

Inspection of a good school: Northbourne Church of England Primary School

Coldharbour Lane, Northbourne, Deal, Kent CT14 0LP

Inspection date: 18 July 2023

Outcome

Northbourne Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this nurturing school. They appreciate the school's wide-open spaces and enjoy tending the ponies and chickens. Pupils develop their resilience and practical skills well in the forest school.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive. Clear, consistent routines mean that the school runs like clockwork. Pupils are kind and considerate towards each other. Older pupils develop their strength of character well. With considerable maturity, they helpfully support younger pupils during playtime. In this school, everyone is known as an individual.

Pupils are expected to work hard. All pupils follow an engaging curriculum. They collaborate well with one another, showing independence and confidence in their learning. Across nearly all subjects, pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

School leaders provide a range of extra-curricular and wider opportunities. Pupils love trying out the different languages spoken in the school. Regular trips and visits in history help bring the past alive. Pupils enjoy learning to play the cornet and taking part in musical performances. After-school clubs, including sports, dance and archery, are well attended.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about how to best make the curriculum work for pupils in mixed-age classes. Leaders set ambitious goals for pupils, for example all pupils are taught French from the start of key stage 1. The curriculum is accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND. Pupils' SEND needs are swiftly identified so that they receive timely specialist support. Staff understand pupils' SEND needs well and understand what works best to help them succeed in lessons.

In most subjects, leaders have precisely selected and organised learning. Subject leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn and how this will be built on over time. However, in a handful of foundation subjects, the organisation of learning is not as finely tuned. The key knowledge, and how it is best taught, has not yet been agreed. In these subjects, some pupils' work is of a lower quality.

Assessment opportunities are not clearly defined across all subjects. Leaders have not yet identified how pupils will demonstrate what they know and can do after units of learning. Leaders recognise this and have plans in place to strengthen assessment processes in some foundation subjects.

Children get off to a good start when learning to read. Strong phonics teaching right from the start of early years provides firm foundations. Children confidently sound out words and write short sentences independently. Staff make sure that pupils' reading books are closely matched to the sounds that they have learned. Pupils in key stage 1 are well supported by staff to become increasingly fluent readers. Pupils understand the importance of reading well and value the wealth of books in the school. The mathematics curriculum is equally well considered. Children in early years develop confidence with numbers because staff give them many opportunities to practise counting. Teachers explain mathematical concepts clearly and address any misconceptions. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well in mathematics.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are impressively polite and courteous. This starts in early years, where consistent routines and warm relationships mean that children get into great habits. For example, all pupils listened attentively while their peers led an assembly about the legacy of Nelson Mandela. During lessons, almost all pupils focus well. Those with SEND are well supported by kind and skilful staff. Disruption to learning is extremely rare.

Leaders have considered pupils' personal development very carefully. The curriculum teaches pupils about growing up and relationships. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves healthy, such as eating well and being active. They are respectful of difference, including different faiths. Pupils are curious about the wider world and have mature views around equality. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and sense of responsibility. Pupils' views matter to staff. Pupils collectively decide, for example, which charities will benefit from their fundraising.

Staff are proud to work here. They are well-motivated and strive to provide top quality-care and learning experiences for the pupils. Staff appreciate the way that leaders, governors and the trust focus on their well-being and professional development.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent, typical of many, commented: 'The school has a holistic, nurturing and motivating educational environment. As families we are involved, informed and cared for.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Staff know pupils and their families well. Well-trained staff feel confident to report any concern they have about a child's welfare. Leaders follow up concerns swiftly and liaise effectively with outside agencies to get the help that pupils and families need. Leaders make sure that staff recruitment checks are timely and thorough. Governors and trust staff monitor safeguarding processes regularly.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. This includes informing pupils about the potential dangers they may face in the local area and when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, the curriculum is not planned with enough precision and is not always delivered in the most effective way. This means that pupils' achievement is not as good as it could be. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in these subjects is planned with the same precision as the strongest subjects and that teachers deliver the curriculum in the most effective way.
- Assessment processes in some foundation subjects do not currently provide teachers with accurate enough information on pupils' learning. The ways that pupils may demonstrate understanding have not been identified across all subjects. This means that teachers move on when some pupils have not fully grasped the key ideas. Leaders should ensure that assessment processes provide teachers with helpful and accurate information.

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 predecessor school, Northbourne Church of England Primary School, to be good in September 2016.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	147055
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10288083
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	126
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Charmian Winslade
Headteacher	Matthew Reynolds
Website	www.northbourne-cep.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Northbourne Church of England Primary School joined Deal Education Alliance for Learning Trust (DEALT) in April 2019.
- DEALT is a trust formed of eight primary schools in the Deal area of Kent.
- The school sits within the Diocese of Canterbury. The school's last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) was in March 2017.
- The headteacher has been in post since 2017.
- Currently, the school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings with the headteacher, the trust's chief education officer, other school leaders, teachers and support staff.
- An inspector spoke to a representative from the Diocese of Canterbury.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the local governing body.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector heard pupils read aloud to a known adult. Inspectors also looked more broadly at other foundation subjects.
- Inspectors checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare of pupils. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- The inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and staff about their experience in the school.
- The inspectors considered the 71 responses and free-text responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also reviewed the 46 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Maria Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gavin Thomas

His Majesty's Inspector

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