

Valley Invicta Primary School At Leybourne Chase

Derby Drive, Leybourne Chase, West Malling, Kent ME19 5FF

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Parents and carers are delighted with the school. They are impressed by the school's warm and welcoming atmosphere.
- The headteacher has high aspirations for the pupils. Since her appointment a year ago, she has made many improvements. All staff support her vision and ambitions for the school's future.
- The school has a caring ethos and inclusive approach. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Teaching is effective. Staff have a good subject knowledge. They are accurate in assessing how well pupils are progressing. In most cases, activities set meet pupils' needs well.
- Pupils make good progress overall. In a few classes, progress is exceptional. In both key stages 1 and 2, most pupils attain at least in line with the national average.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points. They are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Pupils in the specialist resourced provision make strong progress in their personal and academic development.
- Pupils feel safe and happy at this school. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, such as being play leaders.
- Governance from the trust board of directors is strong. They provide effective and valuable support. The local governing body have acted to address many issues raised in the recent review. However, they still do not check pupils' attainment and progress well enough.
- Some middle leaders are not fully accountable for the progress that pupils are making in their areas of responsibility.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and /or disabilities make too variable rates of progress from their starting points. When progress slows it is because they do not have work that is matched to their prior learning.
- The curriculum has a clear intent and purpose. Leaders have ensured that pupils have a range of exciting experiences. However, some of the most able pupils do not have enough chances to develop their skills to greater depth in subjects such as history and geography.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the role of middle leaders to ensure that they have a greater impact on the areas for which they are responsible
 - ensuring that the local governing body have a clear understanding of where attainment and progress are strongest and weakest in the different year groups.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress by always having work that is planned to match their abilities
 - further developing the curriculum to ensure that it provides valuable opportunities for the most able pupils to deepen their understanding, particularly in subjects such as history and geography.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the new headteacher's arrival a year ago, the school has gone from strength to strength. Senior leaders have high ambitions. They have a clear understanding of what is going well and where they still need to make improvements.
- The staff work well as a team. All who responded to the staff questionnaire consider that the school is well led and managed. They praise the effective support that they have been given by senior leaders, the trust and external advisers. New members of staff commented that their induction has been useful and thorough.
- Parents are very pleased with the school and nearly all would recommend it to another parent. They like the fact that the headteacher and her staff are readily available every day to greet the children.
- Most middle leaders are still developing their roles. As yet, they are not fully accountable for how pupils are doing in the areas for which they are responsible. Although middle leaders conduct checks on teaching and learning, these are often not thorough enough. Consequently, they have too little impact on improving progress.
- The aim of the school curriculum is to encourage pupils to think creatively and critically. Leaders have been successful in achieving this aim. Pupils develop good debating skills. For instance, pupils have debated how to stop the problem of plastic damaging the oceans. Pottery, art and drama productions help to develop pupils' creative skills.
- Leaders aim to provide pupils with many real-life experiences. These include working alongside adults with learning difficulties to create a garden. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to consider money management, both what they would do when they earn money as well and what areas they would prioritise if they lost their jobs.
- The curriculum is well designed in subjects such as English, mathematics and science. It enables pupils to develop their skills by building on past learning. Leaders have adapted the curriculum for the most able pupils in some subjects. They can use the science facilities at the trust's secondary schools, for instance. But leaders have not provided enough chances for the most able pupils to deepen their understanding in subjects such as history and geography.
- Leaders ensure that funding for physical education (PE) and sport is well used. For example, it has been used to train sports coaches to improve pupils' skills and participation in a variety of sports. Pupils enjoy varied extra-curricular activities, such as horse-riding, cycling and skiing. Pupils develop their team sports skills through county and intra-trust events.
- Pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is well used. It has a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils throughout the school.
- Funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used appropriately to provide resources that meet their needs.
- Leaders have been successful in developing a community ethos in this new school. All

