

Inspection of a good school: Joy Lane Primary Foundation School

Joy Lane, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4LT

Inspection dates:

23 to 24 April 2024

Outcome

Joy Lane Primary Foundation School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in this joyful school are compassionate, enthusiastic and respectful. Leaders' ambitions for Joy Lane to be highly inclusive are fulfilled daily. Behaviour is impeccable, because this school expects the best of everyone. When pupils need emotional support, pastoral provision is exceptional. Pupils learn about neurodiversity. One pupil commented, 'Everybody's brain works differently, so sometimes we need some extra help.' Inclusivity is showcased by the excellent work of the 'Oysters' provision for pupils with autism, who are thriving. Pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND) flourish in their mainstream classes. Staff expertise and tireless compassion combine to ensure that everyone feels safe, special and ready to learn.

Achievement is good across the curriculum, and every subject is valued. In 2023, pupils' attainment in mathematics was lower than the national average at the end of key stage 2, so the school is prioritising improvements to boost achievement.

Music is the driving force of a creative approach that nurtures wider development. Pupils excel with instruments including ukuleles, guitars, 'boomwhackers' and 'bucket drums'. There is something for everyone. Club provision is diverse and extensive. The school makes every effort to ensure exceptional take up of opportunities by disadvantaged pupils.

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

Every subject is well planned and sequenced with key knowledge and skills. Teachers plan well-designed tasks and check pupils' understanding routinely. Learning builds over time to help pupils grasp and recall essential content. Pupils enjoy sharing their knowledge at the end of each unit of work as part of the 'voices for choices' approach. Pupils choose how to present their findings in a range of creative ways, helping to embed their learning. In music, pupils acquire particularly impressive skills through a strong curriculum offer. Everyone loves the inspirational Friday music assemblies which end the week with uplifting celebration.

Pupils with SEND achieve well. Leaders and teachers meet together as part of the school's internal 'inclusion forum' to analyse help that pupils need. The school assigns in-house expertise to support needs such as speech, language and communication. Every classroom is designed to support disadvantaged pupils including those with SEND. This ensures accessible and equitable learning opportunities everywhere, from mainstream classes to the impressive Oysters provision.

Phonics is taught effectively from early years onwards. Using consistent language and resources, all staff are trained to deliver the reading programme. Pupils access well-matched books to plug any gaps with their sounds, ensuring that nobody is left behind. Pupils develop a passion for reading, achieving fluency and comprehension as they move through the school.

Pupils' work in mathematics shows effective understanding of concepts, which they use to solve problems with flair. However, this success was not reflected in the most recent national tests at the end of Year 6. The sharp focus on number skills in early years gives children a strong start, and the school is prioritising success for all in mathematics as they move through the school.

Classrooms are purposeful, calm and positive. The school behaviour approach ensures that pupils are 'ready, respectful and responsible'. High expectations are quickly established in the thriving Reception classes, and children rise to meet them. Relationships are nurturing and supportive, leading to a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere across the school. Playtimes are enhanced with outdoor play and learning opportunities, leading to a delightful buzz outside. Support for well-being is exemplary. Pupils find help in a range of places including 'Zen Zones', and in the 'Sanctuary' and 'Cosy Cabin'. The school has achieved strong improvements with attendance. The morning 'Serenity' group provides valuable support with transition from home to school.

The school promotes pupils' wider development through the curriculum and assemblies. Pupils learn about a range of faiths and cultures, healthy relationships and online safety. Recognising the dangers of coastal living, swimming provision is prioritised, ensuring frequent use of the school pool. Leadership roles help pupils to make a tangible difference to school life. Responsibilities including reading ambassador, kindness leader, eco councillor and sports captain empower pupils to improve their community. Trips, visits and charitable links enrich learning and provide valuable life experiences to prepare pupils for modern Britain.

This school is led exceptionally well. Leaders are dedicated to ensuring inclusion and equality. Staff feel proud, well-supported and highly valued. Constant professional development ensures strong subject knowledge across the team. Governors bring a wealth of expertise and provide meaningful support and challenge. Parents are thrilled with the school's care, curriculum and communication. They say that their children 'always feel listened to', describing the school as 'wonderful, inclusive and inspirational'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was lower than the national average in 2023. This means that pupils may not be well prepared for their next stages of mathematics learning at secondary school. The school should ensure that its focus on raising mathematics achievement is successful for all pupils by the end of Year 6.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2018.

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	135130
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10321928
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	618
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Graves
Executive headteacher	Debra Hines
Head of school	Mark Ashley-Jones
Website	www.joylane.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 October 2018

Information about this school

- The school incorporates Oysters specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This is a special education needs unit specialising in supporting up to 31 pupils with autism.
- The school also oversees Oyster Bay Nursery, which offers provision for children from 0 to 4 years old on the same site. This is inspected separately by Ofsted.
- The school offers a before- and after- school club, overseen by the governing body.
- This school is part of the Coastal Alliance Co-operative Trust, an informal collaboration of schools in the local area.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 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.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with governors and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: geography, history, early reading and mathematics. 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.
- Inspectors also discussed and evaluated the music curriculum.
- The lead inspector listened to a range of pupils read. He observed catch-up interventions to evaluate how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors evaluated responses to the pupil survey and spoke with a range of pupils in meetings, lessons and break times.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of parents and took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Michael Green

Ofsted Inspector

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