

Inspection of a good school: Minterne Junior School

Minterne Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1SB

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 October 2021

Outcome

Minterne Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this happy, busy school. The school's usual curriculum is full of interesting trips and fun activities and events which help to bring learning to life. Pupils are excited to be back in school as things begin to return to normal after the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to catch up with old friends, as well as making some new ones. Many pupils enjoy games such as football and tag during break times, although there are quieter options too, such as chatting with friends in the reading cabin. Pupils who attend The Acorn Centre happily join in with other pupils in the main school.

Pupils know that their teachers expect them to do their best. They work hard and behave well. Some pupils are taking a little longer to readjust to school after the restrictions of the pandemic than others. Adults are providing sensitive support to help all pupils to settle back into school life. Strong relationships ensure that pupils feel safe. Bullying incidents happen infrequently. However, leaders take any pupil's concerns seriously when they arise and take suitable action when needed.

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

Leaders have established a well-sequenced, broad and engaging curriculum which supports pupils' personal and academic development effectively. Clear subject plans in English, mathematics and other subjects ensure that teachers know what they need to teach. Those pupils who attend The Acorn Centre are very successfully supported by adults proficient in teaching pupils with speech, language and communication needs. As a result, these pupils achieve well and join in with school life confidently.

The teaching of reading is central to the school's English curriculum. A well-established approach to teaching reading ensures that pupils become competent readers. Teachers check pupils' reading at the start of Year 3 so that they know which pupils need extra help. Careful support for these pupils, including effective phonics teaching, ensures that pupils who have fallen behind in their reading catch up quickly. A rigorous phonics

programme in The Acorn Centre means that pupils who attend this provision also develop secure reading skills.

The school promotes reading well. The school library is full of good-quality books to capture pupils' imaginations. Teachers read to their pupils often. Pupils clearly enjoy reading. One said, 'Reading a book helps me to feel calm and makes my morning happy.'

Mathematics teaching builds strongly on what pupils have learned in infant school. Teachers assess pupils' learning regularly as a routine part of their everyday practice. For example, at the start of this term, teachers noticed that some pupils had forgotten aspects of place value and number. They are currently recapping and reinforcing pupils' mathematical knowledge in these areas before moving on.

Teachers plan work for pupils which ensures that most get on well during lessons in the foundation subjects, such as history. However, occasionally a few pupils in the main school, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), find the work too hard to complete without adult support. Leaders have prioritised this aspect of teaching for further development.

Pupils behave well in lessons. This means that everyone can get on with their work undisturbed. Occasionally, a few pupils get a bit fidgety. A gentle reminder is usually all that is required to bring them back on track. Strong relationships and clear routines throughout the school ensure that pupils in Year 3 settle quickly into life in a junior school.

The school is committed to developing pupils' personal, emotional and social development. For example, the annual year-group performances play a central part in school life. Everyone has a role to play, whether on stage or behind the scenes. Each pupil's contribution is highly valued. The school is excited at the prospect of reinstating these special events, as well as its extensive range of clubs and visits, as pandemic restrictions continue to ease.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff give pupils' safety a high priority. Well-established procedures and clear lines of communication ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding. Effective training ensures that everyone knows how to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff are clear about what to do if they have any worries about a pupil. Safety issues are taught regularly through the school's personal development curriculum, as well as special events, assemblies and visitors. The school provides helpful guidance for parents on specific issues, such as online safety, so that they can support their children at home.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes those pupils in the main school who find learning more difficult, including those with SEND, find it hard to complete the work set in foundation subject lessons without adult support because the work is too hard. This slows pupils' progress and affects their confidence over time. Leaders should ensure that teachers in the main school know how to plan and adapt activities in the foundation subjects so that all pupils have the opportunity to complete tasks without adult support from time to time.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Minterne Community Junior School, to be good in April 2014.

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	144869
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10203153
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	368
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Stewart
Headteacher	Catherine Hurst
Website	www.minterne.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has a specialist resource centre, called The Acorns Centre, for 36 pupils between the ages of five and 11 who have speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils are on roll at Minterne Junior School and some at The Oaks Community Infant School. There are 24 pupils from Minterne Junior School between the ages of seven and 11 who attend the centre currently. All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) and are placed in the setting by the local authority. Pupils spend most of the time in The Acorns Centre and the rest of the time in mainstream classes, where they study subjects such as physical education, computing, and music. They also join the mainstream school for break times and lunchtimes.
- The school does not currently use 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 this into account in their evaluation.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff. She also spoke with two governors, including the chair of governors, the chair of the trust, the trust's school improvement officer and the chief executive officer.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, held a discussion with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspector reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central record. She also met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the school's safeguarding records and spoke with a group of pupils.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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