Inspection of St Crispin's Community Primary Infant School

St Crispin's Road, Westgate-on-Sea, Kent CT8 8EB

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	**Requires improvement**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Requires improvement**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and happy at this warm and nurturing school. Starting in early years, pupils learn routines that help them to behave well. Pupils are polite and kind. They concentrate well in lessons and play together joyfully at breaktimes. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils have strong relationships with staff. They have trusted adults that they know will help them with any concerns they may have.

Pupils enjoy learning. They learn many of the skills that prepare them well for their next steps. However, the teaching of phonics is not consistently effective and some pupils, who fall behind in reading, do not catch up swiftly enough. As a result, too many pupils do not become confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

Pupils learn a range of strategies to manage their emotional health and well-being effectively. Pupils use the 'nurture nooks' to give themselves time to reflect and return to class ready to learn. Pupils who require additional help can work with a range of staff. For example, 'treehouse talks' with members of the skilled pastoral team offer a range of therapeutic support. Pupils are confident to share their feelings and to seek help when they need it.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. It has clearly identified the skills and knowledge it wants pupils to learn. This begins in early years. The curriculum revisits prior learning over time. In most subjects, this helps pupils to recall and build on this knowledge.

Too many pupils do not learn the sounds and letters they need to become confident and fluent readers quickly enough. While there has been some improvement, the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check remains low. Staff's checks on pupils' phonics knowledge are not precise enough. Consequently, the books that pupils read are not matched closely enough to the sounds and letters that they know. This means that some pupils cannot practise their reading sufficiently well. Children in early years do learn the sounds and letters they need.

Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure. They explain learning clearly. Teachers' checks on knowledge identify gaps in learning and they use these to plan activities to help pupils catch up. The school is a rich and engaging learning environment. Teachers carefully consider how to maximise learning. For example, early years staff ensure there are writing opportunities next to the popular construction area. As a result, more children engage with writing tasks independently. However, a small number of tasks that teachers select do not always help pupils to recall prior learning well enough.

The school knows its pupils well. This helps staff to identify the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), accurately. Staff adapt activities to break down barriers to learning and help pupils to learn the curriculum

content. A small number of pupils follow individualised curriculums closely matched to their needs. These pupils quickly improve skills and knowledge from their starting points.

The school has introduced a new approach to writing. Consequently, pupils write accurately in a number of styles, and their spelling improves over time. They have a passion for the books they read and can recall key elements of these stories. Pupils have age-appropriate mathematical knowledge and can apply it accurately. However, too many pupils are not prepared well enough for their next steps because of the inconsistent approach to phonics.

Pupils work hard and listen to teachers intently. Older pupils act as 'play rangers' and positive role models. They take these responsibilities seriously and help others to behave well. The school tracks attendance carefully and responds quickly to pupils' absence. It identifies potential barriers to attendance effectively. The school has clear strategies to reduce absence for the small group of pupils who do not attend frequently. These include support from the pastoral team or referrals to external agencies. As a result, attendance is improving over time.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. The well-designed outdoor learning offer improves resilience and independence. Engaging trips and visits enhance learning and introduce pupils to a range of potential careers. The broad range of clubs offered by the school helps pupils to develop their talents and interests.

Governors work closely with the school. They offer appropriate levels of challenge and support. The school has refined the curriculum over time. However, at times, it is not aware of the impact of its work. Leaders at all levels do not respond quickly enough to improve achievement for pupils in some subjects. Staff receive appropriate training and are well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not precisely evaluate the impact of its strategies to improve pupils' achievement in some areas. As a result, it cannot identify which activities have the strongest impact in improving outcomes for pupils. The school must ensure it has systems for clearly identifying the impact of its work to better inform its improvement priorities.
- Pupils' reading books are not closely enough matched to the sounds and letters that they are learning. As a result, some pupils do not read with appropriate accuracy and fluency. The school should ensure that checks on pupils' phonics knowledge are more

precise and support staff in selecting books that pupils can read confidently and fluently.

- Some staff do not implement the school's early reading programme as consistently as they should. When this is the case, the quality of phonics teaching is variable. This means that some pupils do not benefit from high-quality phonics teaching. This is also the case for some pupils who receive additional support for reading. The school should ensure that all staff who teach pupils to read have the skills and knowledge to deliver the phonics programme with total fidelity.
- Some of the learning activities that teachers select for pupils do not support pupils in applying the important skills and knowledge they learn. As a result, pupils learn the curriculum content but do not always recall the vocabulary and knowledge they have learned. The school should ensure that teachers select activities that allow pupils to apply and build on the curriculum content they learn.

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	118411
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341489
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Mulcahy
Headteacher	Louise Davidson
Website	www.st-crispinsinfants.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 September 2019 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses no alternative provision.
- The school manages a breakfast club and after-school club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of the school's education provision.
- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection team met with the headteacher as well as with other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, design and technology and science. They also sampled pupils' work from history. For each deep dive, the inspectors 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 lead inspector considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspection team spoke to staff and pupils during the inspection and took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Gavin Thomas, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Louise Lythgoe	Ofsted Inspector

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