

Inspection of a good school: Foreland Fields School

Newlands Lane, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6RH

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 May 2023

Outcome

Foreland Fields School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy place. Pupils are welcoming to visitors. They are proud of their school, their achievements, and their teachers. Friendships are strong, particularly between older pupils. Students in the sixth form are noticeably confident, benefiting from the school's caring culture and excellent provision to support their personal development.

Pupils are kind and caring. Poor behaviour is rare. Relationships are respectful and positive. This includes between pupils themselves and especially in classrooms, where successes are celebrated triumphantly.

Staff act as role models. They know pupils well. Children in the school's early years provision are also supported well. Staff are keenly aware of the additional anxieties created by the transition into a school setting for children with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities.

One noticeable feature of the school is the sense of consistency in approach from leaders and staff across the school and its three satellite sites. As a result, pupils feel safe and cared for. When asked what could be better in their school, most pupils struggled to think of anything. However, the lead inspector could hardly get a word in edgeways when pupils were asked what was great about Foreland Fields.

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

This is a school where pupils and staff openly display a great sense of belonging. Members of the senior leadership team are very 'present' throughout the school. They lead by example. Parents and staff appreciate the care and dedication that they put into their work. Leaders and parents are also appreciative of the 'amazing' pool of expertise and experience available across the staff base, including within the multi-disciplinary team of support staff. The outcome is an environment where children, pupils and students across all phases of the school thrive.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is fit for purpose and meets the needs of pupils well. Middle leaders responsible for different aspects of the curriculum are open minded in their approach. This is an outward-looking school. Much work is put into ensuring that the curriculum evolves as pupil cohorts change year on year. Governors also play their part in questioning senior leaders' decisions around the curriculum. This helps to ensure that pupils enjoy their learning across the five different pathways available to them.

Teaching pupils to read has a high priority here. Leaders are aware of the additional challenge that pupils' complex needs brings to this aspect of the school's work. They know that developing pupils' early reading skills is important, no matter what pathway pupils are following. The school has recently switched to a new phonics programme. Staff have received additional training. They also have access to dedicated resources as part of the programme, but not all staff use these consistently. This is partly to do with the availability of sufficient books from the programme. Additionally, not all staff are delivering the new programme with complete fidelity. Leaders are aware of this. Additional resources are coming. More training and support for staff are planned.

All aspects of the school's work are dependent on building pupils' communication skills. Simple concepts such as bigger or smaller, or developing children's early mathematics skills, are all underpinned by this. High-quality communication pervades all aspects of teaching, curriculum subjects and learning pathways. It supports pupils' social and emotional development, and builds self-esteem, independence and confidence. Staff are experts in this field. As a result, pupils, including those with severe and profound learning difficulties, make good progress against personalised targets within their own pathways.

Pupils' personal development is equally as important as their academic progress. The school's work in this area is exceptionally strong. A carefully adapted scheme of work is in place for personal, social and health education (PSHE). This includes appropriately targeted relationships and sex education. Careers education is in place. An extensive menu of extra-curricular opportunities is available, which staff use to stimulate and extend pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain and of traditions and cultures further afield.

Students in the sixth form in particular benefit from individualised support to help them on their journeys towards college places and life after leaving school. Building life skills, including shopping or using different modes of transport, is an important aspect of this work. Staff make sure that these activities are more than just fun things to do. Pupils were subtle in sharing opinions when discussing the pros and cons of different local supermarkets in front of an inspector. Price, quality or convenience were not overtly mentioned, but it was clear that pupils had more than a simple understanding of what different outlets offered.

Older pupils talk proudly of their achievements within the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme, their recent trip to Finland being a highlight. Watching the sun rise, walking on snowshoes and the importance of wearing a face mask when travelling on a dog sled were all experiences that have left a lasting impression. Taking part in the recent Global Peace Games in Belgium has broadened horizons and nurtured new friendships for some pupils. Other pupils speak equally enthusiastically about playing music at lunchtime, ballet lessons, horse riding and swimming.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's work to keep pupils safe is ongoing and has a high profile. Staff at all levels understand their responsibilities in this important area. They are well trained, well informed and vigilant. Policies and systems to safeguard pupils are known, understood and adhered to. Record-keeping is tight. Leaders with additional responsibility for safeguarding know what to do when they have concerns. Their links with outside agencies are well developed. Those in positions of governance are equally well informed about their role in keeping children, pupils, students and staff safe at this school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff are delivering the school's new phonics programme with complete fidelity. There is also an inconsistent approach in the way staff are using resources linked to the programme. This is particularly the case with some of the books that pupils are given to help develop their early reading skills. Leaders need to provide staff with additional resources linked to the programme. They also need to provide additional training and support for staff so that all pupils benefit from a consistent approach to learning to read across all phases of the school.

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 June 2013.

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](#)' 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	119041
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256546
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Pamphilon
Headteacher	Adrian Mount
Website	www.foreland.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils aged three to 19 who have profound, severe or complex needs. Some of these pupils have additional difficulties arising from physical disabilities or sensory impairments, autistic spectrum disorder, and communication and interaction difficulties.
- The school is divided into age-banded departments with largely needs-led classes so that teaching can be carried out in an age-appropriate and relevant manner. The curriculum is designed around five different learning pathways which cater for pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school's First Leap Nursery provides specialist provision for younger children with identified special needs. Most children who attend the nursery do so on a dual-placement basis, accessing a mainstream setting at the same time as the specialist assessment provision at the school.

- Some pupils attend one of five satellite classes at Garlinge Primary School, Hartsdown Academy or East Kent College.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice chair of the governing board, accompanied by four other governors. He also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, communication and PSHE. Inspectors also considered the quality of the school's early mathematics curriculum. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector heard pupils read to known members of staff.
- Inspectors checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. The lead inspector also met formally with three different groups of pupils on day two of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were also considered through Ofsted's confidential staff survey.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rosemary Keen

Ofsted Inspector

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