

Inspection of Smeeth Community Primary School

Caroland Close, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6RX

Inspection dates: 18–19 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school. They enjoy the varied activities such as learning in the school grounds about wildlife, re-enacting historical events or being part of the school council.

The school sits within a close-knit community. Parents are very supportive, particularly since the new headteacher started last year. They are eager to become involved in school events.

In the curriculum, pupils do not build up their knowledge and skills as well as they could. This is because in some subjects, including mathematics, leaders have not planned when knowledge will be taught and why. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around school. Teachers expect pupils to behave well. Pupils are courteous and polite. Pupils work well together during activities. They told inspectors that pupils are almost always kind to one another. If problems do happen between pupils, staff sort it out quickly.

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

In some subjects, including mathematics and science, leaders do not plan out how pupils' knowledge should build up over time. Although teachers follow the curriculum set out by leaders, in some subjects teachers choose topics to teach based on their personal preferences rather than how best to promote pupils' learning, skills and understanding over time. Consequently, work is not always as demanding or well-focused as it could be. Nevertheless, teachers use their good subject knowledge to make lessons interesting. They encourage pupils to share ideas so that they can learn from each other. Teachers know where pupils are in their learning and provide extra help when they need it.

Pupils develop their reading from the very beginning of Reception Year. The reading curriculum is well planned. Pupils learn phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) quickly. They enjoy reading and develop a passion for reading as they move through the school. Older pupils know why they like certain types of books and authors. Leaders ensure that reading is a significant part of almost every task or activity. Pupils achieve well in reading.

Although achievement in mathematics improved last year, pupils do not do well enough. Teachers teach all the topics included in the national curriculum. However, lessons are not sequenced well over time so that pupils can confidently build up their mathematical knowledge and skills over key stages 1 and 2.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers encourage them to work hard. However, leaders do not always understand which teaching approaches support pupils with

SEND well and which do not. As a result, leaders do not inform teachers about the best ways to support pupils with SEND in their learning.

In early years, the seven areas of development are planned well. Children build on what they know and can do. Teachers closely monitor children's development and make changes to the curriculum when children fall behind. Children leave early years well prepared for key stage 1. Reading is a priority. Parents help children in their reading by reading books with them at home. This is recorded in their reading journals. Children quickly develop a love of books.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of activities on offer. For example, pupils participate in musical instrument lessons, sports clubs, cookery courses and clubs that encourage pupils to think about the environment. Pupils are keen to be house captains or have other positions of responsibility. Pupils develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding well throughout the school.

The new headteacher has quickly got to grips with what needs to be improved. She is supported by her subject leaders and governors. The headteacher has ensured that improvements in curriculum planning have been put in place quickly and knows that there is more to do. Staff feel well supported by leaders. Staff enjoy coming to work and they believe that leaders take their workload into account when setting school policy. All staff are proud to be members of the school. They feel that they are led and managed well.

Governors support leaders and share the ambitions of the headteacher. They hold leaders to account well. For example, governors check how effective the spending of extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is. Governors make visits to the school, check the school website and attend school events.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe. The school has a vigilant safeguarding culture. Staff are well trained. They readily refer pupils to the designated safeguarding leads if they are concerned about a child.

Staff have a good understanding of the dangers that pupils face, particularly online. Assemblies and personal, social, health and economic lessons tackle these issues with pupils head on so that they have a good understanding of them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, including mathematics and science, curriculum planning is in its infancy. Leaders should improve the sequencing of the curriculum so that

knowledge and skills build up over time so that pupils learn and achieve more, particularly in mathematics.

- The work that teachers set for pupils is not as demanding as it could be overall because of the weaknesses in curriculum planning. Leaders need to ensure that work is consistently demanding and logically planned so that pupils are able to build on what they know and can do.
- Although records of interventions and support for pupils with SEND are recorded diligently, leaders do not evaluate the strategies used to support pupils with SEND well enough. Consequently, teachers are not always informed about the best strategies to employ. Leaders need to make sure that they thoroughly evaluate teaching strategies that are used with pupils with SEND so that they understand which strategies are most effective with individual pupils and communicate them consistently to teachers.

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're 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

Unique reference number	118381
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10111212
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lee McRoberts
Headteacher	Jennifer Payne
Website	www.smeeth.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2018

Information about this school

- The new headteacher was appointed as the substantive headteacher in April 2019.
- The school is a member of the CARE Foundation Trust.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, governors, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the CARE foundation trust.
- On the first day of the inspection, inspectors focused their activities on reading, science, mathematics and history. In each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff from a meeting with a group of staff and from the responses of six staff to the confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors also considered the views of 15 pupils from the responses to the

confidential questionnaire.

- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of 47 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parent questionnaire, including 46 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Harry Ingham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sam French

Ofsted Inspector

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