitivity and respect, thinking deeply about their own and others' actions. Year 4 pupils, for example, studied art from the Second World War, mimicking the style of established artists and discussing the scenes that their work depicts. Pupils throughout the school develop exceptionally strong moral values.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding
- Pupils are respectful, polite and considerate. They care about their school and show great respect for staff and each other. As one pupil noted, 'I feel comfortable talking to any member of staff here; we are a community.'
- In classes, pupils show tenacity and drive. They value the work that their teachers give them and complete this to the very best of their ability. Pupils confidently ask questions of teachers when they do not understand, and use teachers' feedback to do even better. As a result, pupils' behaviour is lessons is industrious and purposeful.
- Pupils behave well at breaktimes and show high levels of respect for the staff who supervise them. Lunchtime supervisory assistants guide pupils to play fun and enjoyable games, and solve their problems through respectful dialogue. Consequently, the playground is a vibrant and joyous space where pupils can play and develop their friendships.
- Poor behaviour is rare. Pupils understand the clear and consistent expectations set by teachers and feel that sanctions are used appropriately. Leaders' careful monitoring of behaviour and bullying shows that when incidents do occur they are dealt with quickly and appropriately. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour are infrequent and increasingly diminishing.
- Attendance levels are rising for all groups of pupils. In 2016, the levels of absence for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were higher than the national average. Support for pupils and families, and the positive promotion of attendance in school, has had a dramatic impact on pupils' attendance. Rates of absence for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have reduced significantly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils, including the disadvantaged and most-able disadvantaged, write at the standard expected for their age. An increasing proportion are exceeding this standard. Pupils use a wide range of vocabulary and punctuation in their writing to produce varied and interesting texts. As a result, writing standards are high and continue to rise.
- Pupils in all year groups read well because they have a firm grasp of phonics and read regularly at school and at home. In 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils making expected reading progress was below the national average. Leaders have taken swift

and appropriate action to support pupils who fall behind. For example, additional funding is used to provide phonics tuition for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, current pupils make rapid reading progress.

- Pupils across the school are attaining at the expected standard for their age in mathematics. They regularly practise calculation skills and, in most classes, apply these to solve complex problems. Nevertheless, in some classes, pupils are not provided with challenging mathematics work that allows them to think deeply. As a result, the most able and most-able disadvantaged pupils do not routinely attain at a high standard in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils, particularly lower-attaining disadvantaged pupils, are given helpful support to accelerate their progress. School leaders use pupil premium funding to provide effective additional teaching after school. Differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school have diminished in every year group.
- Pupils make rapid progress and achieve high standards of personal, social and health education. Pupils write about, and debate, subjects such as human rights, respect for others and personal safety. For instance, pupils in Year 6 described how to securely fit booster seats and seatbelts for travelling in cars and the importance of road safety. Pupils in Year 4 recently learned about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, carefully considering how this applied to themselves and children in other countries. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

School details

Unique reference number	141224
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10032827

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Hannah Bayley
Headteacher	Miss Monique Harlin
Telephone number	01634 337720
Website	www.cuxtonschools.co.uk
Email address	office@cuxtonjun.medway.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Cuxton Community Junior School opened in September 2014. The previous junior school that occupied the site was judged inadequate in October 2013.
- The school federated with Cuxton Infant School in September 2014. Leaders and governors oversee both schools.
- The school joined the Primary First Trust in September 2014.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This is a smaller-than-average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- The school met the floor standards in 2016, which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 16 parts of lessons, some with senior leaders.
- In addition to discussions with parents, 39 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, including 16 written comments.
- A range of school documentation was scrutinised to gather information on: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance; systems for managing the performance of teachers; behaviour and safety of pupils; safeguarding; the progress and attainment of pupils; and curriculum leadership.
- Inspectors scrutinised the website to evaluate the quality of information for parents and whether the school meets statutory publishing requirements.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, representatives from the governing body, including the chair and officers from the academy trust.

Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Baxter

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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