

# Valley Invicta Primary School at Holborough Lakes

Holborough Lakes, Pollyfield Close, Snodland, Kent ME6 5GR

## Inspection dates

3–4 October 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Senior leaders' effective work is having a significant impact on raising standards, particularly through their prompt challenge and support to improve teaching where necessary.
- Valley Invicta Academies Trust (VIAT) provides highly effective support to the school. It has taken swift and effective action to improve standards.
- Governance is effective. The local board and the wider trust work well together to ensure that their legal duties are met. Their collective rigorous challenge to leaders ensures that standards in the school are improving.
- Teaching is typically good. Where teaching remains less strong, expectations for what pupils can achieve are not consistently high, including in early years.
- Most pupils learn well across subjects, and enjoy an interesting and relevant range of topics and themes.
- The most able pupils usually receive work that challenges them and encourages them to think more deeply. At times, though, expectations for what these pupils can achieve remains limited.
- The school provides highly effective additional support for vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. As a result, they learn well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils show respect for each other's differences and treat everyone well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are proud of their school, cooperate well with each other and understand the school's high expectations.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, and most take pride in their work, particularly where expectations for the standard of their work are high. They listen attentively in class and are eager to do well.
- Pupils feel safe and happy at school and are well looked after. They say it is a 'kind' and 'content' school.
- The specialist resourced provision offers strong and sensitive support for pupils who have complex needs.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve teaching by ensuring consistently high expectations for pupils' achievement, including the most able pupils and children in the early years.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since joining a year ago, the headteacher has demonstrated a clear and persistent vision for the school. She is very ably supported by the recently appointed assistant headteachers. Together, they provide strong leadership. Leaders and governors are determined to ensure the best possible learning and personal experiences for pupils. As a result, standards in the school are improving. A parent commented on this positive change: 'I can see a really team-orientated, positive, ambitious and enthusiastic change in the atmosphere and general ethos of the school.'
- Valley Invicta Academies Trust (VIAT) provides highly effective support for the school. The trust keeps 'a close watching eye', encouraging the school to maintain its own autonomy and identity while providing helpful support wherever needed.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders are making a significant contribution to improving the learning environment and developing the quality of teaching across the school.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate and useful training. Staff value the continuing professional development that they receive. They take part in training and share good practice across the trust. For example, staff have worked closely on an inspiring ceramics project with specialist teachers from the trust's secondary school.
- Any weaknesses in the quality of teaching are picked up quickly through leaders' rigorous checks on pupils' progress. Leaders are prompt to identify relative weaknesses in teaching, particularly where expectations for pupils' achievement may lack some ambition. Teachers are responsive to this challenge, and leaders recognise that this aspect of their work needs to continue.
- Leaders ensure that strong support is provided for vulnerable pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive prompt support and appropriate care, particularly in the specialist resourced provision. As a result, these pupils settle into school successfully.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting. Leaders consider learning opportunities carefully, making helpful links wherever possible between subjects. For example, pupils in one class studied a fiction text set in America, and in geography they studied maps of America where they identified key cities. Leaders are ambitious to develop the curriculum even further, and work on this is securely underway.
- The school uses additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively in order to provide both academic and pastoral support. Provision for these pupils is tracked rigorously to ensure that they receive the help that they need and that it is effective.
- Additional sports funding is used well. Pupils' participation in sporting and physical activities has doubled since last year. As a result of an increased number of clubs and specialist coaching, many pupils take part in competitive sports and tournaments with schools across the trust and other schools locally. Leaders encourage pupils to look after their physical well-being, for example by taking part in a daily run around the school field.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.

Fundamental British values are explored imaginatively through assemblies, and pupils demonstrate an insightful understanding of democracy. Leaders are developing opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school. The new school council representatives are keen to discuss their ideas and wear their badges with pride. Pupils are extremely proud of the charity work they do and understand the difference their fund-raising is making to others.

- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and those spoken to during the inspection, value and support the school. They appreciate the care and help their children receive and the improvements that have been made. One parent, expressing a typical view, explained: ‘Staff go out of their way to help with progress or if there is a problem. I really trust the staff and feel lucky that my children attend this school.’

