

Inspection of a good school: Palmarsh Primary School

St George's Place, Hythe, Kent CT21 6NE

Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

Outcome

Palmarsh Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They are keen to live up to the school's 'HEART' values of honesty, endeavour, ambition, resilience and tolerance.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Staff and parents and carers comment positively on the 'family feel' of the school. Pupils rise to staff's high expectations of their behaviour and learning. They play well together and help one another in class.

Pupils joining the school settle quickly because of the caring staff team. Staff make sure pupils are safe and happy. They build great relationships with pupils. Pupils trust the adults in the school and are confident to talk to them about any worries they have. Pupils say that, although there are sometimes arguments, bullying is rare.

Pupils learn well across a wide range of subjects. They enjoy lessons and are encouraged to try hard. Pupils put their mathematical, reading and writing skills to good use to help them learn in other subjects. They build a love of reading and develop a wide range of knowledge and skills across different subjects.

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

The headteacher and governors make sure that the curriculum is exciting and planned to build on what has gone before to help pupils to learn. The headteacher gives subject leaders, some of whom are new to post, time to develop their subject. This helps them to manage a busy workload and give time to making sure that teachers have a strong knowledge of each subject. Subject leaders have thought carefully about the steps of learning in each subject. Teachers use this information to plan sequences of lessons that help pupils remember, recall and build on what they have learned previously. That said, leaders believe learning could be even better, so they have very recently changed the way subjects are taught. Parents do not understand why an already good curriculum has changed because leaders have not told them yet. Similarly, pupils are not sure why things have changed.

Pupils enjoy reading. From their first days in school, children in early years experience a rich diet of language through songs and rhymes. They quickly learn to recognise the sounds that letters represent. As pupils move through the school, they read a wide range of books in class and at home. When reading in class, teachers choose texts that link to the topics taught. This helps pupils to develop their understanding of the importance of reading. Teachers support pupils who need to catch up with their reading skills through helpful activities. They choose texts that link well across subjects and help develop vocabulary. By the time pupils leave the school, they are confident, fluent readers.

Pupils develop their mathematical understanding quickly. In the Reception class, children build a strong understanding of number and shapes as they learn through their play. As pupils move through the school, teachers build in opportunities for them to practise mathematical learning across subjects, for instance, by using grid references in geography lessons and counting in Roman numerals in history lessons. This helps pupils to see purpose in their learning.

Teachers broaden pupils' understanding of the world around them through trips and visits. Pupils have opportunities such as performing with trumpets, attending a residential adventurous trip and supporting local litter picks on the beach. They develop a pride in their community. Teachers plan activities in Palmarsh's forest school to help them develop their social skills.

Pupils know the school's values and rules. A small number of pupils and parents think behaviour in class is not always as good as it should be. In the past, some pupils have disrupted learning. Leaders are clear about how they expect pupils to behave and staff are consistent in the way they deal with them. Behaviour has improved as a result. In lessons, pupils behave positively towards one another and the adults around them in class, and get on well with their learning.

Adults support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. The inclusion leader works closely with teachers to make sure pupils with SEND get the right support. Adults working with pupils with SEND know when to help and when to step back. This supports pupils with SEND to build confidence as well as knowledge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school keeps careful records of checks on all adults working with pupils. Staff are well trained and know what to do to make sure pupils remain safe. They quickly raise any worries they have about pupils' well-being with the designated safeguarding lead. Leaders act quickly when they think a pupil may be at risk.

Staff think carefully about the risks of activities in school and on trips beyond the school. This includes making sure that activities in the school's forest school and outdoor area in early years are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has introduced a new structure to teaching from the start of this school year. The curriculum before these changes was effective, but subject leaders think this will improve it further. Senior and subject leaders need to keep a close check that recent work to develop the curriculum leads to pupils learning more across all subjects.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, but they do not yet understand the changes made to the way the school is now structuring the curriculum. Pupils enjoy their learning, but do not fully understand the reason for these changes. Senior and subject leaders need to improve how they communicate with parents and pupils about what is being taught, so that they understand how learning builds over time.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	118490
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10111346
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
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	Kenza Bowman
Headteacher	Jamie Leach
Website	www.palmarsh.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 March 2016

Information about this school

- Palmarsh Primary School is situated in the western end of Hythe. The site is shared with a nursery and baby unit, which are managed and inspected separately from the school.
- The number of pupils on roll has doubled over the past three years.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, governors and subject leaders. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- I looked in particular at reading, geography and science. I visited classrooms to see these subjects being taught. I looked through pupils' workbooks in class and with subject leaders. I spoke to subject leaders to understand how these subjects are planned. I met with teachers and pupils to talk about learning. I spoke with senior leaders about how pupils learn in these subjects.
- I met with the office staff and looked at the school's records for the recruitment of adults working in the school. I met with the designated safeguarding lead and

reviewed the electronic record-keeping system in the school for safeguarding.

- I considered the views of 64 parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View and reviewed 45 individual comments written by parents. There were no responses to the pupil and staff surveys. I met with pupils and staff to make sure their views were taken into account.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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