

Inspection of an outstanding school: Horsted Infant School

Barberry Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME5 9TF

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 July 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Horsted Infant School love coming to this happy, welcoming school. They are eager to be Horsted 'STARS': striving, thoughtful, ambitious, resilient and supportive. Pupils try hard to show these values when working and playing with their peers. They are proud when their efforts are recognised and celebrated in assemblies.

Pupils enjoy learning. They are keen to tackle the challenges of the school's curriculum. Most of the time pupils approach their learning eagerly, revelling in their successes along the way. Where the curriculum has not been planned well enough, and expectations are not high enough, pupils lose interest. Pupils do not achieve as highly as they could in some subjects.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to learn outside in the school's large and well-equipped outdoor space, including the woodland area.

Pupils become good friends with one another. They play nicely together, enjoying the wide variety of activities on offer at breaktime. Pupils in the partner junior school act as 'sports crew', organising games during lunchtimes. Pupils value this support. When pupils fall out with one another, staff make sure any unkindness is nipped in the bud. As one parent said, 'staff are never too busy to help'.

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

Leaders and staff provide a varied curriculum that covers a wide range of subjects. Leaders have made sure that the content pupils will learn in English and mathematics is carefully planned and sequenced. They have high expectations of all pupils in these

subjects. This is not the case for all subjects. For example, in art and design and history, leaders have not made it clear exactly what pupils need to learn and remember. This means that teachers are not always clear about what knowledge and skills they need to teach pupils. Leaders are in the process of addressing this. However, pupils are not achieving as highly as they could in some subjects.

Leaders have made learning to read a priority. They introduced a new phonics scheme this year to make sure that there is a consistent approach to teaching early reading. Leaders have trained all staff, and provided them with the resources needed, to teach phonics well. Children and pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do well in reading. They develop the confidence and skills required to become fluent readers.

Mathematics is also a strength of the school's curriculum. Leaders are explicit about what pupils need to know and understand by when. Teachers check what pupils have remembered and use this information to plan future learning. Children get off to a strong start with mathematics in the early years. They develop a good understanding of number. They explain their understanding confidently and are eager to learn more. In key stage 1, pupils build on their mathematical knowledge well.

Staff have established really clear routines so that children and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Pupils know that, when they are inside, they should use their 'quiet, indoor voices'. This creates a calm and orderly environment. When pupils move from one activity to the next during a lesson, they do this quickly and sensibly. No time is wasted. Where subjects are not planned in enough detail, teachers sometimes give pupils tasks that do not support their learning well enough. When this happens, pupils lose interest in their learning and start to fidget.

Leaders are thorough in their assessment of pupils' additional needs. When necessary, leaders work closely with specialist external advisors to identify and better understand pupils' needs. This information is shared with staff so that they are able to support these pupils well in class. Staff help pupils with SEND to overcome any barriers to their learning. Staff sensitively prompt and encourage these pupils so that they are fully involved in lessons.

The school has a well-established team of staff who want the very best for all pupils. Staff feel supported by leaders to manage their workload. They feel valued by leaders and appreciate the thought leaders give to their well-being.

Leaders plan interesting experiences that enhance pupils' learning in different curriculum subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 particularly enjoyed their recent visit to Wingham Wildlife Park, where they learned even more about the habitats of different animals for their science topic. The school also offers a variety of after school clubs to develop pupils' talents and interests in different areas. Football, cookery and gardening clubs are all popular with the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture where safeguarding is everyone's top priority. Leaders have trained all staff so that they are alert to the signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. Leaders give staff regular updates to keep their knowledge up to date.

Leaders follow up any concerns quickly. They ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need, involving outside agencies when necessary. Leaders keep thorough records of their concerns and actions. They meet regularly to check that the actions they have taken, and support they have given, are having a positive impact.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In several subjects, leaders have not been clear enough about precisely what subject content pupils need to study and when. Pupils are not achieving the standards of which they are capable in these subjects. Leaders are in the process of addressing this. They need to ensure as a matter of priority, that the crucial knowledge and skills that pupils will learn in each subject is planned and sequenced precisely.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 school to be outstanding in June 2016.

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	118442
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10227125
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Murdoch
Headteacher	Steve Geary (executive headteacher), Sarah Steer (head of school)
Website	www.horstedschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 – 29 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a part of the Bluebell Federation of schools.
- An external provider offers a breakfast club and an after-school club on the school site.
- The school is not currently using any 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector also met with representatives from the Bluebell Federation's governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- 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 lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils about their learning, looked at

pupils' work and listened to pupils read. The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about some other subjects.

- The inspector met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training records.
- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views. This included formal meetings with pupils and informal discussions during playtime, lunchtime and in lessons.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Leah Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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