

# Inspection of a good school: The Mill Primary Academy

Ifield Drive, Ifield, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 0EL

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Inspection dates:

25 – 26 May 2021

## **Outcome**

The Mill Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to The Mill. The school is a calm and caring place where pupils behave respectfully towards each other and their teachers. Pupils know that teachers expect them to try their best. This inspires pupils to do just that.

The school's extra-curricular offer entices many pupils to take part in sports competitions and community projects. Pupils are proud to represent their school. They are also keen to get involved in after-school activities such as dance, table tennis and yoga.

Pupils feel safe and know that bullying and unkindness are not tolerated. If bullying does happen, it is dealt with effectively. Teachers know pupils well. There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils.

Pupils want to play a full part in school life. Older pupils have opportunities to take on positions of responsibility, such as play leaders and interpreters for younger children. Many pupils help to run the popular specialist art classroom, 'Room 13'. Here, pupils decide on the creative projects they want to offer to other pupils in the school. Recently, pupils made tote bags to raise money for charity.

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

Leaders and staff are dedicated to providing the best education for pupils. Since the last inspection, leaders have reviewed the curriculum and made many changes. They have thought carefully about how to arrange the order in which knowledge is taught. However, in a few subjects, such as history and computing, pupils do not learn important knowledge in enough depth. Leaders are aware of this and are putting plans in place to strengthen these areas.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They create interesting activities that help pupils to understand difficult concepts and knowledge. Pupils regularly answer teachers' questions about what they have previously learned. This helps pupils to remember what

they know and to build on this with new learning. For example, in science, pupils in Year 4 remembered the names of different types of teeth and then went on to learn about the functions of these teeth.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teaching assistants receive high-quality training. This helps them to support pupils with SEND effectively. Teachers adapt their plans to ensure that these pupils do not get behind. Leaders work closely with teachers, parents and external agencies to assess pupils' needs and provide the right support for them.

Staff have an admirable passion for encouraging pupils to love reading. As soon as children start in Reception, they begin learning phonics. Staff are well trained in this area. They ensure that pupils learn to read quickly and catch up when they fall behind. Teachers' clear explanations help pupils to use their phonic knowledge to read words. As pupils move through the year groups, they develop a love of books. Pupils read often and achieve well.

In early years, teachers establish routines quickly to ensure that children are attentive. In other year groups, teachers promote high behaviour standards that pupils live up to. Lessons are purposeful and calm. Pupils get on well together. They behave sensibly around school and play considerately together during social times.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to join clubs and take on positions of responsibility within school. For example, older pupils can apply to mentor younger pupils, and pupils can join the school council. Leaders also work with an external agency to provide lessons on bicycle road safety for pupils. High proportions of disadvantaged pupils take up these opportunities.

Pupils feel well cared for. Staff provide a range of support for pupils' mental health and emotional development. These include art therapies, play therapy, counselling and access to a member of staff who specialises in emotional support. The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.

Staff feel very well supported. Leaders work with their colleagues from The Kennal Academies Trust (TKAT) to provide most of the training that staff receive. Staff appreciate the training provided for them. They feel that the training supports them in developing their knowledge and expertise, particularly in wider curriculum subjects. Staff believe that leaders consider their workload and well-being in the decisions that they make.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding procedures and processes are understood by staff. All staff are well trained and aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Pupils feel safe. Staff are vigilant in spotting the signs that children may be at risk. Staff also work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the most appropriate support if they need it.

Leaders ensure that appropriate employment checks are carried out on staff who join the school. These checks are recorded accurately and monitored by governors.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is strong in most areas. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not planned for knowledge to be taught in sufficient depth. This means pupils do not deepen their understanding well enough. Leaders should sharpen curriculum planning so that all subjects are planned in sufficient depth.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 25-26 May 2016.

## **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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139958
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10192864
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	494
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gaenor Anne Bagley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sophie Gosden
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.themill-tkat.org">www.themill-tkat.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25-26 May 2016

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in January 2018.
- The school is part of TKAT.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, governors and the senior director for primary schools from TKAT.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. In each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at pupils' work, visited lessons and spoke to teachers and pupils. Inspectors also took into account the views of the five pupils who responded to the confidential pupil questionnaire.

- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors took into account 56 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 39 free-text comments. Inspectors also met with parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 34 staff who responded to the confidential questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation including the school's plans for improvement, its self-evaluation, reports on behaviour, records relating to pupils' safety and minutes of governors' meetings.

### **Inspection team**

Harry Ingham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bruce Waelend

Ofsted Inspector

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