pupils from Year 4 upwards have transferred from other primary schools. Parents say that they are 'delighted to have made the move'.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body members are committed individuals who are very supportive of the school. They have a range of valuable expertise and are keen to utilise their skills effectively. They have produced a detailed action plan in response to the recent review of governance.
- The local governing body members now have a clear understanding of their roles. However, they still do not fulfil all of their responsibilities. For example, they had not ensured that the most recent special educational needs report was published on the school's website. This was addressed during the inspection. Minutes of meetings show a growing evidence of challenge to senior leaders. However, local governors do not fully understand how pupils are attaining and progressing in the different year groups.
- The board of directors have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They have ensured that the school has received high-quality support as it has grown in size.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Designated safeguarding leads perform their roles diligently. All members of the school community understand that it is everyone's duty to be vigilant and help pupils to feel safe. Staff have had extensive training on the different forms of abuse and neglect.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their child is safe at this school. Pupils say that they feel safe. They know they can talk to staff if they ever have any worries.
- Staff recruitment checks are thorough. Leaders ensure that all who work or volunteer at the school are suitable to work with children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers work closely with senior leaders to ensure that there is accuracy in assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils who fall behind are identified quickly. Teaching assistants provide useful support to ensure that these pupils catch up.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of a subject. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, effective questioning enabled pupils to explain their understanding of negative numbers. Lessons in mathematics provide many opportunities for pupils to problem solve and demonstrate their reasoning.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and, as a result, pupils make a good start to developing their early reading and writing skills. Older pupils enjoy reading regularly. Staff develop pupils' comprehension skills carefully. Pupils say they enjoy talking about the characters and plots of the books they have read.

