

Valley Invicta Primary School At Kings Hill

Warwick Way (Off Tower View), Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4AL

Inspection dates

27–28 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

- The new leadership and teaching teams have established themselves well with pupils and parents.
- The recently appointed headteacher has quickly established a positive, upbeat and open culture in the school.
- Parents express strong confidence in the new leadership and teaching team.
- The headteacher and her new senior leadership team have a clear view of the school's performance. They have identified appropriate priorities for improvements in the school.
- Leaders, governors and trustees have ensured that the curriculum provides a secure framework for teaching during a period of change.
- The special educational needs team provides exceptional leadership and oversight for those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Assessments completed early in the school year have provided teachers with reliable information about pupils' previous learning and individual needs.
- Pupils are keen to do their best and behave well. They feel valued and safe in school.
- The trust took robust and effective action last year to steady the school during an unsettled period in its history. As a result, most pupils continued to learn well, despite many changes in teaching staff.
- Children in early years make good progress. Strong relationships and clear routines help children to settle quickly during the first few weeks of their school career.
- Teaching builds pupils' knowledge and skills securely and effectively. As a result, most pupils make strong progress over time. However, teaching does not extend learning for the most able pupils consistently enough.
- The local governing board members' roles in holding the school to account, and in contributing school improvement, are at an early stage of development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that teaching consistently challenges and deepens learning for the most able pupils, so that they attain the highest levels of achievement by the end of key stage 2.
- Make sure that the governing body hold leaders to account rigorously for pupils' outcomes and makes a more active contribution to the school's development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school has experienced an unsettled phase during the past year. Numerous changes in teaching and leadership, including at senior leadership level, have caused understandable anxiety among parents.
- The trust's considered and concerted action during the past year has been central to ensuring the school's continuing success. For example, the trust has made good use of expertise across schools in the trust to support and inform teaching. The trust's actions have ensured that pupils continue to learn well, despite numerous changes in staff.
- The trust has made a number of judicious appointments to the teaching staff and to the leadership team, including the recently appointed headteacher. All have proved their worth in a very short time. New members of staff have established themselves well in the school, winning the respect of parents and pupils alike. The school is now much more settled and parental confidence is returning quickly.
- Parents are highly appreciative of the new headteacher's approach to school leadership. Many parents who completed Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, or spoke with inspectors, commented on her open, honest and welcoming manner. Parents say that she and her team are pleased to speak with parents whenever needed. They feel that the headteacher and her team genuinely value parents' views and put the interests of children at the heart of the school.
- The trust has ensured that assessments at the end of early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 are accurate and reliable. In addition, senior leaders have also completed assessments in all year groups at the start of the school year. This has ensured that teachers are clear about pupils' starting points and can plan teaching accordingly.
- The special educational needs (SEN) team provides highly skilled and knowledgeable support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including for those who attend the SEN resource provision. The SEN team is totally committed to ensuring that pupils who have additional needs thrive. They work closely with parents, agencies and teachers to ensure that this is the case.
- Subject leaders are very knowledgeable about teaching and work well together. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and about aspects of the school's work which need further development. For example, they have already prioritised the need to ensure that teaching consistently deepens learning for the most able pupils.
- Leaders provide good-quality support for student teachers and for teachers who are new to the profession. Leaders make sure that they are available to discuss any questions and they make the time to give advice about teaching. As a result, student teachers and those new to the profession develop the skills needed to be confident and effective practitioners.
- Leaders use additional funding appropriately to enhance learning. For example, leaders make good use of pupil premium and SEN funding to support pupils' individual needs and to tackle barriers to learning.
- Sensible use of physical education and sports funding ensures that pupils participate in

a wide range of activities which help them to keep fit and active. Ongoing training contributes well to the quality of physical education teaching and to pupils' physical development.

- Pupils and parents have noticed improvements in the school's appearance during the past few months, including an increase in pupils' work displayed throughout the school. One pupil said, 'The school is more colourful, and that makes us feel good about school.'
- The trust's curriculum plans have provided a secure framework for teaching during the turbulence of the past year. For example, the trust's well established English, mathematics and science curriculum plans have given teachers clear guidance about what to teach, and when, so that pupils have continued to learn successfully.
- Pupils learn a broad range of subjects which contribute well to their enjoyment of school and preparation for life in modern Britain. British values are woven throughout the curriculum, and are promoted well. Pupils speak confidently about British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. Trips and visitors, such as a recent trip to the Houses of Parliament and a magistrate's visit to the school, successfully enhance pupils' understanding of the importance of British values in everyday life.
- The school's religious education curriculum ensures that pupils learn about a number of world religions, including Christianity. Pupils speak about different beliefs and faiths with interest and respect.
- Leaders are now rightly focusing on introducing more opportunities to deepen learning for the most able and to enrich learning for all pupils.

