

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Herne Bay Infant School

Stanley Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 5SH

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 June 2025

Outcome

Herne Bay Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils delight in attending this friendly and caring school. They are happy and safe. Pupils skip into school past a member of staff dressed as 'Punctuality Parrot'. Peggy, the school dog, also greets pupils at the start of the day.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievements. Children in the early years settle well to life in school. They engage in a range of purposeful activities that help them to embed what they learn. As well as developing pupils' academic achievements, the school prioritises the development of pupils' character. As a result, pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to transition to their next school with confidence.

Pupils behave well when at play. They form very positive relationships with one another. Staff care deeply for the pupils. Playtimes are energetic and joyful times. Pupils delight in playing imaginative games and enjoy rummaging in the sandpit area. Older pupils play with younger pupils; there is a family feel to the school community. Pupils relish the roles of responsibility given. For example, pupils appointed as play rangers support the playtime activities and librarians encourage pupils to use the school library. This gives pupils a sense of responsibility and pride in their school.

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

The school provides a curriculum that matches the needs and interests of the pupils well. The school has refined the curriculum since the previous inspection. Staff receive training that helps them to deliver the curriculum with consistency. Leaders ensure that curriculum changes are purposeful and manageable for teachers. The school supports teachers to manage their workload effectively.

Children in the early years achieve well. They engage with their learning enthusiastically. Children form positive relationships with one another. They explore the knowledge and skills in the early years curriculum through a range of meaningful activities. For example, children hunt for bugs in the garden area and use a key to identify the animals found. This prepares children for future learning in science in key stage 1. Staff encourage children to be brave in their learning. For example, children use hammers and saws to make models. This helps children to learn about risks and how to keep themselves safe.

Pupils gain the reading, writing and mathematical knowledge needed to succeed. Pupils read widely and often. While some pupils have fallen behind with their reading, the school supports them to catch up effectively. For example, staff ensure that pupils who read less frequently at home have the time to practise their reading skills in school. Pupils write well and gain the mathematical knowledge needed. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply this knowledge across the curriculum. For example, pupils explore bar charts in science. Staff identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. They provide helpful adaptations in class. This supports pupils to learn in English and mathematics well.

Teachers present subject matter clearly. The school has identified the key vocabulary that it intends pupils to learn in each subject. It has recently put more focus on ensuring that pupils can understand, use and remember these words. However, some pupils struggle to recall key vocabulary learned in some subjects. This is because the opportunities for pupils to record and rehearse new vocabulary in some subjects are limited. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their learning. This helps pupils to think about new learning and explain their thinking. Teachers use questioning to help pupils to think through new ideas. This also helps teachers to check what pupils know and understand. Pupils' learning is shared with parents and carers, which ensures that parents are well informed about their child's learning.

Pupils behave well in class. They are respectful of one another and of adults. Staff provide compassionate support for pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour. As a result, pupils become increasingly able to self-manage their own behaviour. While school attendance has been low in the past, the school now addresses this diligently. It supports families of pupils whose attendance is low to make the improvements needed. As a result, the attendance of pupils is now improving.

The school provides an extensive range of opportunities for pupils. Pupils go on visits beyond the school and experience a host of visitors to the school. For example, pupils visit local sites including the church and the seafront. Visitors include members of local emergency services. This helps pupils to learn about those who help and work in their community. The school develops pupils' cultural understanding well. For example, pupils experienced a Bollywood dance workshop and celebrated the Hindu festival of Holi. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable when asked about life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects beyond English and mathematics, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils produce work that enables them to rehearse the key vocabulary being learned. This means that some pupils do not embed the vocabulary needed. The school should provide further opportunities for pupils to transcribe and embed new vocabulary learned so that they can recall and apply this to new learning.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in April 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](#)' 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	118359
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341483
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anna Lancefield
Headteacher	Nicky Brown
Website	www.herne-bay.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is an infant school with nursery provision.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, members of the governing body, other leaders and a range of staff.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 reviewed a wide range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector spoke to staff and considered the views of staff in the staff survey. The inspector spoke to pupils and parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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