

Inspection of a good school: Boughton Monchelsea Primary School

Church Hill, Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone, Kent ME17 4HP

Inspection dates:

26 and 29 September 2023

Outcome

Boughton Monchelsea Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

A warm welcome awaits pupils at this vibrant village school. Pupils are enthusiastic and happy. The school has high expectations for behaviour and most pupils meet them with pride. A small minority of pupils require specific pastoral support to manage their emotions. This helps them to improve their conduct, ensuring that everyone feels safe and included. Pupils have full faith in staff to help them with any worries.

The school shows ambition for all pupils to be their best. Pupils are achieving well in many subjects. The school is taking the correct steps to ensure that every pupil finishes their time at school as confident, fluent and accomplished readers.

Everyone has the opportunity to share and develop their unique talents. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who routinely shine in 'Boughton's Got Talent' shows. Pupils give kind support to one another, building everyone's confidence to share piano skills or magic tricks. A special feature of the school is the immersive experiences that bring the past to life. Pupils love the '1950s day', Mayan food tasting and the whole-school celebration of kings and queens. Trips to museums and a local animal centre enrich pupils' learning further.

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

The teaching of reading starts well in early years, where pupils practise sounds in a nurturing setting. Continuing into key stage 1, most staff are knowledgeable and teach the programme with consistency. Books match the sounds which pupils are learning so that they get the practice they need. Staff identify gaps and plan catch-up sessions if pupils fall behind. These activities are often effective, but some do not precisely target where pupils may be struggling. This means that some pupils have not consistently moved through the school with fluency, confidence and joy for reading.

The curriculum is well planned in most subjects from the early years onwards. In the stronger curriculum areas, such as mathematics and history, learning is designed and

delivered to help pupils build secure knowledge and skills over time. Teachers know what to teach and in what order. They use secure subject knowledge and appropriate tasks to help pupils achieve well. Some subjects are less coherently planned. As a result, this means that while science lessons are engaging, staff do not emphasise the most important content. Consequently, pupils' recall of the key knowledge and skills is less detailed and confident.

Teachers check pupils' understanding during lessons using a range of strategies. This involves pupils demonstrating key knowledge on mini-whiteboards or sharing their learning in class discussions. Staff swiftly identify pupils who need additional support, including those with SEND. Staff adapt their teaching to enable these pupils to access the same curriculum as their peers. The school reviews the provision to check that disadvantaged pupils receive the help they need, which can involve support for learning or well-being.

Pupils' learning behaviour is generally positive. The small number of pupils who need extra help are well supported using individual plans. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, behaviour and attendance have improved. Relationships are warm and expectations are usually met. Behaviour starts well in early years, where children settle with success.

Pupils learn about equality and life in modern Britain through the curriculum and assemblies. They learn about safe relationships, cybersecurity and self-care, such as the importance of brushing their teeth. Pupils learn about managing their self-esteem and the awareness of media influence. They explore different belief systems and develop a deep understanding of equity. Year 6 pupils learn about the rule of law when a magistrate visits the school.

Many clubs are free of charge to make sure nobody misses out. This includes girls' and boys' football and netball. Opportunities in dance and musical theatre are popular. The school uses funding effectively to make sure that disadvantaged pupils access these opportunities. Swimming provision is impressive, boosted by frequent lessons in the school's pool. Parents feel involved in the school community and appreciate how leaders listen to their views and share important communication.

Leaders are well respected and effective. Through compassion and diligence, they have raised standards for learning and behaviour. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and standards are improving. Parents are impressed with the 'lovely community atmosphere' and say that the school is 'brilliantly run'. Staff are unanimous in their praise for leaders, who help them to improve their teaching while keeping their workload manageable. Governors ask probing questions to hold the school to account. After a period of change and uncertainty, shared ambition and values are now well established across the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The additional support for struggling readers sometimes lacks precision. This means that, on occasion, some pupils do not catch up with their reading quickly enough. The school should ensure that staff have the required expert knowledge to help all pupils to learn to read swiftly and with fluency and confidence.
- In some subjects, leaders have not yet precisely identified and sequenced the detailed knowledge that they want pupils to learn in the curriculum. This means that teachers do not consistently know exactly what knowledge needs to be taught, and in what order, which slows pupils' learning. The school must ensure that the planning for all subjects precisely identifies the knowledge and skills that staff intend pupils to learn and remember.

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 2018.

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	118288
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10287911
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
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	Sarah Stribbling-Williams
Headteacher	Mandy Gibbs
Website	www.boughton-monchelsea.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has recently undergone significant changes in leadership. The headteacher started her post in April 2023.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.
- The school offers a before- and after-school club, managed by the governing body.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers (including early career teachers) and governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and science. 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 met with leaders to evaluate pupils' work in geography and history.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read. The inspector observed catch-up interventions to learn how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses.
- The inspector spoke with a range of pupils to learn their views about the school.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection was led by one inspector on 26 September. A different inspector completed the inspection on 29 September.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector (29 September) His Majesty's Inspector

James Stuart, lead inspector (26 September) His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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