

Inspection of a good school: Shears Green Junior School

White Avenue, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 7JB

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 January 2023

Outcome

Shears Green Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff at this school put pupils at the heart of all they do. They take care of pupils and keep them safe. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They are proud to belong to this inclusive community. As a pupil said, 'Everyone is welcome here.'

Positive working relationships between adults and pupils characterise this school. Leaders have developed a culture where pupils learn the importance of respect. Pupils get on well together with very little unkindness or bullying. Staff deal with any rare cases of bullying well.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. An interesting curriculum inspires pupils. Experiences such as 'cosmic camp' and the stone age visitor aid pupils' eagerness to learn. Consequently, pupils do well.

School leaders have worked hard on improving communication and partnership with parents. Leaders welcome parents into the school regularly. Parents are highly complimentary about what the school does for their children, especially since the new headteacher took over the reins. Parents are appreciative of the weekly podcasts that keep them informed about school news. Parents are particularly pleased about the remote learning provided during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have identified that some curriculum subjects did not prepare pupils well enough for their next steps. This has been rectified. Leaders have revamped the school curriculum, and it is now suitably ambitious. In particular, leaders make sure that new learning builds on what pupils already know. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. This is because leaders have provided helpful training and clear direction to staff. Teachers know their pupils well and check their

learning regularly. Leaders have made sure that assessment of pupils is not overly burdensome for teachers.

Pupils enjoy learning and there is no low-level disruption during lessons. A new behaviour system accentuates pupils' positive behaviours. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their emotions and focus on learning are supported well. Any issues are resolved quickly so they can resume their learning. Pupils of all abilities take a pride in their work and are delighted with their achievements.

Across the school, pupils take great pleasure in reading. They enjoy the texts that are chosen as class reading books and recall with excitement the authors who have visited the school to talk to them. Leaders have strengthened transition from infant school, and they identify precisely any gaps in pupils' early reading skills. Pupils with SEND or those who may have fallen behind catch up quickly in Year 3. Pupils practise their early reading skills through reading regularly to highly skilled staff. Books are matched closely to pupils' phonics knowledge, so they experience success. However, this work is yet to be embedded fully for weaker readers in older year groups.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Pupils have opportunity to attend a wide range of clubs, trips and visits. Pupils learn well about life in modern Britain. They learn about and demonstrate respect and tolerance towards others. The ethos of the school shines through and, as a teacher said, 'The caring and inclusive ethos permeates all through this school community.'

Leaders and governors know their school well and ensure that the school community share and celebrate achievements. The school staff are united as a team and feel valued. Staff share good practice within the school and across partner schools in the trust. Leaders look out for areas of improvement, such as the key stage 2 reading published outcomes that dipped in 2022. They have made sure that plans are in place to improve outcomes. However, leaders' oversight of their work to improve aspects of the school has not always been sufficiently robust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Effective working relationships across the school community contribute to a strong safeguarding culture. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about safeguarding matters and how to keep safe, including when online.

The designated safeguarding leads (DSL) and school staff are well trained. Staff report safeguarding concerns diligently. Incidents are recorded in detail in chronological order. DSLs ensure that any safeguarding issue is followed up assiduously, liaising with outside agencies.

Leaders carry out all the required checks when appointing staff. They keep clear and complete records of the checks made. Governors keep a close eye on safeguarding matters and ensure that the safeguarding policy meets requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not yet ensured that weaker readers in all year groups have exactly the right help they need. Consequently, some pupils do not read fluently or accurately. This affects how well they can apply their knowledge in other subjects. Leaders should ensure that the support for all pupils who need help with reading is fully effective.
- Leaders and governors do not yet keep close enough strategic oversight of the school's plans and work to improve outcomes for pupils. This means that they are not able to evaluate fully how well this work is progressing or whether this is having the intended impact. Governors should ensure that all leaders sharpen their strategic oversight of their plans to improve outcomes, especially pupils' reading.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

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	118436
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256493
Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	483
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Barry Rogers
Headteacher	Matthew Paterson
Website	www.shearsgreenjuniorschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in May 2022.
- The school is part of Northfleet Schools Co-operative Trust, which consists of six schools.
- The school does not 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 governors, the chair of Northfleet Schools Co-operative Trust, the headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, carried out lesson visits, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The school website and a number of policies and documents were considered.

- The inspector considered the views of staff by speaking with them through their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The lead inspector spoke with parents and carers and considered their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and other safeguarding records. The inspector also met with the designated safeguarding leaders and spoke to staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Sue Child, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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