

# Inspection of a good school: Cuxton Community Junior School

Bush Road, Cuxton, Rochester, Kent ME2 1EY

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Inspection dates:

6 and 7 July 2022

## **Outcome**

Cuxton Community Junior School continues to be a good school.

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

This is a happy school. During the inspection, pupils were excited to share their entries to the forthcoming talent show, enthusiastically listed the wide range of clubs they can join and spoke proudly about the different roles and responsibilities to which they can aspire. This includes a wide range of 'ambassador' roles, or serving as a member of the 'pupil parliament'.

Pupils equally enjoy, and are proud of, their academic learning. They behave well during lessons, around the school and at breaktimes. Pupils are respectful of each other and feel safe and valued to be different.

Adults want the best for pupils personally and academically. Pupils learn to keep trying and not give up, even when work is tricky. Staff find lots of ways to work in partnership with parents and carers in pupils' best interests.

Pupils thrive in this caring community. As one parent summed it up, 'The school values are lived and celebrated by everyone'. Adults carefully log and monitor incidents of any kind that affect pupils. They are vigilant about what may amount to bullying and tackle problems directly. Pupils are understandably confident that teachers are good at resolving any issues.

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

Leaders have continued to build on the school's good quality of education. The curriculum is particularly well established and successful in mathematics and English. Pupils make good progress in readiness for their secondary education.

Pupils enjoy a broad, rich curriculum, learning useful things across subjects. In the past, the curriculum has prioritised giving pupils rich experiences and an understanding of what it means to be, for example, a scientist or historian. However, in subjects beyond English and mathematics, there has not been enough focus on the useful knowledge pupils

should also learn. Leaders and staff have already started to redress this balance, but they know there is more to do.

Adults think carefully about the range of literature they introduce to pupils. Teachers help pupils develop the reading skills required to get the most out of more-challenging texts. The school is refining the help it offers pupils who have fallen behind. These pupils use their developing phonics skills with increasing confidence. The school uses innovative approaches to make sure such pupils frequently read to trained adults.

Through expert leadership, the mathematics curriculum has improved strongly since the previous inspection. Prioritising the professional development of all staff, leaders have created a positive culture and the necessary expertise. This is typical of leaders' approach. Adults' strong subject knowledge and precise, systematic teaching help make sure that pupils' learning in mathematics lasts.

Leaders and staff have a sound understanding of how to help pupils remember what they learn and how to check this. They use a range of helpful strategies to do so. However, now and again, the importance of making the learning stick for pupils becomes confused with making the experience itself memorable. Sometimes, pupils can remember the fun that they had doing something, but not what they were supposed to learn.

Passionate advocacy and strong leadership mean that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get a good deal. High ambition for them is balanced with meeting their current needs and starting points. Specialist equipment and adapted resources are routinely used to help individual pupils succeed. The well-trained team of teaching assistants play an important part in this strong provision.

Pupils' positive attitudes are an asset and a mark of their strong wider development. Lessons are seldom interrupted. Pupils engage earnestly in mature discussions about their work. There is much on offer beyond daily lessons, including sport, music, art, charity and community activities.

Leaders know the school well, including what needs to improve and how to achieve this. Staff form a close-knit and united team. Leaders show considerable care for them and pupils alike. There is a shared determination to keep the school moving strongly in the right direction in a manageable way.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding is strong. Systems are well established and constantly refreshed with staff to ensure that safeguarding is always at the forefront of everyone's minds. Staff put their training to good use. They are vigilant and act promptly on any concerns. Leaders are not afraid to challenge local safeguarding partners if they feel they should be doing more to support a family. The importance of online safety has been prioritised. The pupil parliament is currently working on an online code of conduct that is tailored for pupils of different ages.

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

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

- The curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics does not make consistently clear the knowledge that pupils should learn by the time they leave and along the way. Work towards tackling this issue is already underway. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied. Leaders should continue with this important work so that the curriculum in all subjects identifies and organises what pupils need to know in a logical sequence towards agreed end points, to better support pupils' learning.
- Sometimes the importance the school attaches to outdoor, or what staff call 'experiential', learning leads to activities being selected that are not best suited to secure the learning intended. At times, a sharp focus on the most important learning is lost at the expense of making the experience itself memorable. Leaders should ensure that staff have and use a consistently strong understanding of the importance of both long-term and working memory in learning, and use this to help pupils focus on and remember the most important points.

## 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

## 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>	141224
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241795
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	223
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	William Harwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Charlotte Aldham-Breary
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cuxtonschools.co.uk">www.cuxtonschools.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The Academy of Cuxton Schools operates as a single primary school. For both infant and junior schools, there is a single headteacher, senior leadership team and local governance arrangement. However, the junior and infant schools are registered and inspected separately. The infant school was most recently inspected in March 2022.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both appointed to their roles since the previous inspection of the junior school. At the time of this inspection, the headteacher was on maternity leave and the deputy was acting headteacher. However, the substantive headteacher was fully involved in the inspection, including the telephone conversations held with the inspector the day before.
- 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 leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector worked closely with the substantive and acting headteachers throughout the inspection. He also met several times with the special educational needs coordinator.
- In considering whether the quality of education at the school remains good, the inspector focused on certain subjects. He carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also met with subject leader for religious education and reviewed curriculum plans for other subjects with senior leaders.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspector explored the theme of safeguarding in discussions with a wide range of staff and pupils. He also scrutinised the school's records and arrangements for managing safeguarding, as well as systems for identifying and responding to concerns.
- The inspector chatted informally to pupils and staff at breaktime and between lessons. He also took account of the views expressed by pupils, parents and staff through Ofsted's online inspection surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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