

Inspection of a good school: Snodland C of E Primary School

Roberts Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5HL

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

Outcome

Snodland C of E Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff, parents and governors are proud of their school. Pupils are happy to come to school. They thrive in the calm and purposeful environment. One pupil summed up the views of many by describing the school as 'caring, loving, forgiving, playful and a school where you can believe in any religion'. Parents are very supportive of the school. Typical views were summed up by a comment from one parent, 'There is a real sense of community; families are welcomed and encouraged to join in with school life and events.'

Pupils want to learn and they work hard. They rise to teachers' high expectations to flourish personally, socially and academically. They know that everyone supports them to do their very best. One parent said, 'The inclusive and supportive atmosphere of the school is evident from the moment you visit.'

Pupils behave well and feel safe and secure. Staff know the pupils very well and there are positive, trusting relationships. Pupils say bullying is rare but they know they can share any concerns or worries they may have and that they will be listened to. The school values of 'hope, joy, peace, faith, love and unity' are at the heart of all the school does. Pupils get on well together and value the friendships they make.

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

Leaders have designed a vibrant and engaging curriculum. The key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and remember are very clear from Reception to Year 6. Subject leaders have excellent knowledge of their subjects, and colleagues benefit from their extensive skills and expertise, including the several new teachers to the school. Staff are quick to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is equally ambitious for pupils with SEND as it is for other pupils. Pupils with SEND are well supported so they can experience the same curriculum as their peers and achieve their best.

There is no complacency in the school and there is a relentless drive for constant improvement. Leaders are determined to make sure that all pupils are getting the best possible learning, social and cultural experiences. Leaders have already correctly identified the need to further embed the curriculum to be consistently highly effective. There have been recent significant improvements in the early years environment and provision. However, leaders know there is scope for further improvement to ensure that the well-planned early years curriculum is having as much impact on children's learning as possible.

Teachers carefully check pupils' understanding and use this information to inform their teaching. There is a strong focus on developing and enriching pupils' vocabulary, which starts in Reception. Teachers help pupils remember what they know so they can build on this when they learn something new. Most lessons start with a 'flashback' session to help them do this. In history, for example, pupils in Year 5 could draw on their prior knowledge of conflicts and settlements to help them learn about Anglo-Saxons. Early mathematical skills are developed through practical activities to deepen understanding. For example, children in Reception were exploring patterns and repeating patterns using pegboards and threading beads.

Reading is a priority throughout the school. Teachers encourage pupils to develop a love of reading from the start. As they get older, pupils are encouraged to read widely and frequently. They develop as confident, fluent readers with the skills to access the wider curriculum. Teachers introduce them to a range of quality texts. The titles are carefully chosen and often promote pupils' awareness and discussion of issues such as cultural diversity, equality and difference.

Pupils learn phonics skills well. The new phonics programme is well organised and structured. It begins as soon as children start in Reception. Pupils read and take books home that match the sounds that they know. Staff are well trained and have the resources they need to teach early reading well. Pupils who find reading more difficult, including pupils with SEND, are supported to catch up quickly.

Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about their school and all the activities on offer. They are particularly motivated by activities in the forest school. For example, pupils baked bread and made pots as part of their Anglo-Saxon study. They enjoy their leadership roles, including being school council members and eco warriors, and take their responsibilities seriously.

There is a very strong culture of developing the expertise and leadership skills of staff. Staff work well as a strong, committed and dedicated team. Staff, including those at the start of their careers, feel valued and supported by senior leaders. Governors know the school well and provide valuable insights, challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' well-being and safety are priorities for everyone. Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular training and frequent updates, so they understand how to help keep pupils safe. Staff know pupils well and so are quick to spot any signs that a child may be at risk of harm. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have a concern. Leaders ensure that any necessary action is taken quickly. They seek support from specialist services where appropriate. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. The required checks are carried out on adults who work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the well-designed and ambitious curriculum intent is not fully embedded in all areas. This means that there is not always the rigour and consistency in the delivery of the curriculum. Leaders need to continue their work to monitor the implementation to ensure that the curriculum is fully embedded and consistently meets their high expectations in all subjects.
- The early years provision is not consistently supporting the delivery of the well-designed and sequenced early years curriculum. Children's learning opportunities are not always as effective as they could be. Leaders need to further refine and build on the positive changes that have already taken place in the early years to ensure that the quality of the provision is fully effective.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 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.

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	118846
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10227653
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Oliver Allen (co-chair) Sarah Harewood (co-chair)
Headteacher	Holley Hunt
Website	www.snodland.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there are several new senior and subject leaders.
- Six teachers joined the school in September 2022.
- As a Church of England school, Snodland is part of the Diocese of Rochester. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in April 2018.
- The school does not currently use 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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy and assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, other leaders and staff.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the two co-chairs. She also held a telephone conversation with the local authority school improvement adviser.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum planning in other subjects and observed some pupils reading to teaching assistants.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector spoke with leaders, staff and pupils. She looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records. Throughout the inspection, the inspector considered and checked the culture of safeguarding within the school.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school development plan and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. She talked to pupils formally and informally about their learning, what behaviour is like and whether they feel safe in school.
- The inspector considered the responses from Ofsted's online surveys for staff and parents and spoke to some parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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