

Inspection of a good school: Otford Primary School

High Street, Otford, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 5PG

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 October 2023

Outcome

Otford Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff embrace the school's values of courage, kindness and curiosity. Pupils are polite and respectful. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that the school has of their achievement. Pupils are interested in their learning and talk about it with pride. Their work is displayed creatively and celebrated throughout the school.

Pupils' well-being is a priority. There is a range of pastoral support across the school that pupils can access if they need to. Pupils consider the 'peaceful pod,' the 'listening ear' and the 'nest' to be safe places where they can go to speak to a trusted adult about any worries they may have or to get some help to manage their feelings positively.

There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop beyond the academic curriculum. For example, pupils learn to play musical instruments, including the keyboard and ukelele. They enjoy forest school sessions. Pupils experience a range of sports and many take part in local competitions. Pupils are proud to represent their school as a 'community ambassador' or a house captain. One parent, reflecting the views of many, commented, 'There is a clear ethos of community, equality and care for each child.'

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

The school has recently reviewed and refined the curriculum, which is ambitious and reflects the school's values. Learning begins strongly in the early years, where adults support children effectively to explore and to be independent. Children thrive in this vibrant environment. Pupils' thirst for learning continues throughout the school, with pupils rising to the challenges they are set. They talk about their learning enthusiastically, for example about their knowledge of civilizations from the past that they have gained in history. Teachers adapt tasks to ensure all pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff check pupils' understanding diligently. Pupils rightly take great delight in sharing their work with adults and each other. The school is rightly focused on ensuring that the ambitions of the new curriculum are realised

fully so that pupils achieve as well as they could. A robust and clearly defined monitoring system is in place to support this, but it is not yet consistently applied across the school.

The school rightly recognises reading as an essential skill in enabling pupils to access the wider curriculum. High-quality texts are chosen carefully to enrich the curriculum, widen pupils' vocabulary and promote reading for pleasure. Staff know how to teach reading effectively and are highly skilled in supporting pupils to prevent them from falling behind. Adults make sure that pupils read books that are appropriate for their stage of reading, which supports them to become successful readers. Having an interest in, and a love of, reading helps pupils to develop a wide and varied vocabulary, which they use in their writing. Pupils and staff enjoy their daily story time, and pupils really value the newly refurbished library, which has a wide range of books.

Pupils are kind to each other. They behave well in lessons and show positive attitudes towards their learning. This is because adults have established clear routines and expectations which are reinforced through positive praise and effective behaviour management.

The school provides for pupils' wider development well. A range of educational visits and after-school clubs enrich pupils' experiences. These include history workshops, trips to art galleries and a residential experience in Year 6. The school has ensured that the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum supports pupils in developing an age-appropriate understanding of their community, the world and relationships. Pupils know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They learn about different religions, faiths and cultures. They debate and discuss key questions in lessons. They learn how to keep safe online. Pupils relish the range of leadership roles, including 'playground pals', 'reading buddies' and sports leaders, which help them to contribute positively to the school community.

The school has high expectations and aspirations for pupils. Staff feel valued, supported and proud of the school. Governors know the school well and offer appropriate support and challenge. They fulfil their statutory duties with diligence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The aims of the ambitious curriculum are not yet realised fully. Consequently, in a few subjects, pupils may not yet achieve as well as they could. The school should continue its work to monitor the implementation of the curriculum to ensure that it is highly effective 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 November 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](#)' 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	118279
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10287910
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs of governing body	Paul Jackaman and Hannah Thomas
Headteacher	Helen Roberts
Website	www.otford.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers a before-school provision, 'Early Birds'.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with leaders, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the co-chairs of the local governing body. They also had a discussion with a member of the local authority.

- The inspector observed lunchtime play and met with some parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector met with the inclusion leader to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. They visited lessons to look at the support these pupils were receiving.
- The inspector considered the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys. They took account of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments.
- 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.

Inspection team

Kirstine Boon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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