

# Inspection of a good school: Crest Infant School

Fleet Road, Rochester, Kent ME1 2QA

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Inspection dates:

11–12 February 2020

## Outcome

Crest Infant School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy, united school. Pupils, parents, carers and staff describe it as being a warm, family community. Everyone strives to give children the best possible start in life. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and make lessons interesting. Pupils respond by working hard and behaving well. They enjoy a challenge and are not afraid of making mistakes. One Year 1 pupil explained that 'If you make mistakes then you are learning.'

Senior leaders and staff understand the importance of teaching pupils to read. Staff are well trained and teach phonics accurately. As a result, pupils achieve well in reading. They develop a deep love of books and stories while they are still young.

Pupils feel safe in this school. Parents, staff and pupils all agree on this. Senior leaders have instilled a culture of kindness and care. This leaves no room for persistent bullying or unkind behaviour. If bullying does happen, pupils report it straight away. They know that staff will deal with it promptly.

Developing pupils' character is central to the school's work. The four 'STAR' values of success, teamwork, aspiration and respect are found in every aspect of school life. Pupils understand these qualities and work hard to live them out.

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

The school has been through a challenging time in recent years. Numbers of pupils on roll have fallen for reasons beyond the school's control. Leaders have shown calm, determined leadership throughout this unsettled period. As a result, pupils continue to achieve well. Staff morale is high.

Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Lessons capture pupils' interest and help them to remember important information. For example, in geography, pupils in Year 1 can recall the names of all seven continents. Year 2 pupils remember this from last year and can now also name the world's five major oceans.

Similarly, in mathematics, teachers make sure that pupils have understood previous work before moving on. They use such questions as 'Do you remember when ...?' to help jog pupils' memories. Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects.

All staff appreciate the vital importance of helping pupils to learn to read. Pupils become capable readers. In the Nursery, staff focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. They also sow the seeds for a love of stories and books, which flourishes as pupils move through the school. Teachers and pupils share a love for reading.

Children are introduced to phonics as soon as they start Reception. This learning journey continues until they leave the school. Staff are trained and skilled in teaching reading. They have a shared understanding of what each pupil must learn by the end of each term. Pupils develop a strong grasp of phonics. However, they do not always apply their phonics knowledge in their written work. At times, pupils' work contains unnecessary spelling mistakes.

Staff check to make sure that all pupils learn to read well. If anyone starts to fall behind, they receive extra help to catch up. Most pupils are provided with books that they can sound out confidently. Just occasionally, pupils in Year 1 are given books that are too hard for them. Leaders are very aware of this and have already started to address it.

The early years curriculum is effective. Staff plan an exciting range of activities, both indoors and outside. Children become eager learners who are sociable and cooperative. Children learn to concentrate, try hard and achieve well. They are well prepared for Year 1.

The curriculum provides well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The inclusion manager provides strong support. Staff are well trained and adept at meeting pupils' behavioural and pastoral needs. Pupils' needs are assessed promptly and accurately, and support is put in place. Pupils with SEND are fully included and involved in all lessons.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities to support their personal development. These include trips to interesting places as well as visitors to the school, such as two alpacas who visited recently. The school provides a wealth of clubs and sporting activities. Senior leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils have every opportunity to participate fully.

Pupils behave well in lessons, during assemblies and at free times. They listen carefully and are eager to join in, ask questions and voice their opinion. Too many pupils are persistently absent. Senior leaders are aware and have worked hard to tackle this. Their efforts are starting to pay off, but more needs to be done.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone at the school takes the well-being of children most seriously. All staff are thoroughly trained in all aspects of safeguarding. They are vigilant for any signs that a

pupil may be at risk. Adults record and report even minor incidents, understanding that their observations may contribute to a much bigger picture.

Pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe. This includes having an age-appropriate understanding of the dangers of being online and how to avoid them. Pupils are clear that they must talk to an adult if they see anything at all that worries them.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Pupils learn phonics well. However, at times, teachers do not insist and check to make sure that all pupils use their knowledge of phonics in their writing. As a result, the quality of some pupils' writing is not as good as it could be. Senior leaders should ensure that pupils' spelling improves in their written work.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent. This means that they do not achieve as well as they could because they are not in school regularly. Leaders should redouble their efforts to reduce persistent absence to at least the national average.

## **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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 21–22 June 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118330
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122250
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Nicola Archenoul
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Shields
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.crestinfants.co.uk">www.crestinfants.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21–22 June 2016

## Information about this school

- The school runs a Nursery class for children aged three and four years old.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly throughout the inspection. I also met with the inclusion manager. Meetings were held with four governors, including the chair and vice chair of governors. I met with a representative of the local authority to discuss their support for the school. I met with several parents on the playground at the start of the school day.
- I conducted deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. These deep dives consisted of linked activities to gather evidence about how well pupils are helped to gain knowledge and skills. I had a discussion with the headteacher and meetings with the leaders of each of these subjects. I visited lessons in all year groups. I spoke to pupils and teachers from these lessons and looked at their work. These work scrutinies were carried out with subject leaders.
- I also had another meeting with pupils from Years 1 and 2 to find out about how much they had learned and remembered during their time at the school in a range of

subjects. They also helped me to understand what it is like to attend the school and how well the school supports their wider personal development.

- I spoke to pupils and staff throughout the inspection to reach an understanding of the school's safeguarding arrangements. This was in addition to a meeting with the headteacher to discuss how the school keeps pupils safe. Safeguarding was also discussed at the meeting with governors. I also looked at various documents relating to safeguarding, including the school's single central record.
- I considered the 81 responses to Ofsted Parent View and the 23 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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