

Inspection of a good school: Horsted Junior School

Barberry Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME5 9TF

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

Outcome

Horsted Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are excited to be a part of Horsted Junior School. They are enthusiastic about the many clubs and activities the school provides, such as the much sought-after cooking club. The playground is a happy and thriving environment. Older pupils take roles as play leaders to help make sure that spaces and games are shared. The popular breaktime 'snack shop' offers healthy and nutritious food. There are also quiet spaces such as 'rocket club' which pupils value and benefit from.

The school sets high expectations for how pupils should learn and behave. As a result, pupils achieve highly. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils behave well and see the school's approach to behaviour as supportive and fair. They seek to show the school's 'STARS' values in their learning, for instance by demonstrating resilience. These values are celebrated and strengthened through weekly assemblies.

Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep safe and are confident to speak with staff about any worries they may have. Pupils and parents speak positively about how well supported they feel. This is because staff take effective actions to resolve issues and prevent them from escalating.

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

The school has high ambitions for their pupils, and this is reflected in the curriculum. As pupils move through key stage 2, there is a clear sequence for learning important knowledge. Staff are skilled at identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. This helps to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils. When some pupils need additional support, the school ensures that this is in place.

Teachers have secure knowledge about the subjects that they teach. They select purposeful activities to help pupils learn. Teachers give clear explanations, and they model and demonstrate important concepts well. For example, in mathematics, pupils use visual

representations to help them with dividing numbers. The school emphasises making sure that knowledge 'sticks' and is remembered by pupils. To that end, teachers use questioning effectively to check what pupils have understood and what they need to do next. For pupils with SEND, the school breaks down the stages of learning into small steps. This gives staff a detailed and granular guide to exactly where these pupils are in their learning. By using these small steps to identify patterns and potential obstacles, pupils with SEND develop effective strategies for learning.

Pupils enjoy reading and improving their vocabulary. They understand how important reading is for their learning. Leaders allocate time and resources to reading throughout the school. Pupils have access to high-quality books and texts which are appropriate to their age. For instance, Year 6 can read thought-provoking articles about Darwin's voyage on the Beagle. The school provides extra support for pupils who need to catch up with reading. Despite this, the phonic knowledge of some weaker readers is not as secure as it should be. This limits their understanding of the texts they are reading. Consequently, they are not catching up as well as they could.

The school's curriculum gives pupils the understanding that they need to be ready for secondary school. They produce work of a high standard, for instance when writing about the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians in history. In national tests, pupils typically achieve outcomes which are above the national average. Staff are positive about the school's approach to assessment and workload. Their teaching practice is supported by the sharing of resources, and the open-door approach which leaders take.

The school has effective systems to support pupils with making the right behaviour choices. As a result, pupils listen carefully and concentrate well on their learning. The school provides considerable opportunities for pupils to develop their wider learning. Pupils enjoy the educational visits that are woven into their topics. The school ensures that there are opportunities to enhance pupils' understanding of the wider world. For example, pupils learn about other faiths and cultures through visits to local places of worship.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some weaker readers do not consistently recall elements of their basic phonic knowledge. As a result, these pupils find it difficult to understand the books they are reading as well as they could. The school should continue to strengthen the impact of the phonics programme to ensure that weaker readers catch up more rapidly.

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 2014.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	118477
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10287917
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Murdoch
Headteacher	Sarah Steer (Headteacher), Steve Geary (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.horstedschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Horsted Junior School is part of the Bluebell Federation of schools.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior and middle leaders including the headteacher, executive headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspector also spoke with a representative from Medway local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, 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 discussed the curriculum and provision for pupils with SEND.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, governors, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts the pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Daniel Botting, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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