

Inspection of a good school: Herne Bay Infant School

Stanley Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 5SH

Inspection dates:

3–4 December 2019

Outcome

Herne Bay Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy in school and they enjoy learning. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and of what they are capable of achieving. They provide nurturing support throughout the school day, beginning with a very warm welcome at the start of the day. Pupils particularly like receiving their sticker from 'Punctuality Parrot' for arriving at school on time.

During lessons, pupils work hard and try their best. Most pupils concentrate for extended periods of time, persevering with their learning. Some pupils, however, find it difficult to maintain concentration. They need regular reminders from adults to keep going with their tasks. While this does not disturb the learning of other pupils, leaders are working on further developing pupils' perseverance.

During breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils are well supervised. Staff provide a wide range of activities and games for pupils to enjoy. Pupils keep active and play together well, following the school's expectation that they use 'kind hands, kind feet and kind words'.

Pupils are safe and well looked after. They say that adults in school help them to sort out any worries they might have. If bullying or unkindness occurs, pupils say that it is dealt with quickly.

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

Pupils learn the full range of subjects in the national curriculum. In English and mathematics, teachers deliver a well-planned curriculum that helps pupils to learn well. More recently, leaders have refined the curriculum for the foundation subjects, for example geography and history. Leaders have mapped out, in order, the key skills and knowledge that they want pupils to learn in these subjects. Leaders need a little more time to make sure that these improvements are securely embedded and delivered well. Subject leaders have begun to check on this. Some subject leaders are experienced at doing this. Some, however, are new to the role. Leaders have begun to train new leaders

so that they are able to carry out this work effectively.

Alongside their review of the curriculum, leaders have continued to improve the teaching of English and mathematics. For example, they have given staff extra training in teaching phonics. As a result, adults have strong subject knowledge and are skilled at teaching early reading. Children make a strong start in the early years. They quickly develop a secure understanding of phonics. Children are confident to apply their knowledge to read and write unknown words. This stands pupils in good stead as they go on to read more challenging books.

Pupils also secure key knowledge and skills in mathematics. Teachers are good at showing pupils how to complete mathematical calculations. Pupils are confident to use the methods they have been taught. Pupils know how to use practical equipment to help them get the right answer. However, some pupils find it tricky to explain their mathematical thinking. This is because teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve problems and to reason mathematically.

Leaders and teachers have developed effective rules and routines. Pupils know and follow these well. This means that pupils move around the school safely and no learning time is wasted during lessons.

In the early years, teachers create rich learning experiences for children. Teachers plan a wide range of activities that appeal to children's interests. Children are enthused by these activities. They are supported by adults, who question and guide children's learning well. Children join in with enthusiasm and play together nicely. Children learn well in the early years.

The special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) use assessment well to better understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The SENCOs use this information to plan targeted support for these pupils. This support is well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with SEND learn well across the curriculum.

Leaders plan experiences so that pupils can learn how to be good citizens. They encourage pupils to look after their local environment. For example, they take pupils on local beach clean-ups. School council representatives have also attended a local schools' parliament. Here, they learned about protecting wildlife habitats. When they returned to school, pupils made recommendations for improving the school environment. This led to the construction of a 'bug hotel' in the school grounds. Pupils also learn to celebrate and respect people's differences. They learn about different cultures and religions in subjects such as art, music and religious education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture where all staff prioritise pupils' welfare. Leaders have trained all staff so that they know how to raise any concerns they may have about pupils. Safeguarding records are thorough and well organised.

Through the wider curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They know that you have to 'tell a grown up if you see something scary' when using the internet. They also remember the key messages that they learned in road safety week. They know that they have to 'stop, look, listen, think' when crossing the road.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum for the foundation subjects. They have carefully mapped out the key skills and knowledge that they want pupils to learn in these subjects. This has been planned so that pupils' learning builds on their prior knowledge and skills. In some subjects, the revised curriculum expectations are not yet fully embedded. Subject leaders have not yet checked thoroughly enough on how well the curriculum is being implemented and the impact that it is having on pupils' achievement. Leaders need to ensure that their work to strengthen the curriculum in these subjects is fully embedded so that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems and reason mathematically. Consequently, some pupils struggle to explain their mathematical thinking. Leaders should ensure that pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems and explain their mathematical reasoning so that they achieve as highly as they can.

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 on 20–21 April 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	118359
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10111356
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Sophie Gollop and Mrs Kate Amos (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Day (acting headteacher)
Website	www.herne-bay.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	20–21 April 2016

Information about this school

- Since the previous headteacher left the school in April 2019, the school's substantive deputy headteacher has held the post of acting headteacher. She is supported by an acting deputy headteacher and an acting assistant headteacher.
- The school offers Nursery provision for two- to four-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I met with the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher and the SENCOs. I held a meeting with a group of governors and had a telephone conversation with one of the co-chairs of the governing body. I also met with two representatives from the local authority.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. This included meeting with the curriculum leaders for these subjects, visiting lessons, talking to pupils, listening to pupils read, speaking with teachers and looking at pupils' work.
- I met with the school's designated safeguarding leads and scrutinised the school's safeguarding records. This included a check on the single central record of recruitment checks on adults working with pupils.

- During breaktime and lunchtime, I observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to pupils informally. I also met formally with groups of pupils.
- I took into account 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 29 free-text comments. I also considered other feedback from parents and carers, including meeting with parents at the beginning of the first day.
- I met with a range of staff during the inspection, including teachers and support staff. I also considered 42 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Leah Goulding, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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