

Inspection of Slade Primary School and Attached Unit for Children with Hearing Impairment

The Slade, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1HR

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Outstanding
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This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 thirteen years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Slade Primary is a welcoming and positive place for pupils. The school has clear ambitions for all pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils learn well, and children in early years make a confident start to their time in school.

Pupils know that staff will help them to deal with worries or problems. The 'wobble room' is available as a space to help pupils to regulate their emotions. Older pupils can become 'safeguarding champions', and this helps pupils to feel safe and cared for. Pupils and staff interact warmly with one another. Around the school, behaviour is calm and orderly. Children in early years learn to share and take turns as they play and learn. However, in some classes, there are times when pupils lose focus on learning.

Pupils with SEND are supported effectively. The school's work for pupils with hearing impairment helps them to integrate well with their peers. Many of them represent the school through opportunities such as sports fixtures. All pupils have the chance to learn British Sign Language. This helps pupils to develop a strong commitment to inclusivity.

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

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. The school provides books that match closely with what pupils can read for themselves. In early years, the environment is language-rich and filled with resources to help children learn letters and sounds. Children enjoy poems and rhymes as well as the stories that guide their topics. Staff use assessment to identify weaker readers with accuracy. These pupils benefit from work in targeted groups to build their fluency and confidence.

The school sets out a clear programme for what pupils will learn. In most subjects, teachers make sure that this builds securely on what pupils already know. For example, in English, pupils make use of 'magpie books' to help them with their writing. In some subjects, the tasks set by teachers do not always reflect the important knowledge that pupils should learn. When this happens, pupils do not develop their understanding securely. Leaders have responded to last year's low outcomes at key stage 1 by making considered changes to the curriculum. This is delivering some initial successes in closing gaps in pupils' achievement.

Teachers provide clear explanations for pupils. In many subjects, they model and demonstrate well. In mathematics, teachers provide helpful resources to support pupils with understanding numbers. The school emphasises extending pupils' vocabulary, in order to help them access future learning. Staff in early years build this strongly through thoughtful interactions and activities. In some other year groups, vocabulary development needs embedding further. Teachers analyse what pupils know and can do over the course of each term. They use this to refine their approach to what pupils will learn next. This helps to support pupils' learning in

phonics and mathematics, for example. However, in some subjects, teachers are not precise enough in picking up on pupils' misconceptions. This means that as they move through their learning, some pupils have gaps in their understanding.

The school has clear systems to help pupils make the right choices about behaviour. Pupils feel that this is effective and fair. They are proud of accumulating house points and having their work showcased. Staff in early years establish strong classroom routines for children. In some other year groups, these are not as consistent. At times, off-task behaviour by a few pupils means they don't learn as much as they could. Attendance is promoted effectively here. Leaders work closely with families to remove barriers to attendance. This has been highly impactful for pupils with EHC plans, and their learning benefits as a result.

Wider opportunities provided by the school enhance pupils' experiences. Guest speakers help pupils to learn about different faiths. Pupils can also share knowledge and experience from their own backgrounds and beliefs. Staff teach pupils about how to keep safe in person and online. Physical and mental health are promoted through routines like the daily mile. Older pupils particularly enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities. These extend beyond the school, such as fundraising in the local community.

The school gives parents guidance on supporting their child's learning. Families are encouraged to come and see what pupils have learned, and to celebrate their successes. Leaders and governors take the well-being of staff seriously. They have sought to make curriculum development manageable by grouping staff into subject teams. This helps to share workload, and to bring greater consistency to pupils' learning.

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 align directly with the aims and sequence of the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not develop their knowledge as strongly as they could. Leaders need to make sure that tasks and activities closely reflect the intentions of the curriculum across all subjects.
- In some subjects, teachers do not identify and address misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning with enough precision. As a result, they do not always adapt their teaching in response, which leads to some pupils learning less than they could. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are more systematic in checking what pupils understand as 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 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	118285
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296255
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Simon Griffiths
Headteacher	Karen Slade
Website	www.slade.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 September 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act

Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This is designated for pupils with hearing impairment, and provides places for nine pupils.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with school leaders, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspectors also met representatives from the governing body, and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, geography and English. 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 inspectors also discussed the curriculum and provision for pupils with SEND, and sampled work from other areas of the curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, governors, 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
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Hylands	Ofsted Inspector

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