

Inspection of a good school: Swalecliffe Community Primary School

Bridgefield Road, Swalecliffe, Whitstable, Kent CT5 2PH

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

Swalecliffe Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are ambitious to live up to the school rules of 'ready, respectful and safe'. The school ensures that there is a high priority given to fostering strong relationships between staff and pupils. There is a positive environment in classrooms. Pupils are happy and feel safe. Pupils recognise how to treat each other with kindness. On the rare occasions bullying occurs, adults take effective action to swiftly resolve it. Pupils focus well on their learning. Adults have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND achieve well alongside their peers. The school puts reading at the heart of the curriculum. Good-quality key texts throughout the curriculum help bring pupils' learning to life.

Pupils value leadership roles, such as being 'subject champions' and serving on the school council. These responsibilities allow pupils to have an impact on the school. For example, the 'maths champions' have run a mathematics club which inspires pupils across the school.

Pupils' well-being is a priority. The pastoral team and the school 'hub' provide important support for pupils, which ensures all pupils are ready to learn. Pupils are considerate of each other's needs.

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

The school provides a broad and well-sequenced curriculum. Teachers revisit learning regularly to check what pupils remember. The knowledge that pupils acquire builds effectively, from the early years onwards. While the school reviews the curriculum regularly, in a few subjects pupils are not making clear links in their learning. Sometimes, pupils remember activities more than the learning itself, which means they do not always achieve as well as they could. Pupils with SEND get the help that they need to achieve in line with other pupils. They are supported to access the curriculum through careful adaptations.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils talk passionately about the stimulating texts that are central to the curriculum. These also support pupils' wider personal development, for example in their understanding about equalities and the school's values. All staff have rightly received training in the new phonics scheme. The books pupils read are matched closely to the sounds that they know. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind often get the extra help that they need. Most pupils learn to read confidently and accurately. For some pupils, however, additional support is not always precise enough, which means they do not learn to read as fluently as they could.

The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. The mathematics curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Teachers make sure that pupils recall their previous learning using effective strategies. As a result, pupils achieve well in mathematics.

Pupils live up to the high expectations staff have for their behaviour. There is a calm, consistent approach across all classes. Pupils have strong attitudes to their learning and concentrate well. Pupils enjoy school. They are treated fairly and consistently. The school supports pupils with specific behavioural needs effectively. Pupils' learning is rarely disrupted by the behaviour of other pupils.

The curriculum for pupils' wider personal development is of a high quality. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop leadership qualities and to take on responsibilities. Through these roles, they make a meaningful and positive contribution to the life of the school. Pupils benefit from a range of educational visits. The school recognises the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this offer and is working to ensure a return to the full breadth of experiences and opportunities. The teaching of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is woven throughout the curriculum. Carefully-planned assemblies further reinforce this.

Governors are well informed about the work of the school. They support and challenge staff and are rigorous in their checks. The school is considerate of teachers' workload and promotes staff's well-being. Working within the Coastal Alliance Co-operative Trust has provided extensive leadership and collaboration opportunities for staff and pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Additional support for some weaker readers is not fully effective. These pupils do not read with enough fluency or confidence. The school should continue to embed the new phonics scheme and ensure that any extra interventions are matched to pupils' needs precisely.

- In some subjects, pupils are not making links in their learning or building on their previous knowledge effectively enough. This means that they do not achieve as highly as they could. The school needs to continue its work to refine the curriculum so that pupils know how their learning connects together.

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 school to be good in June 2013.

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	118558
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10268920
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	550
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mel Payne
Headteacher	Ben Cooper
Website	http://www.swalecliffeprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher and a head of school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school works in partnership with the Coastal Alliance Co-operative Trust.

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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about

their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also heard pupils read to a member of staff.

- The inspector met with leaders, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of the local governing body.
- The inspector observed breaktimes and lunchtimes and the start and end of the school day.
- The inspector scrutinised minutes of the governing body meetings.
- The inspector met with the inclusion leader to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. She visited lessons to look at the support these pupils were receiving.
- The inspector considered the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys. They took account of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments.
- 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.

Inspection team

Emma Law, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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