

# Inspection of a good school: Seal Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Zambra Way, Seal, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0DJ

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Inspection dates:

19 and 20 January 2022

## Outcome

Seal Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel respected and safe. The school values can be seen in pupils' day-to-day interactions with staff and their peers. They are proud members of their school and speak confidently about what they enjoy learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning from the time they start in the early years. Their learning experiences extend beyond the classroom and include activity on their school farm. Pupils also have access to a range of clubs that they enjoy, including choir, cooking club and sports clubs.

The taught curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to nurture their talents as well as teach them important knowledge. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. This is clear in the ambitious outcomes that they plan for pupils. This includes preparing artwork for the school gallery and opportunities for public speaking. Leaders have plans in place to continue the development of the curriculum to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

Pupils learn in a calm and positive environment. They say that if bullying happens it is fixed quickly by adults. As one parent said, 'the teachers go above and beyond to support not only the education but also the welfare of our children'.

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

Leaders have forged ahead with their plans to teach a purposeful and engaging curriculum to all pupils. They have thought carefully about the important knowledge they want pupils to learn from Nursery to Year 6. This includes the vocabulary pupils will be taught. Leaders have also planned appropriate opportunities to develop pupils' communication and made relevant links to the Rights Respecting agenda. However, in some subjects within the wider curriculum, the knowledge pupils are taught is not yet clearly ordered within each year group. This means that in history and art, for example, what is taught is not always building on pupils' prior knowledge. Leaders are taking action

to check that what is planned gives pupils opportunities to revisit important knowledge before new teaching.

Reading is prioritised at the school. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in their reading. They regularly check what each pupil needs to do to improve, and ensure that pupils have books to practise their letters and sounds. Staff put appropriate support in place for those pupils who struggle. This means that many pupils make good progress in reading. This allows them to access the wider curriculum and the broad selection of texts that staff want to engage pupils in. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is appropriate. However, leaders acknowledge that there are a small number of pupils with SEND that are not yet making good progress. Leaders have plans in place to ensure all pupils benefit from staff expertise and timely interventions.

Children in the early years make a confident start to their school life. They are well supported by committed and knowledgeable adults who encourage them to know more and do more. Through a range of well-planned activities, children have opportunities to develop a broad range of important skills and knowledge. This includes their communication and their physical development, for example using their mathematics knowledge during outdoor construction activities and practising their letters and sounds during role-play activities.

Pupils' behaviour in and around school is good. They know what the rules are, and they follow them. Pupils show respect to the staff at the school and their peers. Leaders take important steps to ensure that positive behaviour is promoted. As well as clear routines for all pupils, a new lunchtime provision provides a quieter space for pupils if they need it. These thoughtful approaches to meet the needs of all pupils are valued by the school community.

Staff feel well supported and respected at the school. They talk positively about leaders' approaches to managing workload and the steps taken to ensure the ongoing support with their development. Governors have plans to resume their onsite monitoring so that they can see at first hand the work of the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff take their responsibility to keep pupils safe at the school very seriously. They are well trained and alert to possible risks pupils might face. Pupils are confident that staff will listen and help them if they have any worries. There are clear systems to report any concerns that staff might have about pupils. Leaders have recently undertaken an audit of the recording system and provided further guidance to staff to make improvements to the quality of written records. Staff know the importance of this and there are clear improvements taking place. Leaders take swift and appropriate action to support pupils and families that need help or advice.

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

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

- In the wider curriculum what is taught has been carefully identified. However, the curriculum design does not yet clearly outline when important knowledge is taught during each year group. This means that some planned teaching does not systematically support pupils to know more and do more within each subject. This impacts what pupils can remember. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about by reviewing the curriculum plans to support subject-specific coherence. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

## 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 October 2011.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118605
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10207118
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	394
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Thompson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Mitchell (Executive Headteacher) Lorraine Butler (Head of School)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sealprimary.com">www.sealprimary.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- As a Church of England school, Seal Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is part of the Diocese of Rochester. They received a section 48 inspection in December 2016.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider.
- There is a part-time Nursery class in the morning and afternoon. The Nursery class provides education for children between the ages of two and four.

## 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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's school development plan and relevant school policies.

- The inspector met with senior leaders and a range of phase leaders and subject leaders. The inspector also held meetings with two members of the governing body and also a local authority adviser.
- The inspector did deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art. This involved the inspector talking to subject leaders, class teachers and pupils, visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and listening to pupils read. The inspector also looked at subject planning in relationships, sex and health education and history.
- The inspector reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by looking at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training records. The inspector also talked to a range of staff and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed by 33 staff and 67 parents, including 36 free-text comments through our online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Hanna Miller, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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