

# Inspection of a good school: North Borough Junior School

Peel Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2BP

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Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2023

## **Outcome**

North Borough Junior School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive in this inclusive and nurturing school where each child is encouraged to be proud of what makes them unique. Pupils value and celebrate the different cultures and backgrounds that make up their community. Kindness is at the core of the school's values. It is threaded through all aspects of school life and demonstrated admirably by pupils and staff.

Pupils are very happy, behave well and are safe at North Borough. They love coming to school and are particularly excited to see Angus, the school dog. The school is determined that all pupils will achieve their very best. Pupils respond well to the high expectations for their learning. Pupils want to do well. Many agreed with one pupil's view: 'Everyone in the school never gives up; they always keep on trying.'

Relationships between staff and pupils are trusting and respectful. Pupils know they can talk to staff should they have any worries. Any concerns are dealt with quickly and fairly. Parents speak highly of the school. One expressed the views of many, with the comment, 'The staff nurture, encourage and care for all the pupils and have made it a happy and safe environment.'

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

The school has designed an effective and ambitious curriculum. There is a clear sequence for learning the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary for each subject. The curriculum is accessible to all and the needs of all pupils are identified and met. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the significant number who join or leave the school at different times, including pupils from service families, and those who speak English as an additional language.

Teachers deliver interesting and effective lessons that motivate pupils. The few pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour are supported well. Staff quickly refocus pupils on learning and ensure that the learning of others is not disrupted.

Teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and appreciate the support and guidance they receive. In some subjects, some teachers do not consistently check whether pupils have learned and understood the key knowledge they should know or identify and correct any misunderstandings. Pupils, therefore, cannot always recall and apply different knowledge and skills to remember more across the curriculum.

Reading is a strength in the school. There is a relentless determination that all pupils will leave the school as successful readers. Reading for enjoyment is fostered highly successfully. Pupils love reading and agreed that they enjoy getting lost in the world of a book. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of genres and can give considered opinions on their likes and dislikes. Most pupils become fluent, confident readers. Pupils who are still in the early stages of learning to read are identified quickly. They are supported effectively to catch up.

The school works hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly, including undertaking valuable work with families to secure improved attendance. The school has set great store in creating an environment where pupils want to come because they feel safe, secure and enthusiastic about learning.

Provision for pupils' broader development is excellent. Pupils relish their many leadership roles and take them very seriously. Pupils learn to be responsible, respectful and active citizens. They have a deep awareness of differences between people and understand that everyone has a right to have equal opportunities. They learn to respect others' opinions even if they do not agree with them. They have a firm understanding of different faiths and cultures. Pupils enjoy many visits and visitors to school. Pupils develop personal skills and strengths that stand them in good stead for their future lives.

Governors are highly committed to providing the best possible opportunities for all pupils. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive for their well-being and workload. There is a strong sense of teamwork. They feel valued and supported.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Assessment in some subjects is not yet consistently in place. Teachers are therefore not always confident in knowing how secure pupils are in their understanding of key knowledge. Some teachers do not consistently identify and correct any misunderstandings. As a result, pupils cannot always recall and apply different knowledge and skills to remember more across the curriculum. The school should carefully monitor the effect of assessment to ensure pupils know and remember more across the curriculum.

## 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 June 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118301
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296257
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	353
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Hale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jenny Chiverton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.north-borough.kent.sch.uk">www.north-borough.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school federated with St Paul's Infant School in June 2023.
- Since the federation there is one governing body for both schools.
- 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and many teachers.
- The inspector met with governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and languages. 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 reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness, priorities for improvement, external reviews and documentation relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The views of staff and pupils were gathered through both formal and informal discussions.
- 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 confidential Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils and the responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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