

Inspection of a good school: Lamberhurst St Mary's CofE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Pearse Place, Lamberhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 8EJ

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 March 2023

Outcome

Lamberhurst St Mary's CofE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils build positive relationships with staff and with one another in this caring school. Staff greet pupils with a warm welcome at the start of each day. One parent expressed the views of many, when they said, 'Teachers are kind, nurturing and helpful.' Pupils delight in spending time with one another when at play. They enjoy the variety of activities offered at playtime.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. Older pupils take on the role of 'buddies' and show a genuine care for younger pupils. Pupils are courteous when moving around the school. For example, pupils hold doors open for adults and make visitors feel welcome with their warm greetings. When bullying happens, leaders are swift to act. Pupils use the school's 'three tells' approach to articulate when they do not like the behaviour of others. This empowers pupils to respond to unwanted behaviour positively.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well. Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities to explore their thinking and develop their interests. For example, pupils in key stage 2 learn Latin and younger pupils learn French.

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

There is a culture of high ambition for all pupils. Leaders provide a curriculum that is relevant and interesting, and subject leaders have created clear routes through so that teachers can see how to shape their learning activities. This ensures that pupils develop their knowledge and skills well. Teachers use regular checks to ensure that they have a clear understanding of what pupils know and remember. They use this information to plan future lessons, which build on what pupils have already learned.

Teachers use helpful questioning to encourage pupils to reflect on what they have learned previously. This helps pupils to develop their thinking and join up their learning. Children in the early years learn through a range of relevant and engaging activities. In subjects such as art and design and science, leaders ensure that pupils learn a good balance of the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. However, in subjects such as geography and design and technology, while pupils develop skills well, they have fewer opportunities to develop subject-specific knowledge.

Leaders evaluate carefully how well pupils learn the curriculum. Governors review the actions of leaders and make sure they address any improvements that are needed. This helps leaders to strengthen the delivery of the curriculum and supports teachers to manage their workload. As a result, teachers feel valued and make effective use of their time in class.

Teachers deliver the curriculum well. Leaders provide effective training for teachers to help them develop their knowledge. Most recently, leaders have worked with teachers to refine the approach to teaching mathematics. As a result, pupils develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding well. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge across subjects. Teachers identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. They make helpful adaptations that ensure pupils with SEND receive the support needed to learn alongside their peers.

Pupils develop their phonic knowledge well. Staff teach phonics consistently and effectively. Children in the early years quickly learn to recognise the sounds needed to begin to read. As pupils move through key stage 1, they read unfamiliar words with increasing confidence and accuracy. Staff provide effective support for pupils who have fallen behind with their reading. As a result, most pupils who have fallen behind catch up quickly. However, there is some inconsistency in the approach to teaching reading at key stage 2. This means that a few pupils do not learn to read as well as they could.

Teachers set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They show respect for and understanding of each other. They benefit from a variety of opportunities that enhance what they learn in class, and join in with these with enthusiasm. They also enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Teachers encourage pupils to learn about life in modern Britain.

Pupils are proud of the school's values, and teachers help pupils to use them to guide their thinking. Leaders ensure clubs and activities are accessible for pupils with SEND and for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils learn a range of instruments, such as guitar, keyboard and drums. They experience curriculum visits and learn from visitors to the school. For example, pupils visit the local church and have visited an observatory and a working farm. These opportunities help pupils to deepen their cultural understanding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They receive detailed training and regular updates that help them to identify when a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders act swiftly to address concerns that are raised. They draw on support from outside agencies to make sure that pupils and their families receive the help they need.

Pupils know how to stay safe. They learn about staying safe online through the computing curriculum and learn from visiting speakers. If pupils have a worry, they are confident that they can speak to a trusted adult in school who will help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not sequenced the key stage 2 reading curriculum in enough detail. This means that there is some inconsistency in the teaching of reading. Leaders need to provide teachers with a clearly sequenced approach to teaching reading in order to ensure all pupils learn to read confidently and with fluency and comprehension.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn. This means that pupils do not develop a broad enough body of knowledge across the curriculum. Leaders need to review the curriculum content to identify the substantive knowledge that pupils must learn in all subjects.

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 May 2013.

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	118604
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10241826
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Edgesmith
Headteacher	Caroline Bromley
Website	www.lamberhurst.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary-controlled Church of England primary school within the Diocese of Rochester. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in January 2018. The next inspection will be within eight years of that last inspection.
- The school is an associate school of The Tenax Schools Trust, a trust with eight primary schools and one secondary school in Kent and East Sussex.
- 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other leaders and a range of staff at the school. The inspector met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust where the school is an associate member. The inspector also met with the chair of governors and six members of the governing body. The inspector spoke with a

representative from the Diocese of Rochester and a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and design and technology. 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 considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers through responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. The inspector spoke to staff, parents and pupils during the inspection and took account of the staff and pupil confidential online surveys.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and considered safeguarding documents and records. These included the school's records and plans for supporting pupils who have been referred to outside agencies.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted 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 2023