

Inspection of a good school: Deanwood Primary School

Deanwood Primary School, Long Catlis Road, Parkwood, Gillingham, Kent ME8 9TX

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Outcome

Deanwood Primary School continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Jane Wright. This school is part of The Howard Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Owen McColgan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dan McDonald.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school at Deanwood. This is clear in the positive ways that they interact with one another. It is also reflected in their good attendance, which the school has worked diligently with families to improve.

Children in early years start their education strongly. Staff set clear and high expectations for what every child will learn, and this helps them to achieve well and be ready for the next stage of learning. In class, pupils focus well. They are keen to share and discuss their ideas as they learn. In the playground, older pupils take on roles as play leaders. This helps to strengthen the community ethos of the school.

Pupils feel that they are listened to and understood by staff. The school council and the trust-wide pupil parliament discuss issues that matter to pupils. This has prompted the school to become more sustainable, and to raise money for charities.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the clubs and activities they can join in with, including karate and cooking. Alongside these, pupils look forward to an exciting programme of visits, from the local library to the historic Chatham Dockyard. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit equally from this offer.

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

The school identifies the important knowledge pupils should learn in each subject. In most subjects, this is set out in a clear order to build pupils' understanding. In a few subjects, leaders are reviewing the sequence of learning, in order to help pupils to embed

this more securely. The school has adapted how the curriculum is taught to pupils with SEND. This ensures that these pupils continue to access the full breadth of learning.

Teachers provide clear explanations of important ideas and how these fit in to what pupils already know. They model and demonstrate concepts to support pupils' understanding. In mathematics, this approach helps Year 2 pupils to understand the principles of multiplication. Most of the work that pupils complete helps them to develop their understanding effectively. Sometimes, the tasks they are set do not align with the aims set out in the curriculum. When this happens, pupils do not develop their knowledge and skill as strongly as they could.

All staff play an active role in enhancing the culture of reading within the school. Children in early years are encouraged to re-tell and explain their favourite stories. Throughout the school, teachers select books which are matched carefully to what pupils can read. Combined with the effective teaching of phonics, this helps pupils to become confident readers. When pupils need additional support with reading, staff provide targeted input to help them to catch up.

Staff make effective use of assessment to support pupils' learning. This enables the school to identify pupils' SEND needs and to adapt learning accordingly. Teachers make use of assessment information to provide targeted support for pupils who need it. In class, staff identify and address most misconceptions that pupils have. However, there are instances when teachers are less systematic in checking what pupils have understood. This results in some gaps in learning persisting. Overall, pupils produce work which is detailed and accurate. They achieve well, and pupils with SEND progress strongly in their learning throughout the school.

The school has worked closely with pupils and families to improve attendance. Staff consistently promote the importance of being in school. Leaders use carefully chosen approaches to support persistent absentees to attend more. Over the last two years this has led to a sustained reduction in pupil absence. In most classes, clear routines and expectations help pupils to get the most from their learning time. Pupils understand the school's system for behaviour. They feel this works fairly to reward their efforts.

Pupils benefit from a breadth of opportunities beyond academic learning. They can take up a range of different instruments, and all pupils learn about musical genres from around the world. Staff guide pupils in exploring moral and ethical issues that encourage them to think independently. Pupils develop an 'emotional toolbox' to help them manage social situations they may find challenging.

Governors and trust leaders take staff workload seriously, just as the school does. As the curriculum evolves, staff have access to high-quality professional learning to support their subject knowledge. Leaders make sure that assessment tools enable staff to share understanding about what pupils need next. Where this is embedded securely, such as in phonics, this means that all staff know exactly what support pupils need next.

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, the work given to pupils does not always enable them to achieve the full aims of the curriculum. As a result, they do not develop their knowledge or skills as securely as they could. Leaders should ensure that the tasks assigned to pupils are consistently matched to the expectations of the curriculum in order to improve pupils' understanding.
- The school's approach to checking what pupils have understood as they are learning is not fully embedded. This means that sometimes misunderstandings are not spotted and addressed as thoroughly as they could be. Leaders should make sure that there is a consistent and systematic approach to how teachers check for and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

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 predecessor school, also called Deanwood Primary School, to be good in September 2012.

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	143458
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10322024
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dan McDonald
CEO of the trust	Owen McColgan
Principal	Jane Wright
Website	www.deanwood-that.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Deanwood Primary School is part of The Howard Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with school leaders, including the principal and other senior leaders. The inspector also met representatives from the local governing board, and spoke with representatives from the board of trustees as well as executive leaders from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, 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 discussed the curriculum and provision for pupils with SEND, and the provision in early years.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, governors, trustees, trust leaders, staff, parents and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts the pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Daniel Botting, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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