

# Inspection of Dunton Green Primary School

London Road, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2UR

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

Pupils see their school as a beacon of friendship. They are proud of their school and see it as at the heart of their local community. Pupils feel that the school is changing for the better, though told inspectors that they have always felt safe and secure here.

This is an inclusive school. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported well. Pupils across the school respond positively to the challenges staff provide and achieve well. They also like that other experts visit the school to teach them new things. Older pupils were particularly enthused by a recent experience to dissect 'assorted organs' as part of their science work.

Members of the school's pupil council have forthright views. They feel a growing sense of responsibility for what happens here. They are proud of the changes they have contributed to, including those that make their break times more enjoyable. They are equally proud of their contribution to 'building the nest', a place where pupils who are finding things tough can find solutions and refocus.

Pupils feel that they enjoy a special partnership with staff. They report that teachers have high expectations and 'mostly' listen. Poor behaviour is frowned on by all and is increasingly rare because of this.

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

This is a school moving forward rapidly from a solid platform. Leadership has been sound in the past, establishing firm foundations to move forward from. However, recent changes in the strategic and operational leadership of the school have revitalised its work. Governors know the school well. The school works positively with external bodies, including the local authority, to ensure the future success of the school.

New energy and enthusiasm are evident in staff. Those who talked to inspectors were clear about the sense of empowerment they feel. The confidential staff survey confirmed overwhelming positivity from staff at all levels. This was clearly reflected in classrooms and in the attitudes of pupils to learning throughout the inspection. There are still things to improve here, but pupils are undoubtedly the beneficiaries of the new direction of travel.

The school is outward looking in its work to improve the quality of education it provides. Long-term work with the local English hub has strengthened its phonics and early reading provision. Children in Reception have also benefited well from this work.

Collaboration with federation partnership schools is also beginning to impact positively on curriculum design and leadership. Again, the early years provision is

stronger because of this work, particularly in the way staff understand the links between the early years foundation stage curriculum and how it links to key stage 1.

Classroom visits, including to small breakout groups and to some of the school's planned interventions to support individual pupils highlighted positive relationships. Staff adapt their teaching well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that while those in danger of falling behind are targeted swiftly, most teaching and learning happens together in the classroom for all pupils. Teaching partners (teaching support staff) are generally used effectively. Some are experts in what they do.

The school has identified that while pupils are making good and better progress across most of the curriculum, more could be done to strengthen writing and mathematics. This is also reflected in the school's national test and assessment results at the end of key stage 2. Sometimes in mathematics sessions, pupils are not as fully engaged in learning as they might be, and the pace of learning slows. Leaders are also developing pupils' writing skills across the wider curriculum. Early indications show that the renewed focus on these areas is having a positive impact across all phases of the school.

Though there are plans to develop the school's provision for pupils' personal development further, its work in this area is strong. It contributes to all aspects of day-to-day school life and builds character and resilience in pupils. A classroom visit by the lead inspector was marked by a discussion with Year 6 pupils about reading and books, leading to a frank exchange of opinions. While most pupils were positive about a current focus text, individuals were not afraid to share a contrary view with confidence. A Year 4 physical education (PE) lesson was marked by pupils assessing the performance of others, not being afraid to offer reasoned advice on how to improve.

The forest school is enjoyed by pupils and staff alike. Leaders have plans to formalise the structure of the outdoor learning programme further in the near future. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of experiences to enhance their understanding of life in modern Britain. An excellent selection of extra-curricular clubs is available for all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The pastoral care of pupils is a strength here. As a result, partnerships with parents are strong. An overwhelming majority of parents of who completed Ofsted Parent View were positive about the school and the support it gives to children and families, including those with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. This work is also impacting well on pupils' attendance. However, although the rates of persistent absence have shown a healthy reduction since September 2023, overall absence rates, though reducing slowly, are still too high.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- On occasion, staff are not as consistent in implementing the school's curriculum as leaders intend. This is particularly the case in writing and mathematics, where some pupils do not make the progress they are capable of. Leaders know this and have started to address the issue. They now need to refocus their efforts to ensure that pupils benefit from more consistent teaching in these subjects, meaning that leaders' high aspirations are fully realised, and that pupils' achievement in these key areas improves over time.
- The attendance of some pupils is not as good as it could be. Although rates of persistent absence are decreasing over time, more needs to be done to improve attendance overall, so that all pupils benefit from the good and improving quality of education the school provides.

## 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>	118272
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296253
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	165
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mark Craig
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ben Hulme (Executive headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dunton-green.kent.sch.uk/">www.dunton-green.kent.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	17 and 18 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school became a 'soft' partner of the Compass Federation, a formal partnership between two other local primary schools, in September 2023.
- Leadership of the federation is provided by an executive headteacher with oversight of all three schools.
- The school has its own head of school who provides leadership on a day-to-day basis.
- The school's substantive head of school was absent on maternity leave at the time of this inspection. An acting head of school is in place to cover for this leave of absence.
- The school's established governing body continues to provide governance according to its own instrument of government. The executive headteacher is a member of the school's governing body.
- The school does not presently use 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 had 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.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with leaders at all levels, as well as teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body accompanied by three other governors. He also talked to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, PE and science. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 lead inspector heard some pupils read to a known adult. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of parents, 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 gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. The lead inspector held a formal meeting with members of the school's pupil council.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were also considered through Ofsted's survey.

## Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Oliver Allen

Ofsted Inspector

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