

Inspection of Claremont Primary School

Banner Farm Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5EB

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud to attend Claremont Primary School. They talk with confidence and enthusiasm about what makes their school special, pointing out the ways that everyone is responsible for looking out for each other. They are pleased to be trained as 'playground buddies' and 'well-being ambassadors'. They know that there is always someone to talk to and that staff will sort any worries quickly, including any concerns about bullying. This culture of care helps them to feel safe.

Pupils love being at school. They take learning seriously and enjoy considering how they will use their developing knowledge and skills in the future. Right from Reception Year, they have a sense of excitement for their next steps and know that staff will support them to be successful. They recognise the high expectations that staff have for both their academic and pastoral development.

The sense of inclusion that pervades the school means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do well. All achievements are celebrated meaningfully, and pupils are provided with a rich range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. These help to develop pupils' characters exceptionally well.

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

Leaders' aspirations for the school are clear to see. They have created a happy and successful school, where pupils and staff work together effectively. Pupils perform very well in the end-of-key-stage-2 national tests, but leaders are ambitious for success across the range of curriculum subjects. They have put in place well-considered actions to raise standards even further, to ensure that the delivery of the whole curriculum is as strong as possible.

The curriculum is planned carefully so that right from the early years children gain the firm foundations that teach them the routines and high expectations that help them to become lifelong learners. Children in Reception Year show a love of stories and books. They are supported well to learn their sounds and are keen to talk about their learning.

This focus on reading continues throughout the school. In lessons, pupils engage happily with phonics and learn well, although there is some inconsistency in how well pupils are supported when they are reading books to adults. Staff do not yet routinely use the agreed phonetical approach. This hinders the weakest readers from gaining the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers.

Across the curriculum, staff follow the agreed plans and provide pupils with a rich range of learning. Questioning is used very well in Reception Year, where children

are supported to develop their vocabulary. Leaders have made sure that staff know how to spot and adapt resources to ensure that pupils with SEND can learn well alongside their peers. This is highly effective. However, teachers do not consistently check how well all pupils can remember their learning. This means that, sometimes, lessons move on without staff correcting misconceptions, leaving pupils with gaps in their learning.

In lessons and around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are well motivated and keen to learn. Pupils engage confidently with staff, debating the 'big questions' that underpin their curriculum. Pupils engage thoughtfully with their learning and, as a result, most achieve very well. They live the values of the school, taking pride in being tolerant and accepting of everyone in their school community and beyond. They understand, appreciate and respect difference in terms of faith and culture. They are respectful and thoughtful when engaging in discussion, whether speaking with visitors or each other.

Pupils have an exceptional range of opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. In addition to a wide range of clubs, a particular strength is the educational visits and work with visitors to the school. Pupils talk excitedly about using 'green screens' in Year 1 to create their own weather reports. The school's film festival celebrates pupils' own short films. Pupils also have a wide range of opportunities to develop leadership skills in school. Pupils talk proudly about these roles and aspire to take them on.

Leaders and governors have a careful and considered approach to their plans. They support staff well and are considerate of well-being and workload. They keep pupils' voices central to their actions and are receptive to feedback. They reflect well and adapt their plans to think about how the school can always be better. However, some subject leaders lack a sense of urgency when implementing changes. They have not ensured that all staff have the expertise to ensure that planned changes are successful.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training. Staff know how to identify pupils who might be at risk of harm. They report any worries quickly. Leaders take swift and appropriate actions to ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need, including from external agencies. Governors ensure that leaders take the right steps to check that adults are safe to work in the school.

Pupils know that there are adults they can talk to, either in person or through the 'worry box', if they are worried. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to the teaching of phonics lacks consistency. As a result, not all pupils are being supported as well as they should to become confident and fluent readers. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have developed sufficient expertise so that all pupils can make good progress in reading.
- In some areas assessment is not always used consistently to identify what pupils do not fully understand. As a result, some pupils have misconceptions or gaps in their learning that are not addressed rapidly. Subject leaders need to ensure that assessment information is used consistently to inform the next steps in pupils' learning.

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	118456
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10242340
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	438
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Chris Davidson
Headteacher	Candi Roberts
Website	www.claremont.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2009

Information about this school

- There have been many changes to staffing and leadership, including the governing body, since the last inspection in 2009.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, physical education and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 lead inspector listened to some pupils read to adults they knew.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held meetings with safeguarding leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised the single central record and checked safeguarding records.
- The inspection team also took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes. They also considered external reports of the school from the local authority, as well as stakeholder engagement surveys undertaken by the governing body. The team also spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of parent and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Linda Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Luisa Gould	Ofsted Inspector

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