

Inspection of a good school: Shipbourne School

Stumble Hill, Shipbourne, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9PB

Inspection dates:

9 July 2024

Outcome

Shipbourne School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Shipbourne School is rightly proud of its strong sense of community. Everyone is welcomed and pupils' views are given a high priority, so that they feel valued and well cared for. Pupils like the fact that everyone can get to know each other well in this small, friendly school and they say that everyone is kind. Pupils from different year groups play and socialise together happily during break times. Those with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and fully engaged in school life. Many parents commented on the school's inclusive and nurturing atmosphere.

Pupils attend regularly and achieve well. They thoroughly enjoy school, responding positively to the school's high expectations and developing a real sense of their own learning and progress. They talk perceptively about what the school's values mean, confidently explaining the importance of values such as teamwork, ambition and honesty. The youngest children have settled into school life well.

Standards of behaviour are high. Pupils are keen to do well and behave sensibly in lessons and when moving around the school. They respect staff and each other. Pupils know that adults will keep them safe. The school's breakfast club provides a relaxed and comfortable start to the day for those who attend.

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

Curriculum development has been a key focus since the previous inspection. Leaders have sensibly prioritised developments in English and mathematics, turning their attention to developing the curriculum in the foundation subjects more recently. The school's curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced and provides a secure framework for teaching. Well-established assessment procedures mean that teachers are clear about each pupil's learning and about what they need to learn next. Small and varying numbers of pupils in each year group mean that published outcomes do not always reflect pupils' achievement accurately. Evidence of pupils' achievement considered during this

inspection, including pupils' work, indicates that all groups of pupils achieve well, and increasingly so.

Pupils' behaviour makes a strong contribution to the school's strong community atmosphere and to pupils' learning. Strong relationships support pupils' well-being well, ensuring that they feel comfortable and secure. The youngest children are introduced to routines and the school's expectations which support their learning from the start. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the fact that all groups of pupils attend regularly.

Developments in the English curriculum have secured improvements in pupils' achievement in reading and writing. The school has worked hard to strengthen achievement in writing since the previous inspection. This work has been effective in improving pupils' writing. Pupils write with increasing confidence and flair. They develop secure writing skills and achieve well. A new phonics programme has been embedded effectively to support pupils' reading. Pupils acquire reliable reading skills and enjoy reading. They talk enthusiastically about books.

The school's ambitious history curriculum has been reviewed and updated this year. It provides appropriate coverage and well-sequenced content. Training has been used well to support staff in delivering the revised history curriculum. However, leaders have rightly identified that further work is needed to ensure that pupils retain prior learning and to enable them to use what they know to make comparisons and connections between different historical periods.

The curriculum is generally adapted effectively to ensure pupils of all abilities access learning equally well. However, sometimes the work set is too hard for some pupils and they struggle as a result. Leaders know that adapting the curriculum to support learning is an area which requires further development. They have suitable plans in place to secure the necessary improvements.

Leaders are alert to the need to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The school's curriculum is supplemented and enriched by a wide range of thoughtfully chosen activities and experiences. Visits to places of worship make a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of different religions and beliefs. Leaders monitor pupils' participation in clubs, ensuring that those from disadvantaged backgrounds have the same opportunities as others. The introduction of the 'pupil development team' provides pupils with a valuable opportunity to express their views, as well as those of their peers, while in a role of responsibility.

Staff are proud to work in the school and staff morale is high. They say that everyone supports each other and value leaders' approachability and responsiveness. Governors use a range of approaches to seek staff views, including regular staff surveys and informal discussions with staff during visits to the school. They consider feedback carefully and give staff well-being a high priority. Parents are pleased with the school's work. They appreciate leaders' openness, the school's kind and welcoming ethos, and the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes the curriculum is not adapted as effectively as it could be to support all pupils' learning. This means that there are times when some pupils learn less well than they could. The school should make sure that the curriculum is adapted successfully and consistently for all pupils.
- Implementation of the updated history curriculum is still being developed. Delivery of the history curriculum does not yet ensure sufficient consolidation of prior learning or of provision to help pupils to make connections between historical periods. As a result, pupils find it difficult to retain what they have learned previously and struggle to make links between historical periods. The school should continue work to develop the curriculum in this subject.

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 April 2019.

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	118311
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341479
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jenny Maydon and Andrew Tittershall (joint chairs of governing body)
Headteacher	Terri Daters
Website	www.shipbourne.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Shipbourne Primary School is part of The Bourne Partnership federation. The federation was formed in September 2019. The federation consists of two schools, led by two headteachers and governed by one governing body.
- The headteacher, who was previously head of school, was appointed in May 2024.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, two senior teachers, and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the two joint chairs of the governing body. She also had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.

- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection. They also considered the views of staff expressed in Ofsted’s survey.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing and history. Deep dives included visits to lessons, a review of pupils’ work, and discussions with leaders, teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at other times of the school day. They also spoke formally with a group of pupils and considered the views expressed in Ofsted’s pupil survey.
- Inspectors gathered parents’ views through Ofsted’s survey, Parent View, and through discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 pupils’ interests first.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrea Harris

Ofsted Inspector

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