

Inspection of a good school: Lympne Church of England Primary School

Octavian Drive, Lympne, Hythe, Kent CT21 4JG

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 October 2021

Outcome

Lympne Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents commented on how happy their children are to come to Lympne School. Pupils agree, saying it is a lovely school to be part of. They say the teachers are kind, learning is fun and they make good friends. They enjoy the broad range of activities on offer. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the outdoor space, including the field, the sensory garden, the climbing wall and forest school. Pupils learn in a vibrant, calm and purposeful environment.

Pupils feel safe. Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. They are polite, kind and caring towards each other. Older pupils act as buddies and provide good role models for younger pupils. Pupils understand what bullying is. They say, 'It hardly ever happens here.' However, if it does, they are confident to talk to staff, know they will be listened to and believe that it will be dealt with well. They understand and live up to the school's values.

Leaders and staff are united in their ambition for pupils to succeed. There are high expectations for pupils' academic and personal development, which pupils meet. Pupils develop respect and tolerance. They have strong and trusting relationships with staff.

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

The school continues to provide a good quality of education. Everyone shares the headteacher's commitment to 'opening pupils' eyes and hearts'. The curriculum is vibrant, broad, diverse and engaging. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and in what order. There is a clear sequence of knowledge and skills to be learned in every year group. The outdoor space is used very successfully for learning, particularly in the Reception Year. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes.

The school motto of 'Growing Together – Branching Out', is demonstrated well by staff and pupils. The staff work together well as a strong team. They take on board the latest educational developments and research. Governors and senior leaders are mindful of teachers' workload and well-being. Teachers appreciate being listened to. Senior leaders

are aware of the continuing need to support staff who are at the start or early stage of their careers. Senior leaders are committed to providing professional development for all teachers. This is to improve subject knowledge in some subjects where it is not strong enough and to ensure that teachers can help pupils to learn and remember more. Teachers welcome the opportunities to enhance their subject and leadership skills.

The teaching of phonics is well organised and begins as soon as children start in the Reception Year. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained. Staff ensure that pupils read books that are matched to the phonics they have learned. Leaders have identified, through rigorous assessment, gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. This is as a result of the disruption caused by COVID-19. Teachers are revisiting some key knowledge to help fill those gaps but this needs to be at a faster pace so that pupils can catch up more quickly. Pupils develop a love of reading throughout their time in school. This is because teachers introduce them to a diverse and wide range of fiction and non-fiction. By the time they leave the school, older pupils are able to talk enthusiastically about favourite authors and styles of writing.

Children in the Reception Year acquire a love of stories and rhymes. Language learning is strong. Teaching helps pupils develop early mathematical skills. Children learn mathematical vocabulary through practical and stimulating activities. For example, children listened to their teacher reading 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. They then compared their own 'caterpillars' using the correct mathematical words.

Staff know the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Staff provide high-quality support in lessons so that all pupils can join in. They check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. They make sure that these pupils learn and experience success.

The headteacher and teachers are relentless and unwavering in their work to make a difference to pupils' lives. They have created a special place for them to learn and thrive. There are many opportunities within and beyond the academic curriculum for pupils. They develop personal attributes and skills to stand them in good stead for later life. Pupils learn about the lives and achievements of people from a range of backgrounds, ethnicity, gender and disability. This raises pupils' aspirations and shows all pupils that they can be anything they want to be. The school's values of 'Love, Endurance, Awe, Friendship' are at the heart of all the school does.

Parents are full of praise for the way the school provided for pupils in terms of their learning and emotional well-being during lockdowns and for pupils' return back into school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, keep a close check on safeguarding. Pupils' well-being and safety are priorities for everyone. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained. Everyone has a good understanding of the risks that pupils might face. Staff know the pupils very well and swiftly identify anyone who is having problems. They know the procedures to follow to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. The appropriate checks are carried out on adults who work in the school. There are good links with external agencies to help secure support if needed. Pupils say they feel safe and parents agree.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge. They are currently working below where they should be, as a result of COVID-19. Leaders are aware of this and although they are providing extra support to help pupils catch up, this is not urgent enough. Leaders should ensure that the extra support and pupils' subsequent learning moves on at a good pace. This is to make sure that pupils are confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.
- Teachers do not always have the strong subject knowledge they need in all subjects. In addition, sometimes teachers are not clear about how pupils should commit new learning to long-term memory. As a result, pupils do not always learn quite as much as they could. Leaders should provide staff with training to improve knowledge in some subject areas and to help them know how to ensure pupils remember more of their learning so they can achieve the best possible outcomes.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	118680
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10200230
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hannah Wallington
Headteacher	Steve Owen
Website	www.lympne.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	13 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Lympne is a voluntary-controlled, one-form entry primary school with 202 pupils on roll.
- The school's last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was in June 2017. It was judged to be outstanding. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the last one.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many staffing changes. The headteacher was appointed in September 2017. The senior leadership team was restructured in 2021.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and curriculum leaders.
- A meeting was held with three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with the local authority school improvement adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also looked at other subject plans, observed some pupils reading to teaching assistants, observed pupils at lunch and in the playground and spoke informally to different groups of pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and one of the deputy designated safeguarding leads, looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records and talked informally to staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered 47 responses to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire, Parent View, including 32 free-text comments. She also took account of 19 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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