

Inspection of Lenham Primary School

Ham Lane, Lenham, Maidstone, Kent ME17 2LL

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Each morning, pupils dance in the playground of this vibrant and happy school. They eagerly take part in a dance fitness activity, led by enthusiastic pupil leaders, waking up their minds and bodies for a day of busy learning. Pupils work hard in lessons. They want to do their very best, knowing staff have high expectations of what will be learned and achieved.

Pupils know how important it is to be responsible and work together to ensure the school is a positive place to learn. They eagerly earn house points for embodying the school's 'PRIDE' values. In the pursuit of 'Personal Excellence', pupils uphold the highest expectations of their own and their classmates' behaviour. They are incredibly kind and considerate of others, making the school a warm and nurturing place to be.

Inclusion runs through the heart of the school. The curriculum has been designed to be accessible for all pupils. Pupils' needs are regularly considered to make sure they get the precise help that they need to learn well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support in lessons. Any barriers to learning are swiftly addressed to help pupils achieve their very best.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for the next stages of their education. In most subjects, the curriculum clearly orders the smaller ideas that pupils must learn to form more complex thinking. Teachers regularly check for and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. They provide effective support to help pupils make strong connections between ideas. In a small number of subjects, such as geography, this is not yet the case. Some aspects of learning can be disjointed, meaning lessons are not always designed in a way that ensures pupils learn as well as they could. Leaders are in the process of refining their curriculum and providing further training to address this.

Staff prioritise helping pupils learn to read and write well. Children in Reception start to learn the sounds and letters they need as soon as they start school. In every class, pupils read daily from a range of interesting books matched to the sounds and words they are learning. This means pupils learn to read with increasing fluency and comprehension. Pupils also acquire a rich range of vocabulary, which they apply in their impressive descriptive written work. Pupils are eager to write and to demonstrate their creative skills, such as exploring a child's perspective of living through an air raid during World War II.

Children in Reception get off to a positive start. Regular routines and high expectations mean that children quickly become independent and inquisitive learners. They learn to listen and take turns when playing with their new friends. The school recognises that some aspects of the curriculum are being further

developed. When this is the case, children do not learn as well as they could, and means children do not always practise new skills, such as counting when they play.

Pupils attend school exceptionally well. They excitedly look after mascots, such as 'Punctuality Pup', as a reward for coming to school on time. Pupils eagerly participate in 'Attendance Monopoly' to win class rewards for high attendance at school. Pupils also attend well because the school is a calm and settled place in which to learn. Staff ensure all pupils receive support to behave well and interact positively with others. Pupils are compassionate because staff teach them how to care about others. This adds to the inclusive ethos that runs throughout the school.

The 'PRIDE' values underpin the school's effective approach to pupils' personal development. Anti-bullying ambassadors contribute to the promotion of 'Equality and Friendship'. They help pupils form positive friendships with others. Guest speakers from the police and local magistrates' courts help pupils learn about 'Respect' for their community and the law. The school journalists practise their writing skills by providing regular news articles in the local village paper and school blog. Pupils extend their many interests through a wide range of clubs, for example extreme frisbee and craft club. Exciting trips to places such as the Tower of London deepen pupils' appreciation of historically significant sites. The school is currently enriching this curriculum further, with more opportunities for pupils to learn about global cultural diversity.

The school is aspirational for every pupil to achieve their full potential. Leaders, including governors, robustly review and monitor the effectiveness of the actions they take in achieving this ambition. Staff value the training and support provided. Consequently, they feel their workload is manageable in helping pupils achieve academically and socially.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some curriculum areas, including the early years curriculum, the school has not yet precisely identified the detail and order of knowledge that pupils need to learn. In addition, teachers do not always check on what has already been learned before moving learning on. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their understanding and do not achieve as well as they could. The school must continue to review the curriculum to ensure pupils build secure understanding that enables them to know and do more.

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	118294
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296256
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ceri Norey
Headteacher	Andrea McCluskey
Website	https://lenham.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and geography. They discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at other aspects of the school's curriculum.

- Inspectors also considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of staff, parents and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors also reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governors' meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura James

His Majesty's Inspector

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