

Inspection of a good school: Goat Lees Primary School

Hurst Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent TN24 9RR

Inspection dates:

21–22 January 2020

Outcome

Goat Lees Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities that are on offer to them in this school. They particularly enjoy using the outdoor equipment. Pupils feel well supported by adults in school. Leaders and staff are determined that all pupils should achieve well. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They are proud of the extra responsibilities they have. For example, the reading ambassadors enjoy helping their peers to choose books to read in the library.

Pupils feel safe because the teachers and other adults in school care for them. Pupils say they can always talk to an adult they trust. They know staff will help them if they are worried about something.

Pupils behave well. They are extremely polite and welcoming to visitors. The school values of respect, responsibility, pride and honesty are understood by pupils. They adhere to these closely, showing care and concern for each other. Pupils play well together and often support each other in lessons. They treat each other with respect. Pupils say that incidents of bullying never happen. They told me that, sometimes, children fall out but they talk to each other and quickly become friends again.

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

Pupils across the school enjoy reading because leaders make reading a priority. The teaching of phonics is well organised and effective. Children begin to learn phonics in the early years. Teachers swiftly identify pupils who fall behind in the phonics programme. These pupils are supported effectively to catch up quickly. Pupils often read to adults in school. Most pupils read books that are the right level for their reading ability. Pupils are supported well by adults in their daily reading lessons. However, pupils working independently are sometimes given tasks that are too difficult or do not build their reading skills. This means they lose interest in their work.

Leaders have thought carefully about their approach to the teaching of mathematics. This is because the progress pupils had made in the past was not good enough. Teachers have clear guidance about what to teach in this subject. They have been well trained.

Consequently, they plan well-structured lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. There is a strong, consistent approach to teaching mathematics throughout the school. Teachers plan engaging lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy their mathematics learning. Most pupils confidently use what they know about number and calculations to solve problems and explain what they are doing. For example, pupils in Year 6 confidently worked with decimals and fractions to calculate how much pizza had been eaten.

Pupils' personal development is a top priority for leaders and staff. Pupils take part in activities to build their confidence and self-esteem. They develop a respect for other faiths and cultures. Events such as visiting a stately home bring pupils' learning alive.

Leaders plan activities so pupils build on what they have already learned. This means pupils know more and remember more across a broad range of subjects. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 explained confidently how they had improved their sketching skills during their art lessons. However, leaders have already identified that there is more work to do to further improve planning in some subjects, particularly music.

Leaders hold the same high ambitions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know the needs of these pupils well and have the expertise to adapt lessons effectively. Consequently, this vulnerable group of pupils are supported appropriately and enjoy the same broad curriculum as their classmates.

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Staff form strong relationships with the children and care for them well. Teachers provide children with interesting activities. These engage children, allow them to practise the skills they have learned and promote their development. For example, after listening to a story, children carefully selected materials to make their own rainbow fish. Teachers check regularly how children are developing and provide support for them to catch up if needed.

Most parents and carers speak positively about the school, particularly the support that staff give to pupils with SEND and families who are facing challenging circumstances. Parents say that staff go above and beyond to support pupils and their families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff have regular safeguarding training. Consequently, staff know when and how to identify pupils who may be at risk and report their concerns promptly. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils, parents and the wider community. This allows them to work together well to act swiftly upon any concerns. Leaders keep thorough records to maintain a clear overview of vulnerable pupils. They persist with external agencies to make sure that pupils and families who need help get it.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders provide pupils with a rich range of learning across a broad range of subjects. However, the curriculum is not planned and sequenced well in all subjects, especially music. Leaders, including governors, should ensure that teachers' planning of the curriculum builds systematically on what pupils already know so that, over time, they remember more in all subjects.
- During their daily reading lessons, pupils working with the teacher or teaching assistant benefit from the support they are given. However, the independent work many pupils do in these lessons does not meet their needs well enough. The tasks teachers set for some pupils are too difficult. Other pupils work on activities that keep them busy but do not build their skills sufficiently. As a result, they do not always benefit from this reading time in the same way that those working with an adult do. Leaders need to ensure that this time is used more productively for all pupils.

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 9–10 June 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 the school and 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	136251
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10122287
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rita Hawes
Headteacher	Teresa Adams
Website	www.goatlees.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9–10 June 2016

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, although, since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased significantly.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, class teachers, staff, pupils and members of the governing body. I spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. I looked at a range of safeguarding documents. I checked the school's register of pre-employment checks and records of statutory training for all staff.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and music. I visited lessons where these subjects were being taught. In addition, I held discussions with senior and subject leaders to find out why they were being taught in the way they were. I held discussions with pupils, reviewing the work in their books. I also met with class teachers. I visited a range of teaching sessions and listened to pupils reading to their class teacher.

Inspection team

Linda Taylor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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