

# Inspection of a good school: Guston Church of England Primary School

Burgoyne Heights, Guston, Dover, Kent CT15 5LR

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Inspection dates:

20 and 21 October 2021

## **Outcome**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils understand the school values of equality, compassion, endurance, forgiveness and friendship. Pupils know that equality is of central importance in the school's diverse community. This diversity is valued and celebrated. The many pupils whose families are in military service may move regularly. However, everyone feels included, known and valued. Parents and carers describe a strong community feel about the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes lessons around online safety as well as practical safety tips learned through toasting marshmallows during outdoor learning sessions. Pupils enjoy their learning, which they say is fun. They relish the good-humoured relationships they make with staff and each other. While there is much laughter, pupils know that the expectations of both their behaviour and their learning are high.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and respectful. They follow instructions quickly and work hard. This helps lessons to run smoothly and supports learning. Pupils are taught that bullying is unacceptable. One explained proudly, 'We are an anti-bullying school.'

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that makes full use of the local area. For example, pupils regularly visit the nearby castle. The school wants pupils to develop a secure understanding of where they are living and to be part of the local community. Learning is closely linked to these aims.

Curriculum plans are well designed. Plans for English and mathematics are particularly effective at building on knowledge in well-sequenced steps. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress, for example through quizzes and careful questions. They adapt plans so that learning is closely matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils make good progress and grow in confidence to tackle increasingly complex challenges with enthusiasm.

Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. Occasionally, learning plans are not as well implemented in the foundation subjects as in English and mathematics. When this happens, pupils enjoy their learning but can struggle to remember it in detail, or to build on other things they have learned. This can sometimes limit the depth of their understanding.

Leaders rightly prioritise teaching pupils to read quickly and well. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils spoke proudly of the wide range of books available from the well-stocked library. Their selections are carefully matched to their needs through regular assessment. Pupils know that reading is important. They enjoy reading on their own, as well as being read to regularly.

The approach to teaching phonics helps pupils get off to a good start with learning to read. Right from the Reception Year, children practise daily and apply their learning through their play and activity. They enjoy blending sounds to make words. Staff across the school are confident and skilled in helping pupils to master their phonics. Pupils who start to fall behind are quickly identified and given additional support to help them to catch up quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from extra support and bespoke provision.

Pupils relish learning, particularly in mathematics, where their enthusiasm is palpable. For example, in Reception, children happily explored numbers through building towers, collecting objects and painting dots. At the other end of the school, Year 6 pupils engaged in an animated and well-reasoned discussion identifying prime numbers.

Across the school, any low-level disruption is rare and quickly dealt with by redirection from an adult. Pupils who need a little extra help managing their behaviour or emotions benefit from well-trained, prompt and effective additional support.

Pupils are encouraged to get involved in the wider life of the school, for example by training as a librarian or being part of the school council. They feel involved and are excited to take on these responsibilities. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate the diverse cultural mix within school. Pupils are curious and enjoy learning about each other's festivals and celebrations. They have a secure understanding of the Christian character of the school but also learn about a range of religions.

Leaders are well supported by an effective and well-trained governing body who take an active role in the life of the school. Some systems, such as those around assessment, have been carefully considered to take account of teacher's workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Careful record-keeping helps leaders to identify patterns and spot when pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders work closely with outside agencies and families to make sure that pupils are kept safe. All staff are regularly trained and updated on safeguarding matters.

Staff, parents and pupils are all confident that the school is a safe place. Pupils learn how to stay safe outside of school, including when online. Pupils trust adults to keep them safe. They are confident that staff would listen and help if they had worries or concerns.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- While the planning across the curriculum has been considered in detail, its implementation has not been fully successful across some foundation subjects. Leaders should continue to provide training and support to help teachers to plan sequences of lessons within the foundation subjects that help pupils to deepen their understanding through building on prior knowledge.

## **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 2012.

## **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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 118687   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Kent   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10200199   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 156  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Sheila Wilding   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Deby Day   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.guston.kent.sch.uk/">www.guston.kent.sch.uk/</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 11 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005           |

## Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England voluntary aided school. The last statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place in June 2017.
- A high proportion of pupils that attend the school are from families where one or more parents serve in the armed forces. Consequently, the number of pupils of various ages that arrive or leave mid-way through the school year is high. Recently the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that there has been reduced mobility for these families.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

## 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.
- During the inspection, the inspector met regularly with the headteacher. Meetings were also held with the special educational needs coordinator, early years lead and the safeguarding team. The inspector met virtually with the governing body, including the

chair of governors. The inspector also had virtual meetings with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.

- The inspector conducted deep dives into reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- Records associated with safeguarding were reviewed, including the single central record and staff's appointment procedures. The inspector spoke to staff about their safeguarding training and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- The inspector spoke to a group of parents and reviewed responses to the staff, pupil and parent Ofsted questionnaires.
- Groups of staff met with the inspector to share their views about the school, including on workload and well-being. The inspector completed a tour of the school with pupils and spoke to them on the playground and in the dining hall.

### **Inspection team**

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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