

Inspection of Headcorn Primary School

Kings Road, Headcorn, Kent TN27 9QT

Inspection dates:

4 to 5 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are nurtured and cared for. They feel safe. Staff know them well. Warm relationships between staff and pupils underpin a calm and respectful culture. As a result, pupils behave well. Pupils explained that while they value the rewards they earn, such as table points, they behave well because it is the right thing to do. They are kind to each other.

Bullying is rare. Pupils know the different forms that bullying can take. They know what to do should it occur. They have every confidence that staff will help them if they have a problem or concern.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and experiences. They enjoy socialising together during these times and at playtimes. Right from the start in early years they get along well together. School is a happy place for them.

All staff share the same determination for pupils to achieve well. Where leaders have focused their efforts, this ambition has been realised. Pupils get off to a good start in learning to read and in developing their mathematical understanding. Leaders have not, however, ensured that pupils always learn consistently well in all other subjects.

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

Leaders, governors and staff are ambitious for the school as it grows to have two classes in each year group. Leaders are carefully restructuring staffing to meet the changing needs of the school. Alongside this, leaders have successfully strengthened the curriculum in English and mathematics. Staff value the support they are getting from leaders as the school expands. Parents are positive about the school. They appreciate how well their children are cared for.

Leaders are in the process of overhauling the curriculum. Some subjects, such as science, physical education (PE) and music, are well planned and sequenced. In these subjects, it is clear what pupils are expected to learn and remember and this builds year on year. However, in other subjects, the order and content of the curriculum has not been finalised. In these subjects, the content is often decided by the class teacher. Curriculum leaders do not have enough oversight to ensure that pupils develop knowledge that will prepare them for the next stage in these subjects.

The curriculum in the early years is developed well to meet the needs of children across all areas of learning. However, this knowledge is sometimes not linked to curriculum subject plans in the wider school to help build on this knowledge successfully. Activities in the early years support children in gaining the knowledge that they are expected to learn. Leaders have ensured that all staff focus on building

children's language skills through all activities. This helps children in all areas of their learning and play.

Leaders have ensured that the teaching of early reading is effective. Staff have expert knowledge and follow the school's phonics scheme closely. Pupils read books that accurately match the sounds they have learned. Weaker readers are given effective help to keep up. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from bespoke support that is carefully matched to their needs. Across the school, pupils are keen to read and enjoy being read to. Their reading books are always to hand, and they grasp every opportunity to read a few pages.

The curriculum in mathematics is organised and sequenced well. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use precise assessment to match learning closely to pupils' needs. Pupils are very positive about mathematics. Pupils with SEND are supported well. Most pupils are keen and confident mathematicians.

In stronger areas of the curriculum, such as music, leaders have carefully linked opportunities to develop vocabulary. For younger pupils, this is introduced in the same way as the teaching of phonics. This supports pupils, including those with SEND, well. They confidently use new words such as rhythm and pace. Leaders have enriched the curriculum. For example, the choir visit the O2 in London to sing. Pupils value these experiences. A pupil said, 'When I heard the choir, it was so beautiful that I cried happy tears.'

Leaders help pupils to value diversity in the world. Pupils learn to respect differences between people in the community. Pupils can talk about the importance of respect, which is evidently part of their everyday experience. They say that 'everyone fits' and that you are never judged.

In lessons pupils behave well. They have a positive approach to learning. They participate in lessons with enthusiasm. Pupils are happy to offer answers to teachers' questions and to work with each other to help come up with the best solutions to problems.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training. Staff understand their responsibilities. Systems to report concerns are understood by everyone. Staff act on concerns promptly. Pupils are supported well. When necessary, leaders work with external agencies so that pupils get the help they need.

Pupils know how to stay safe. They know who to go to if they have a worry or concern. They know that staff will help them. The curriculum helps pupils to learn about different risks they may face and how to manage them. This includes knowing about healthy relationships and keeping safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some parts of the curriculum are not yet fully sequenced. Therefore, teachers are not clear what they need to teach. The curricular plans do not make clear what pupils should know and remember at each point during the school year. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is fully planned and sequenced across all subjects so that pupils know and remember what they have learned over time.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have enough oversight of the aspects of the curriculum which need development. This means that they do not know how well pupils are learning in these subjects. Leaders and governors should ensure that they have the information they need, and that they sharply focus plans to ensure that pupils make progress, learning and remembering more, in all subjects.

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	118291
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10227202
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jack Keeler
Headteacher	Sarah Symonds
Website	www.headcorn.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is undergoing a process of expansion. There are currently two classes in each year group from Reception Year to Year 4. Year 5 and Year 6 contain one class in each year.
- In addition to the additional teaching and support staff needed to expand the school, leaders have increased the role of the SENCo and created additional roles to support pupils' attendance and pastoral support needs.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with senior leaders. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors.

The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspectors conducted deep dives into reading, mathematics, history, PE, music and science. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed the curriculum with subject or senior leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils reading.
- Records associated with safeguarding were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. The inspectors spoke to staff about their safeguarding training and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parents', pupils' and staff's questionnaires.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff to discuss their views about the school, including workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons, in the playground, and around the school.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

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