- In English lessons, teachers encourage pupils to write extensively. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils gain a secure understanding of punctuation and spelling. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting skills. In the past, teachers have not developed pupils' writing skills well enough in subjects other than English. Early indications of current work in books shows that this has improved.
- Teaching in the specialist resourced provision is effective. Staff have built trusting relationships with pupils. Sessions are planned to ensure that pupils work towards both their personal and academic targets.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are a strength. This is clearly seen in PE lessons, where staff encourage pupils to 'have a go' at activities that they may not have tried. Pupils enjoy being physically active. For example, they say that the 'military-training' sessions are tiring but fun.
- In some classes, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities slows. This is because teachers set work that is not well enough planned to match pupils' prior learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have put in place effective transition arrangements to ensure that new pupils settle quickly. Parents praise the school's warm and welcoming atmosphere. A parent said, 'Since joining this school, my son has made amazing progress and made many new friends along the way, which has boosted his confidence.'
- Leaders regularly reinforce the school's values. There is a strong focus on ensuring that pupils understand their rights and responsibilities. For example, pupils show a good understanding about respecting others who are different to themselves.
- Pupils have a good awareness about British values, such as how democracy enables people to influence decisions. The pupil steering group meets regularly and discusses issues that have been raised by pupils. In this way, pupils are well prepared to become responsible citizens.
- Pupils are encouraged to help one another and to be kind. They have numerous opportunities to take on responsibility. For example, peer mentors and play leaders help to ensure that playtimes run smoothly.
- Pupils develop a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe. Online safety is a high priority in the school. Pupils know about the dangers of giving out personal information when online. Those pupils who take on the role as digital leaders help to reinforce the message of 'Think before you post'.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. Around half of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire do not consider that there is any bullying in the school. Other pupils say that although there is some bullying occasionally, staff are really good at resolving it.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire consider that pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to the teacher and complete the tasks that have been set. Pupils take pride in the work they produce. The standard of presentation in books is high.
- Pupils say that the school is a happy place and that behaviour is good. In assemblies, pupils listen carefully and sit quietly. Pupils are polite to each other and hold open doors to visitors.
- There are sustained improvements in the emotional well-being of pupils who attend the specialist resourced provision. They do well because of the sensitive support offered by staff. A parent said, 'They have adopted a flexible approach and adapt plans as necessary.'
- Attendance is similar to the average for primary schools. Leaders check pupils' absence very closely. They work effectively with families to ensure that pupils attend well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Scores in the phonics screening check in Year 1 are above the national averages and have been improving each year. The small number of pupils who resit in Year 2 have a good success rate. Current pupils make a good start to understanding the sounds that letters make. Some most-able pupils in Year 1 already know how to blend letters together to form words.
- In key stage 1, pupils attain broadly in line with the national average. Current pupils are achieving well and making good progress from their starting points. Some pupils make exceptional progress, for example in writing in Year 1.
- 2018 was the first year that there were Year 6 pupils at the school. Unpublished data indicates that these pupils achieved well in their key stage 2 tests. Current pupils across key stage 2 make strong progress in a range of subjects. Some pupils in Year 6 make exceptional progress.
- Pupils in the specialist resourced provision make strong progress from their starting points. But other pupils in the school who have SEN and/or disabilities make too variable progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Leaders check their work regularly and put in place appropriate support to ensure that these pupils do not fall behind.
- Pupils do well in science. They know how to think scientifically and develop good skills of analysis and evaluation.
- The proportion of the most able pupils who are attaining above the national average is improving in key stage 1. In 2018, unpublished data for key stage 2 indicates that pupils do well in their reading, writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Parents are delighted with how well children have settled into the Reception class. They say staff are very caring and kind. One parent said, 'He has settled in fantastically. It's an amazing school, and everyone has gone above and beyond.'
- Children behave well, and feel safe. They know the class procedures and routines. For example, during sharing time, they listen carefully to those whose turn it is to speak. Children get on well together and share resources well.
- Learning and teaching are good. Staff provide a range of exciting activities that develop specific areas of learning. For example, speaking and listening skills were developed when children re-enacted the story of the 'Three Little Pigs'.
- Children start Reception with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1. Results over the last few years show that the proportion of children who reach a good level of development has been at least in line with the national average. Pupil premium funding is used well to improve the progress of children who are disadvantaged.
- The curriculum is rich. It gives children experiences that expand their understanding of the world. For example, during the inspection, an animal charity visited and helped children to understand how to look after animals.
- The enthusiastic new leader of the early years has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop. Activities seen during the inspection show that staff plan to provide the right balance of challenge and support for each child. For example, children who have strong phonics skills are given challenging reading books.

School details

Unique reference number	140430
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10053393

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Nick Ware
Headteacher	Nicola Craig
Telephone number	01732 840908
Website	www.leybournechase.viat.org.uk
Email address	office@leybournechase.viat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Valley Invicta Primary School at Leybourne Chase opened in September 2015. In April 2016, the school moved to purpose-built premises on a new housing development. The school is growing in numbers. Currently, it is smaller than the average-sized primary school. This is the first year that there have been pupils in Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. In April 2018, the school opened a specialist resourced provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. It is registered for eight pupils; currently there are two pupils on roll. Pupils are taught in both the resource base and mainstream lessons.
- The school is part of the Valley Invicta Academies Multi-Academy Trust. Governance is through a board of trustees, who oversee the school's strategic development. There is a local governing body that is responsible for areas such as monitoring pupils' progress

and attainment.

- The headteacher has been in post for a year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, often accompanied by senior leaders. Inspectors checked work in books and listened to the reading of some pupils in Years 2 and 6. There were meetings with two groups of pupils, together with informal discussions at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also considered the 66 responses to the online pupil view questionnaire.
- There were meetings with senior leaders and other staff. Inspectors also considered the 11 questionnaires completed by the staff. Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer of the trust and other trust members. There was also a discussion with members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 83 parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also held informal discussions with parents at the end of the school day. Eleven emails were considered from parents whose child had just started the Reception class.
- The inspectors looked at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour, safety, attendance and punctuality, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Shaughnessy	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Chisnell	Ofsted Inspector

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