

Inspection of a good school: Senacre Wood Primary School

Graveney Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8QQ

Inspection dates:

3–4 December 2019

Outcome

Senacre Wood Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Senacre Wood pupils love coming to school. They know that they are well cared for and valued by the staff. The staff create a strong team and they are determined and ambitious to do their very best for all pupils. Parents appreciate the dedication of all staff. One parent summed up the views of many and said, 'My children feel respected and listened to and as a parent I am also made to feel a valuable member of the school community.'

Pupils behave very well in lessons, at play time and when moving around the school. They listen carefully to their teachers and are keen to join in with the interesting lessons teachers plan for them. Pupils are inquisitive and eager to find out more. They grasp the opportunity to learn and flourish in their personal development.

Pupils understand the importance of treating each other with kindness and respect and do so. This belief lies at the heart of the school's work. Pupils know that on the rare occasions when there are friendship problems, adults will help them to sort things out quickly.

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

The headteacher and her staff are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. Pupils work hard, value the opportunities available to them and achieve well across all subjects. Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support.

The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. The knowledge that pupils should learn each year is carefully planned. Teachers skilfully use these plans to design lessons that build pupils' knowledge over time. In lessons, teachers explain new ideas to pupils simply and clearly. This enables pupils to become fluent and effective mathematicians and achieve well.

Leaders have improved the teaching of reading. Teachers make good use of the newly redesigned library and its appealing stock of books to help pupils enjoy reading. Staff in early years and key stage 1 teach phonics effectively. The books that pupils take home to practise reading are closely matched to the sounds that they learn in phonics lessons. Teachers carefully consider the stories, poems and rhymes that they use to help pupils learn to read. Pupils who fall behind in their reading receive extra help. However, staff providing this support are not always clear enough about exactly what each pupil needs to learn next in order to catch up. Leaders are aware of this and are working on improving the assessment of reading.

Last year, leaders reviewed the content of the subjects that pupils were learning. Curriculum leaders have carefully matched the knowledge they want pupils to learn in each area of the national curriculum. This has resulted in a curriculum that challenges pupils to think deeply and develop curious minds. Leaders have sequenced the curriculum so that pupils build on their previous learning and make links between subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to consider the question 'Is Darwinism compatible with Christianity?' because they already had a secure understanding of Christianity when they learned about Darwinism in science lessons. The impact of the new approach to curriculum design is being monitored closely by curriculum leaders.

Leaders make sure that pupils' personal development is strong. All pupils are fully included in the wide range of clubs and activities that are available. The introduction of yoga lessons and outdoor learning has been enthusiastically received by pupils. Pupils have grasped the opportunity to enter their high-quality art work in competitions and to exhibit it locally and further afield.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. Close links between school and home help pupils make a smooth transition into school. Pupils play and learn together in a safe and stimulating environment. They cooperate well and are confident working independently because staff have established clear rules and routines.

The school's expectations for pupils' behaviour are clear. Teachers use the behaviour policy effectively to help pupils maintain high standards of behaviour. Leaders quickly identify pupils who require additional help and make sure that support helps pupils improve their behaviour.

The staff team are united in their ambition for every pupil to succeed at school. They say that leaders care about their well-being and help them to be the best they can be. Governors think carefully about any changes that are made and the impact they may have on staff workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' welfare is leaders' top priority. Leaders train staff so that they know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils. Meticulous record-keeping helps ensure that information is shared with other organisations to support pupils, and their families, to get

the help they need.

The curriculum is designed to include many opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, in Year 6, pupils investigate 'Is my route to school safe?' which prepares them well for the transition to secondary school and their increasing independence.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have improved the teaching of reading. However, they need to ensure that staff providing support to pupils who fall behind in the early years and key stage 1 have the skills and knowledge they need to help these pupils catch up. Leaders are already working on refining the assessment of reading, which will help staff be clearer about the precise next steps for these pupils.
- Leaders have led improvements to the curriculum. It is planned and sequenced in a logical way. Curriculum leaders need to continue their work evaluating the impact of the new curriculum on pupils, so they are confident that it results in pupils knowing more and remembering more.

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 Senacre Wood Primary School to be good on 13–14 January 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	118526
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10111260
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Allan Adams
Headteacher	Mrs Emily Sweeney
Website	www.senacre-wood.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	13–14 January 2016

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in January 2017.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers.
- I did deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. I discussed the way the curriculum was designed, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and reviewed their work books and spoke with teachers.
- I evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. I reviewed the school's single central record. I met with the four safeguarding leads and reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding, including a sample of files. I spoke to pupils and staff.
- I met with pupils to hear their views about school.
- I scrutinised the 54 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text responses.
- I met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- I met with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

James Freeston, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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