

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Herne Church of England Junior School

School Lane, Herne, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7AL

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Inspection dates:

31 October and 1 November 2023

## **Outcome**

Herne Church of England Junior School continues to be an outstanding school.

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

Pupils, parents and carers, and staff talk happily about being part of 'one big community' in which relationships are positive and supportive. Parents are clear that they 'wouldn't send their children anywhere else' due to the sense of care and support their children receive. This includes creative opportunities to support pupils in their learning, such as reading with Morgan, the school dog.

Staff have high expectations of pupils and what they can achieve, and they rise to meet these especially well. Pupils are proud to demonstrate the school values of 'community, compassion, forgiveness, generosity and hope'. They live out these values, know their importance and are proud to earn stickers and headteacher's awards that recognise when these values are embodied.

This is a highly inclusive school and pupils are clear that everyone is welcome. Pupils feel safe and happy here. Behaviour around the school is consistently calm and orderly. At social times, pupils play well together and take turns. They are creative in inventing games that involve their friends. They benefit from a range of leadership opportunities, including being worship leaders, language leaders, equality ambassadors and members of the school council.

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

The school has high ambitions for pupils and has planned a highly effective curriculum that supports all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in achieving especially well. The school has identified the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn, building to a highly effective and ambitious sequence of learning. This leads to all pupils achieving exceptionally well across the curriculum, including in end-of-key-stage assessments.

In lessons, staff use strong, expert subject knowledge to enthuse pupils in their learning. Pupils are engaged in lessons, and keen to discuss and show what they know. They can

reflect on what they have previously been taught to support their new learning. Staff ask precise questions, and regularly give pupils time to think and talk about their learning. As a result, pupils are confident and articulate, with a highly secure understanding of what they have been taught.

The teaching of reading is especially strong. In phonics, there is clear and systematic teaching which is precisely matched to pupils' needs. This helps those who have joined the school needing extra support to become fluent and confident readers. Once they have moved beyond phonics, the school systematically focuses on core reading skills, including retrieval, inference and choice. Staff also ensure that pupils experience a wide range of interesting texts. Pupils learn how to decode texts effectively, as well as learning to read with animation and interest.

Throughout the school, pupils behave exceptionally well. They are absorbed in their lessons and show consideration for others in all they do. In lessons, they explain with confidence what they know and how what they have learned before is useful. Relationships are incredibly strong, and pupils want to do well for staff because they know staff have pupils' best interests at heart.

The personal development of pupils beyond the classroom is also very strong. Pupils access a range of different clubs that capture their interests, including chess, an array of sports clubs, music and choirs. Assemblies are active and buzzing opportunities for pupils and staff to engage in talk and reflection about their values as a school, and how they might best demonstrate them. These provoke thought well beyond the assemblies themselves, and pupils talk confidently about why such core values are so important to keep everyone happy and safe. These values permeate beyond the school gates, with strong links to the local community, such as the local church and community warden, local residents' homes and in festivals and celebrations in the local area. Pupils know the value of fundraising for those in need, including most recently sending a truckload of supplies to Ukraine, and providing food for the local food bank.

Leaders are reflective and take careful steps to refine their offer for pupils, while considering staff workload in their plans. This is evident in the work to further support pupils in the Discovery Den, ensuring that the emotional well-being of pupils is as well considered as their academic needs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in March 2016.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 118736   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Kent   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10227083   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Junior   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 358  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Dorrell Furness  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mal Saunders   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.herne-junior.kent.sch.uk">www.herne-junior.kent.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 22 and 23 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005                |

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Canterbury. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in May 2017.

## 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The inspector met with the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also met with a representative from the local authority and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and French. 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. Additionally, the inspector looked at planning across other areas of the curriculum.

- 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 took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of parent and carer and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Marian Feeley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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