Governance of the school

- The recently appointed chair of the governing body provides strong leadership for her team of governors. She is very clear about the need to strengthen governors' roles further so that they contribute more strategically to the school's development. The chair of the governing body and the trust have appropriate plans in place to develop this aspect of the governing body's role, including working with effective local governing boards in other trust schools and attending training.
- Until recently, governors have been too accepting of senior leaders' view of teaching and learning and have not held them sufficiently to account for pupils' learning. The chair of the governing body's strong leadership, combined with good-quality training provided by the trust, has improved governors' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. However, leaders and governors know that there is more to do to ensure that governors provide consistent and rigorous challenge for the school, as well as support.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders pay close attention to pupils' safety. They have established robust procedures for reporting any safeguarding issues and follow up any concerns promptly and robustly.
- Timely and thorough training ensures that all members of staff are aware of their

responsibilities for pupils' safety. They have a confident and up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding procedures and requirements. As a result, all members of staff know what to do if they have any concerns.

- Trustees and school leaders ensure that the school is an outward-looking community. They maintain good links with the local authority, with other schools and with agencies, such as children's services.
- Leaders ensure that recruitment checks on new members of staff and governors are completed efficiently. They make sure that safeguarding records are stored confidentially, while ensuring that members of staff can access safeguarding information where appropriate.
- Consistent procedures and clear channels of communication contribute well to pupils' security and well-being. For example, leaders display key information, such as the identity of the designated safeguarding leads and information about procedures for reporting a concern, prominently in the staffroom.
- Leaders make sure that the school is attractive and well maintained. Playtimes are supervised appropriately and adults build strong relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and valued.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers share the headteacher's passion for learning and her determination to secure the very best outcomes for pupils. They know their pupils well and have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour.
- There is some exceptionally strong teaching in the school, including in upper key stage 2. Where this is the case, pupils make impressive progress and are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Leaders are making good use of this expertise to support and develop the quality of teaching across the school.
- High-quality teaching in the specialist resource provision supports pupils' learning very well, both academically and personally. Teachers' calm and consistent approach ensures that all pupils do their best and successfully encourages those pupils who are unsure to have a go.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are knowledgeable about teaching pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They are responsive to pupils' needs and provide perceptive support.
- Teaching equips pupils with reliable learning habits. For example, teachers regularly remind pupils about helpful tips for successful learning, such as reading mathematics problems through carefully before starting work so that they are clear about the question.
- The teaching of reading skills, including phonics, is well established and successful. As a result, pupils become enthusiastic and proficient readers.
- Effective and confident teaching ensures that pupils make good progress. However, teaching does not challenge and extend the most able consistently enough to ensure that they secure the highest outcomes in all year groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are extremely polite. They are interested in speaking to visitors and represent their school very well. Pupils wear their school uniform with pride and look exceptionally smart.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that their classmates care about them and are kind if they are hurt or upset.
- Pupils say that bullying rarely happens and that teachers sort out any worries quickly. School records and discussions with leaders confirm this positive view.
- Pupils are keen to learn and take care with their work. Their regular attendance contributes well to their good achievement. Attendance rates are in line with the national average.
- Leaders have established robust procedures to monitor and support pupils' attendance. As a result, persistent absenteeism has reduced substantially over the past two years to levels below the national average.
- All parents who completed Parent View, and all those who spoke with inspectors, consider pupils to be happy and safe in school.
- The school's recent focus on developing pupils' personal learning skills has ensured that pupils work with growing confidence. Many pupils relish a challenge and persevere when they find activities difficult. Some, however, are less confident and give up easily when they get stuck. Leaders and teachers continue to work on strengthening pupils' learning skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils behave consistently well. They behave sensibly in lessons, during playtimes and when moving around the school.
- Leaders have made extensive improvements to the quality of support for the small number of pupils who have specific behavioural difficulties. The success of these developments is evident in some dramatic improvements in individual pupils' behaviour.
- A few pupils find it difficult to behave consistently well during lessons and, at times, need several reminders before getting on with their work. They get less work done when this is the case, and sometimes distract their classmates.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Developments in teaching in the past six months have secured improvements in the quality of pupils' work and in pupils' progress across the school.

