

Inspection of a good school: Harcourt Primary School

Biggins Wood Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 4NE

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 October 2021

Outcome

Harcourt Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to come to Harcourt School. They enjoy learning in a calm and purposeful atmosphere without fear of bullying or discrimination. Pupils are polite and friendly and happy to give each other a helping hand. There are very positive relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils make good friends at school. They learn to respect each other and adults because they too are respected and provided with good role models.

Pupils feel safe in school and well looked after. They know that if they have any problems they can talk to their teachers, who will listen to them. Pupils behave well in their lessons and in the playground. Pupils work and play well together. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are not afraid to ask for help if they are stuck in lessons and they know that their teachers will help them.

Pupils know that teachers want to help them and expect them to do their best. Pupils strive to live up to the school's three key values of 'Believe, Achieve, Respect'. Senior leaders' plans include helping pupils to strengthen their independence and resilience.

Parents appreciate seeing the headteacher and deputy headteacher every day in the playground.

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

Harcourt Primary provides a good quality of education. The headteacher, senior leaders and all staff work together well as an effective team. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are taught all the national curriculum subjects.

There is a clear overview of what pupils will learn in each subject. Leaders have identified the progression in skills and knowledge from Reception to Year 6 across the curriculum. Teachers often help pupils to understand new ideas by thinking about and discussing what pupils already know, for example when studying notation and rhythm in music. Pupils know

and remember more when they have a clear understanding of what they are learning and why, for example when understanding the importance and relevance of place value in mathematics.

However, this is not yet consistently the case. Pupils do not always remember what they have learned well enough to achieve the best possible outcomes. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and strive to ensure that their progress through the curriculum is exceptional. To this end, leaders are identifying even more precisely key points of knowledge that they want pupils to know by the end of the year. They are finding more ways to help pupils remember their learning so they know and can do more.

Leaders and teachers swiftly identify and understand the needs of pupils with SEND. They make sure that these pupils are well supported in and out of class. Staff provide pupils with appropriate guidance and resources so that they can achieve as best they can.

Leaders are passionate and determined that all pupils should learn to read. Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading and become confident, fluent readers. There is a strong focus on extending and enriching pupils' vocabulary. Teachers read on a daily basis to pupils of all ages. This helps introduce a wide range of authors and different types of texts.

Phonics teaching is well organised and effective. It begins as soon as children start in Reception. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained. Pupils are given the right books to read, which help them practise the sounds they are learning. Staff quickly identify pupils who might start to fall behind. Effective support helps them to catch up.

Teachers help pupils develop early mathematical skills. Children in the Reception Year learn mathematical vocabulary, such as 'less than' and 'more than', through practical activities. This helps them talk about their mathematical learning as they move into key stage 1. Sometimes there is a lack of challenge for pupils who have developed their understanding quickly.

Pupils live up to teachers' high expectations for their behaviour. Pupils are happy to share their views about their school when chatting informally. They are a little less confident when talking in lessons about their learning. Pupils develop respect and tolerance for others and an understanding of important social issues.

The headteacher has created a culture in which aspirations have been raised for pupils' personal development as well as their academic achievement. Pupils' skills and talents beyond the academic curriculum are acknowledged and nurtured. Leaders are unwavering in their determination to support the further development of pupils' independence and resilience.

Staff are proud of the school and very happy to work there. They feel valued and say that senior leaders are always mindful of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' well-being and safety are priorities for governors and staff. Safeguarding leaders ensure that staff are well trained so they know how to keep pupils safe. The headteacher knows the pupils and their families very well. Staff are alert and vigilant to any cause for concern about individuals. They know the procedures to follow to ensure that concerns are addressed quickly. The appropriate checks are carried out on adults who work in the school. Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents agree that their children feel safe. Good links with external agencies help secure support if needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum intent is very clear. It is not yet consistently being implemented exactly as leaders intend across all subjects. Pupils do not always remember the knowledge they have been taught. Pupils do not always have work that is sufficiently demanding, for example in mathematics. Leaders should continue their work to raise the implementation of the curriculum to an exceptional level. In each subject, teachers should ensure that work is increasingly challenging. Pupils should be helped to remember more of what they have been taught so they know more and are able to do more. Leaders should identify opportunities for pupils to build confidence, independence and resilience.

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 now 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2013.

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	118871
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10207122
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	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Wendy Settle
Headteacher	Anthony Silk
Website	www.harcourt.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Harcourt is a one-form entry primary school with 187 pupils on roll.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many staffing changes. The headteacher was appointed in March 2018 and the senior leadership team was restructured the following year.
- 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 and deputy headteacher and senior and curriculum leaders.
- A meeting was held with two members of the governing body. The inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of the governing body. The inspector met with the local authority improvement adviser.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and music. 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, looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records and talked informally to staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered 41 responses to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire, Parent View, including 33 free-text comments. She also took account of 27 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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