

Inspection of a good school: Kemsing Primary School

West End, Kemsing, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 6PU

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 July 2022

Outcome

Kemsing Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy. They feel safe. They say that their school feels like a family and their teachers really care. Pupils feel that school staff work hard to make their learning fun. Forest school is a highlight for many pupils. They enjoy being outdoors, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Children in Reception quickly learn the routines of the school day. They show high levels of interest and engagement in learning. As they move into Year 1 and beyond, pupils continue to demonstrate consistently positive attitudes. Expectations for what all pupils can achieve in their learning are continuing to grow under the headteacher's leadership.

Pupils take great pride in carrying out the range of pupil roles on offer, including reading buddies, school council, peer mediators and house captains. House captains take an active role in championing and rewarding the school values of kindness, creativity, teamwork, determination, trust and positivity.

Pupils, parents and carers alike appreciate the wide range of sporting opportunities and clubs on offer to pupils. Parents describe the new headteacher as a breath of fresh air for the school. They feel that under his leadership, a new lease of life has been injected into the school. Some parents feel that prior to his arrival, the curriculum had become somewhat stagnant.

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

Staff welcomed the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2021. His appointment has restored a sense of stability to the school, following a period of turbulence. This was caused in part by the pandemic, but also by unrest within the senior leadership team. When he arrived, the headteacher identified that provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) was unacceptably poor and that, more broadly, the school's curriculum needed development. Despite the staffing

challenges caused this year by the pandemic, work to address these issues is well under way.

Prior to the headteacher's arrival, there had not been an inclusive culture within the school. Over time, pupils with SEND had not received the right support or had a consistently positive experience of school. At present, there are low numbers of pupils with SEND on the school roll.

The headteacher has acted swiftly to address these concerns and staff are fully supportive of this work. The headteacher began by commissioning a full review of the school's SEND provision from the local authority, and from this review developed a clear action plan. It is already evident that there has been a significant shift in attitude towards pupils with SEND. The headteacher is aware that further training is needed to ensure that staff have the expertise they need to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, achieve the best possible outcomes. This is planned for September 2022.

While there were curriculums in place for all subjects, during the pandemic, learning lost momentum. When pupils returned, it became increasingly evident that a number of aspects of the curriculum needed to be reviewed and revised, including the curriculum for early years.

A new phonics programme was implemented in December 2021. More children are now getting the right support with reading from the start of Reception. There is support in place for a small number of older pupils who are behind in their reading. Senior leaders know there is still work to do to refine some aspects of the teaching of phonics, such as how children are taught to apply their phonics knowledge to writing. Love of reading is well developed across the school.

The mathematics curriculum for all year groups, including Reception, has been redeveloped from January 2022. This followed a period where teachers focused on plugging gaps in knowledge that had developed over the pandemic. Teachers now explain mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures very clearly, and pupils listen attentively. Almost all pupils have positive attitudes towards mathematics. There is a clear approach to assessment in mathematics, and information gathered from assessments is used to inform teaching.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects. In some foundation subjects, there is a clear and well-sequenced curriculum in place. In other foundation subjects, however, the curriculum has not been coherently planned and sequenced. In these subjects, pupils say their learning is fun, but they are not building a coherent body of connected knowledge. Senior leaders are aware of this and are in the process of redeveloping the curriculum in these subjects.

There have been several changes at a senior leadership level, and within the school's governing body. A new chair and vice-chair were appointed in September 2021. Governors now have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. It has been agreed that in September 2022, the school will federate with another local primary school. Governors'

aims in instigating this federation are to raise standards, promote inclusion and to build capacity between the schools in a coherent manner.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders have ensured that all staff have been trained to identify the signs that pupils may need early help or may be experiencing or at risk of harm. Staff know how to raise their concerns. A new system was implemented in September 2021 to ensure that all concerns were carefully tracked and responded to once they had been raised. Senior leaders do refer to and seek advice from external safeguarding partners appropriately. Safer recruitment procedures are followed. Any allegations about adults are referred and managed appropriately.

Pupils follow an effective personal, social and health education curriculum, and a relationships and sex education curriculum. They learn to keep themselves safe online, and in their relationships. Some pupils are not clear about when to ask an adult for help, rather than a peer. A small number of pupils felt that some school staff could be dismissive of their worries. Senior leaders and governors are aware of this and have clear plans in place to address this with staff and pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some foundation subjects is not sufficiently ambitious; nor does it match the breadth and scope of the national curriculum. As a result of the way leaders have designed the curriculum in these subjects, pupils do not develop a broad and connected body of knowledge. Senior leaders are aware of this and are in the process of redesigning the curriculum in these subjects. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied.
- Historically, the school has not had an inclusive ethos. Over time, staff have not been supported to develop the expertise required to consistently understand and meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND have not always felt valued or welcome within the school community. Pupils with SEND and their parents have not always been fully included as participants in decision-making. The headteacher and governors are determined to address this, but know that at present, not all pupils with SEND are getting the support they need to work with increasing independence in lessons to learn the school's intended curriculum and achieve the best possible outcomes. Since his appointment in September 2021, the headteacher has, with the support of the local authority, already begun to address this. There is a clear action plan in place and further training for all staff is planned for September 2022. For this reason, the transition 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 2009.

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	118277
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10227793
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tara Anderson
Headteacher	Tom Hardwick
Website	www.kemsing.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The chair of governors and vice-chair of governors were appointed to their roles in September 2021.
- In September 2022, the school will formally federate with Sunridge and Brasted Church of England Primary School. Both schools will continue to be led by the headteacher.
- The school uses one off-site alternative provider to support pupils with dyslexia. Parents can apply directly to this provider as part of Kent County Council's local offer. The provider is unregistered.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other members of the leadership team. The inspector met the chair and vice-chair of governors, and

several additional representatives of the governing body. The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. Within the deep dives, 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 reading deep dive, the inspector listened to pupils reading.
- The inspectors also spoke to leaders about curriculum development in other subjects, including personal, social and health education, relationships and sex education and physical education.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector considered how well the school manages safer recruitment, and how they manage allegations about adults. The inspector also discussed safeguarding with those responsible for governance and the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school development plans and a recent review of provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their learning, what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe at school.
- The inspector reviewed 19 responses to the staff survey and 68 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text comments. The inspector spoke to parents at the gate on the morning of day 2 of the inspection.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022