

Inspection of a good school: Culverstone Green Primary School

Wrotham Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent DA13 0RF

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 February 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Sarah Jack. This school is part of The Golden Thread Alliance Academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Garry Ratcliffe, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Philip Vander Gucht.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend this warm and nurturing school happily and regularly. They are proud of their school and describe it as a nice place to be. Positive relationships ensure that pupils settle quickly and apply themselves well in lessons. This starts in Reception, where children settle very quickly into school life.

Following a period of instability, pupils are benefiting from the school's increasingly settled leadership and staffing arrangements. The trust has set high aspirations for pupils' attendance, achievement, conduct and attitudes. As a result, learning is improving in reading and mathematics, but there is work to be done in other subjects, to ensure that pupils learn consistently well across the curriculum.

In lessons, pupils are highly motivated. They feel safe in school. If bullying happens, pupils are confident that staff will sort it out. The school develops pupils' character and nurtures their independence and resilience.

Pupils understand how to stay safe. They know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Pupils show respect for one another. They treat their friends with kindness and care. Older pupils thrive on the opportunity to take on responsibilities, such as looking after younger children or helping others who need a friend at playtime.

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

Following a period of instability, the trust has wasted no time in taking decisive action to stabilise staffing and raise expectations. Mathematics and reading have been rightly prioritised. In both, pupils benefit from a strong curriculum where knowledge is organised into a logical order, beginning in the early years. Staff receive useful training which empowers them to teach these subjects well. However, in too many other subjects, curriculum planning is not precise enough. Checks on what pupils know are not consistently in place. This makes it harder for teachers to know exactly what to teach and when. As a result, pupils do not learn consistently well.

In subjects where the curriculum is coherent, it is taught well. Teachers introduce new learning clearly and with confidence. They model concepts effectively, helping pupils to understand them. Teachers are alert to pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities and support them effectively. They use assessment to carefully check what pupils understand and use this information to adapt future teaching. This ensures that learning builds on what pupils know. As a result, pupils currently in the school are achieving well in these subjects. In particular, progress in mathematics is now better than was seen in 2023 examination outcomes.

Reading is prioritised. Regular assessments in phonics ensure that pupils receive lessons tailored to their different abilities. Access to reading books that are matched to the sounds pupils know helps them to become fluent readers. For pupils who need extra support to keep up with their peers, staff provide extra sessions, using a range of different approaches to address gaps in their learning. More widely, pupils benefit from a carefully curated selection of books. This exposes them to different authors and genres and encourages them to develop a love for reading.

Pupils behave well and demonstrate a consistently positive attitude towards their learning. Expectations are high and are met, including by children in the early years. As a result, learning is rarely interrupted. Attendance is improving and leaders are doing all they can to support those who do not come to school often enough.

Pupils develop character through meaningful leadership roles. Members of the school council and house captains all help to shape the school community. Activities such as choir, film club and drama club enable pupils to explore talents and interests beyond the curriculum. A structured approach to personal, social, health and economic education ensures pupils learn about the importance of keeping physically healthy. However, pupils do not build a sufficient understanding of different faiths and cultures in modern Britain.

Trustees carry out their statutory duties diligently. They hold leaders effectively to account for the quality of education in English and mathematics. However, they do not currently apply the same rigour to their oversight of the wider curriculum. Leaders and those responsible for governance recognise that there is also further work to do to foster positive relationships with parents and carers.

Staff feel well supported, with both their workload and well-being. They benefit from the training opportunities provided by the trust. As a result, staff are proud to work at 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)

- Some parts of the wider curriculum are less effective than provision for English and mathematics. The intended learning in some subjects is not identified precisely enough, and assessment approaches are not consistently in place. As a result, teachers lack clarity about what to teach and when in these subjects, so that pupils' learning builds over time. The school should ensure that curriculum planning and assessment are sufficiently well developed across all subjects, so that teaching is matched consistently well to what pupils have already learned and what they need to learn next.
- Pupils' knowledge of different faiths and cultures is less strong than other aspects of their personal development. Leaders should ensure that teaching enables pupils to broaden their knowledge of different faiths and develop a wider understanding of different cultures in modern Britain.
- Governance oversight of the wider curriculum is less rigorous than for English and mathematics. Consequently, leaders have not been challenged sufficiently about relative weaknesses in the wider curriculum. The trust must ensure that all aspects of the curriculum receive equally rigorous scrutiny, so that relative weaknesses are identified and addressed quickly.

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 predecessor school to be good in September 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

Unique reference number	142346
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10313355
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Vander Gucht
CEO of the trust	Garry Ratcliffe
Headteacher	Sarah Jack (executive headteacher)
Website	www.cgps.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection pupils attended one registered provider of alternative provision.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in November 2023.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors met and spoke with leaders, staff, pupils, parents, governors, trustees and the chief executive officer.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and history. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also met with leaders of geography and science to discuss curricular thinking and look at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered 55 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey as well as the views of pupils that were gathered throughout the inspection.
- 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 met with the school's special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.

Inspection team

James Stuart, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024