- In 2017, standards were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both key stages. An increase in standards at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 reflects ongoing improvements in teaching and the curriculum.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. They learn how to write successfully for different audiences and purposes. The older pupils know how to review and improve their writing competently and efficiently, and often use vocabulary very well to express their ideas. Notable improvements in pupils' handwriting during the past year reflect teachers' increased expectations of pupils' work.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading. They are very pleased with recent improvements in the school library and enjoy choosing and reading the good-quality books available.
- The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check are consistently higher than the national average. Pupils learn how to use a range of strategies to read successfully, including phonics.
- In mathematics, pupils learn how to use their knowledge of number and calculation successfully to tackle increasingly complex mathematical problems.
- Pupils make strong progress across a range of subjects. For example, their art work reflects their care and an increasing attention to detail as they develop a range of artistic skills. They like to see their work displayed around the school and speak with pride about their achievements.
- Pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of science subjects. They make good progress in developing the skills needed to complete experiments successfully.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make rapid progress over time. They develop secure English and mathematics skills and work with increasing confidence.
- Pupils who attend the SEN resource provision are effectively supported to work in the mainstream classrooms, as well as in the centre. They move seamlessly between the classrooms so that good use is made of learning time. Pupils learn how to use strategies well to support their learning.
- Teaching takes careful account of disadvantaged pupils' individual needs. As a result, they make similar progress to their classmates.
- Small inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that there are variations in the progress made by the most able pupils across the school. Some of the most able make dramatic progress and deservedly achieve the highest standards of work. However, others do not achieve as well as they should.

Early years provision

Good

- Effective teaching ensures that children make strong progress and, by the end of Reception, are well prepared for the next stage of their learning in Year 1. In 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was higher than the

national average, with a further increase in 2018.

- The early years provision is led well. Leaders have introduced significant improvements to the early years curriculum during the past year. For example, they have extended use of the outdoor area so that children have more opportunities to explore interests within a secure, caring environment.
- Teachers have made full use of the first few weeks of the school year to establish constructive, open relationships with parents and to get to know the children. Teachers are sensitive to children's needs and respond warmly when they need help or reassurance. As a result, children have settled into school quickly.
- Teachers have already collected a wide range of information about children's starting points at this early stage in the school year. As a result, they are very knowledgeable about children's individual needs.
- Children are happy, secure and comfortable. They are keen to share their discoveries with adults and with each other. Children behave well and enjoy their time in school.
- The trust is committed to ensuring the best possible start for the youngest children in the school. It has made substantial investments to improving the quality of early years provision during the past year. This has enabled the early years team to update resources and to make considerable improvements to the early years classrooms.
- An extensive range of high-quality resources throughout the early years areas capture children's curiosity and enthuse them about learning.
- Parents have every confidence in the early years team. They feel well informed about their children's progress and say that their children have made a flying start in school. One parent said, 'The teachers are stardust', a comment which reflects the views of many.
- Adults take good care of the children. They make sure that learning areas are clean, secure and well organised, so that children can learn and play safely.
- Leaders have rightly identified the need to ensure that all adults in this newly established early years team are equally knowledgeable about how to use assessments of children's learning to secure the best possible progress for each child.

School details

Unique reference number	140432
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10053395

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Chair of trust: Nick Ware Chair of governing body: Sheila Potipher
Headteacher	Steph Guthrie
Telephone number	01732 841695
Website	www.kingshill.viat.org.uk
Email address	enquiriesking@viat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened as a sponsor-led academy in September 2015. It is a member of the Valley Invicta Academies Trust.
- The trust and the local governing body work together closely to oversee the management of the school.
- There have been numerous staff changes during the past year, including at senior leadership level. The headteacher, and seven out of eight teachers, are new to post in September 2018.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than that found in most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils who have autism spectrum disorder. Eight pupils, from Reception to Year 6, currently attend the provision. All pupils who attend the specialist resource centre have an education, health care plan. Pupils spend some of their time in the specially resourced provision and some of their time in the mainstream classrooms.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The school has a privately run breakfast club and after-school club, both of which are inspected separately.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 12 lessons, including three completed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other school leaders. They also met with a number of trustees, including one of the chief executive officers, the director of school improvement and the trust's strategic lead for teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. They also met with two groups of pupils, as well as talking with pupils informally during lessons and playtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 62 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the views expressed by parents informally during the school day. They also analysed 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation documents, safeguarding policies, the school improvement plan and information about pupils' progress and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, and looked at pupils' work in lessons. They listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Clementina Aina

Ofsted Inspector

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