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are actively ambitious for the school. They visit the school regularly to check its effectiveness by meeting pupils and staff and seeing for themselves how well developments are being implemented. Minutes of their meetings show a high level of challenge to leaders and demonstrate governors’ keen sense of enquiry. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the school’s strengths and the areas for further development.
- Governors understand their statutory duties and fulfil them successfully. Members of the local school board work well together with the wider trust to ensure that policies are fit for purpose and regularly reviewed.
- Accurately identified strengths are shared across the multi-academy trust and local school boards. Governors take part in useful training to ensure that they keep themselves well informed about their responsibilities and have the necessary skillset.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school’s safeguarding documentation is well kept and fit for purpose. Leaders ensure that all recruitment checks are completed before adults can start working in the school. These checks are meticulously recorded and maintained.
- Leaders show an impressive knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of vulnerable pupils and their home circumstances. The school works successfully with external agencies for the benefit of these pupils.
- Leaders ensure that staff, including those who have recently joined the school, receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. As a result, staff understand their responsibilities well and are familiar with the latest government guidance, including their duty to prevent radicalisation and extremism.
- Due to the nurturing relationships between staff and pupils there is a strong culture of vigilance and care. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and almost all parents who responded to Parent View confirmed that their children are happy and safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and can

confidently explain how to do this.

- Governors routinely check safeguarding administration, undertaking careful audits to ensure for themselves that procedures are kept up to date.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Pupils are keen to learn, and teachers plan learning carefully, mindful of the school's priorities. On the whole, teachers have high expectations for pupils' success and this motivates pupils to try their best. Consequently, most current pupils make good progress in all areas of the curriculum, including English and mathematics, as teaching sustains pupils' interests and challenges their thinking.
- Teaching is successful in helping pupils to develop a love of reading. Reading and access to high-quality books lie at the heart of the school's newly designed curriculum. Many pupils read for pleasure and show a developing understanding of vocabulary. The school's well-stocked library is much valued by the pupils. They say that they would like more opportunities to visit it.
- Teachers ensure that pupils develop their writing skills well, and provide useful opportunities for these skills to be applied in other subjects. Most pupils take great pride in their handwriting and in the presentation of their work, but teaching does not consistently reflect the importance that leaders place on this.
- In mathematics, pupils' progress is promoted well through teachers' sound subject knowledge. Helpfully, teachers provide increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge and reasoning skills to problem-solving.
- Leaders' helpful and rigorous policy for marking and feedback is not used consistently well. Pupils say that teachers' comments help them to improve their work. However, teachers' feedback occasionally overlooks errors and, in some cases, offers less challenge.
- Teachers assess pupils' work effectively and, if a pupil has not understood their learning, teachers usually offer help quickly to address any misunderstanding promptly. Teachers are supported in the accurate and effective assessment of pupils' work by the close working relationships with other schools in the multi-academy trust. For example, teachers frequently check the accuracy of their assessments with their colleagues from other schools.
- Teachers and teaching assistants adapt resources skilfully to enable pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to succeed. Clear plans and interventions support these pupils to make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have recently introduced greater challenge for most-able pupils. This has resulted in learning that often extends and deepens pupils' thinking, and learning tasks that match pupils' abilities well. However, leaders recognise that further work is needed to embed this development across the school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to take responsibility and contribute to the life of the school. For example, some pupils develop a keen sense of duty through their roles as house captains or school council members.
- The school's commitment to personal development is evident in the many clubs and activities offered. Leaders ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe beyond the school gates, providing training on crossing roads, cycling, and fire safety, for example.
- The school's values of 'perseverance, respect, resilience, oneness, understanding and determination' are successfully promoted throughout the school. Pupils spoken to during the inspection unanimously agreed that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and treat people equally. One pupil said simply that 'there are kind people in this school'.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very attentive in lessons and respond well to teachers' high expectations for behaviour, which supports their positive attitudes and good learning. Pupils say that learning is very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.
- The atmosphere in the school is calm, and pupils move around in an orderly manner. They play well together outside, with older pupils looking after the younger pupils. Most parents and all staff agree that pupils behave well.
- Pupils show respect to staff and to each other. Pupils are rightly proud of their well-kept and organised learning environment. They appreciate the resources and displays that help them with their learning and are delighted to have examples of their art and good writing on display.
- Pupils are happy to come to school. Leaders have taken prompt and effective action to address the slight dip in pupils' attendance last year. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities rose from the previous year. Persistent absence also shows signs of improvement over the last three years, but leaders are not complacent and are constantly seeking ways to improve attendance. Their in-depth knowledge of the families behind the statistics and their proactive approach to tracking pupils' absence has resulted in successful outcomes for individual pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In key stage 1, pupils achieve well overall. The school's information about pupils' achievement in 2018 indicates that in reading, writing and mathematics the proportion of pupils achieving age-related expectations in Year 2 has risen to exceed the national picture in 2017. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth at this stage shows less improvement and remains slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 was above national figures in 2016 and 2017. Information held by the school shows that this proportion dipped slightly last year. However, the teaching of phonics is well established and current pupils are making good progress. As a result, most pupils get off to a good start with their early reading.
- In 2018, Year 6 pupils at the school undertook national assessments for the first time. As the school opened in 2015, none of these pupils were present for the whole of the key stage. Furthermore, a number only joined the school during the latter part of key stage 2. Information held by the school indicates that the outcomes of these assessments varied. Pupils' attainment and progress in writing, for example, is indicated to have been stronger than in reading and mathematics, including for the most able pupils. The same information indicates that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, including those taught in the specialist resourced provision, made reliable progress from their starting points, as did the small number of disadvantaged pupils.
- Work in most current pupils' books demonstrates the high standards now expected. Pupils write confidently across a range of subjects and apply their mathematical learning well. Most-able pupils are increasingly developing their learning at a higher standard. However, leaders recognise the need to ensure that expectations for all pupils, including the most able, are consistently high across the school.
- The school's own assessment information and work seen in current pupils' books show that most disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make good, and often rapid, progress from their typically lower starting points.

## Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader demonstrates passion for her role and sensitivity for the children in her care. Adults in Reception work well as a team and develop positive relationships with parents. A number of parents commented that, 'induction for Reception class has been brilliant, and the staff have been very attentive and reassuring'.
- Children achieve well in the early years. Information held by the school shows that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their time in Reception improved further in 2018 and is likely to be above the national average when these figures are confirmed. This provides children with a secure foundation for learning when they enter key stage 1.

- Strong transition arrangements are in place to ensure that children settle in quickly to early years. Children's routines and expectations are established swiftly. For example, children know that they have to put their photograph on a number line when they come into the classroom each morning, and they are encouraged to independently find their own resources.
- Adults in Reception engage well with parents regarding their children's learning and development. Parents are kept informed regularly, through the school's online communication tool, and by weekly updates on the school website about what children have been learning.
- Both the indoor and the outdoor areas are well resourced and well used. This enables effective learning to take place both indoors and outside the classroom, supporting children to develop their skills in all areas of the curriculum. For example, during the inspection children were seen building a walkway using blocks and using musical instruments to create rhythm.
- Adults provide a wide range of relevant activities which usually engage children's interest in their learning well. Occasionally, though, activities can lack clear structure and purpose so that children are seen to lose interest and move on before achieving success.
- Children's behaviour, on the whole, is good. They happily discuss their interests and activities with adults and with each other. Where activities are less well-structured, children's behaviour can deteriorate. Although, should this happen, any poor behaviour is swiftly picked up by adults.

## School details

Unique reference number	140431
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10053394

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	147
Appropriate authority	The local school board
Chair	Ruth Hinckley
Headteacher	Lisa Vickers
Telephone number	01634 242 839
Website	<a href="http://www.holboroughlakes.viat.org.uk">www.holboroughlakes.viat.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquirieshol@viat.org.uk">enquirieshol@viat.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school opened in September 2015. It is part of Valley Invicta Academies Trust. The board of trustees has overall responsibility for governance but delegates some of these responsibilities to a local school board.
- The school has a single-form intake. It also incorporates an eight-place specialist resourced provision. This provision is specifically for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. They do some of their learning in the specialist resourced provision and join their peers for other parts of the curriculum.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium is low compared with other school nationally.
- The percentage of pupils who receive support for special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is broadly average compared with other schools nationally.

- The majority of pupils are of white British origin. Very few are believed to speak English as an additional language.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school and spoke to pupils informally about their work. All observations were carried out with the headteacher, senior leaders or the director of school improvement for Valley Invicta Academies Trust.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of Valley Invicta Academies Trust.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local school board, including the chair.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and heard some of them read. Inspectors took into account the school's own pupil survey undertaken in July 2018.
- The views of 77 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 36 additional free-text comments were considered. Inspectors also spoke informally with parents at the start of both days of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 15 staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspection team considered a wide range of additional evidence, including information and documents on the school website, samples of pupils' work, and leaders' records of pupils' attendance, behaviour and academic standards.
- Safeguarding procedures were also reviewed.

## Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clementina Aina

Ofsted Inspector

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