

Inspection of a good school: Cuxton Community Infant School

Bush Road, Cuxton, Rochester, Kent ME2 1EY

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 March 2022

Outcome

Cuxton Community Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Senior leaders ensure that every member of this school community is valued. Pupils are individually known, celebrated and nurtured. They are taught and supported by staff who are committed and happy. Pupils feel comfortable being themselves, and they know that staff will keep them safe.

Leaders have high expectations for every pupil to achieve the best possible outcomes. To realise this, at the time of the inspection leaders were introducing a new approach to the teaching of phonics. Pupils enjoy a full curriculum that is enriched through carefully planned, memorable experiences and a range of learning that takes place beyond the classroom.

Behaviour at the school is excellent. Leaders ensure that expectations are clear. All members of the school community model the positive behaviours that they expect from pupils. Children in Reception quickly settle and learn classroom routines. They are eager to learn and explore. Pupils in key stage 1 have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They are supported carefully to develop their resilience, so that they can keep going when learning feels challenging.

Parents are valued as partners in their children's education. Senior leaders actively seek to engage with parents and understand their perspectives, for example through 'Parent Parliament'.

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

Senior leaders are determined that pupils receive an excellent education that engages and inspires, and prepares them well for living in modern Britain. They want to ensure that pupils develop a clear understanding of their individual and collective responsibilities so that they can make a positive contribution, now and in the future.

In developing the curriculum, leaders have carefully considered the needs of the pupils in their school. Following the pandemic, careful adaptations have been made to address learning gaps and in response to the youngest children's new starting points. For example, this year in Reception, the curriculum has been adapted to ensure that children get more support to develop their speech and language. Learning outside the classroom has been a focus. The training that staff have received is ensuring that pupils across the school have meaningful opportunities to utilise the outdoor spaces around their school and beyond. This enables pupils to contextualise and apply their learning.

Over time, most pupils at this school have achieved well in their reading. However, senior leaders have identified that a small proportion of pupils are not achieving as well as they need to. Leaders know that reading is the gateway to the full curriculum. They have therefore invested in a new phonics and early reading programme. All staff have now been trained in this new approach, and pupils have been assessed. Leaders plan for it to be fully in place from the first week of the summer term. Leaders carefully support children, right from the start of Reception, to develop a love of reading. Teachers regularly read a range of carefully chosen books to pupils.

There is a well-sequenced and well-established curriculum in place for mathematics. Leaders have worked with staff to develop their subject-specific expertise. Teachers know exactly what pupils need to learn in each lesson to build their understanding and knowledge over time. Teachers use high-quality texts to further develop and reinforce pupils' conceptual understanding and mathematical vocabulary.

Leaders have set out the themes and topics that pupils will learn in each foundation subject, and the skills that they will be taught from Reception to Year 2. However, in some foundation subjects, leaders have not considered the sequencing of knowledge carefully enough. This is the case in early years and in key stage 1. In some subjects or areas of learning, what is taught does not consistently build on what came before towards a well-defined end point. Teachers are not consistently clear about what the core learning in a given lesson sequence is. This means that teachers do not know what to emphasise in their teaching, and what to focus on when they check pupils' understanding. In the foundation subjects, not all teachers' subject-specific knowledge is as secure as it needs to be.

Pupils' wider development has been a clear focus for leaders over time. 'Pupil Parliament' members have been instrumental in working with leaders to develop a core set of rights and responsibilities. Pupils understand that all members of the school community have these rights and responsibilities. They underpin all discussions about behaviour. Leaders have set out 18 enriching experiences that all children from Reception to Year 2 will experience. All pupils, for example, visit a local wildlife park. Pupils in every year group participate in forest school, through which they develop their knowledge of the natural world and build their resilience. There is a broad club offer, which leaders maintained throughout the pandemic.

The school is very well led and managed. Senior leaders genuinely engage with staff at every level. Every member of staff feels valued and proud to work at the school. The

multi-academy trust provides careful and intelligent support to the school. Those responsible for governance understand their roles very well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff at this school understand the indicators of possible abuse or neglect. They understand how to raise a concern. Pupils are confident that they would talk to a member of staff with any worries they might have. Leaders responsible for safeguarding know how to get pupils the right help and support, and work with a range of external partners to achieve this. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been carefully developed over time to ensure that pupils learn about online safety and consent in an age-appropriate manner. Leaders follow guidance for safer recruitment and demonstrate a clear understanding of how to manage any allegations against adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all foundation subject curriculums set out the knowledge that pupils need to learn in a clear and logical sequence towards agreed end points. Leaders need to ensure that the subject curriculums set out the knowledge that they have identified as most useful, and that this content is taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly enough for all pupils to acquire the intended knowledge and skills. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Not all teachers have expert knowledge of all subjects that they teach. This means that teachers do not always present information clearly to enable all pupils to understand the key concepts. Sometimes, explanations given by teachers introduce, exacerbate or do not effectively anticipate potential misconceptions. Leaders need to ensure that the professional development programme for staff aligns with the curriculum, to develop teachers' subject-specific understanding of each subject they teach.

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 predecessor school, Cuxton Community Infant School, to be good in January 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

Unique reference number	141276
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10211510
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Harwood
Headteacher	Charlotte Aldham-Breary
Website	www.cuxtonschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed as acting headteacher in April 2020 and became the permanent headteacher in September 2020.
- The deputy headteacher was appointed as acting deputy headteacher in April 2020 and became the permanent deputy headteacher in September 2020.
- The school is not currently using 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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. The inspector met with local governance partners and with trustees. The inspector spoke with the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors 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. For the early reading deep dive, the inspector listened to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 reading to a familiar adult. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum for PSHE.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector also discussed safeguarding with governors and the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school and school improvement plans.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their learning, about what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe at school.
- The inspector reviewed 28 responses to the staff survey, and 50 responses to the parent survey.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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