

# Inspection of a good school: Valley Invicta Primary School At Aylesford

Teapot Lane, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7JU

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Inspection dates:

18 and 19 January 2022

## Outcome

Valley Invicta Primary School At Aylesford continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Valley Invicta Primary School At Aylesford is a highly ambitious school where pupils feel valued and respected. This is because staff give pupils a voice and include them in all aspects of school life. Pupils take on many roles, such as those of subject ambassadors, house captains, eco-warriors and digital leaders. One pupil proudly told the lead inspector: 'Lots of people want to come to this school.'

Under the leadership of the determined headteacher and deputy headteacher, the school continues to go from strength to strength. A sense of purpose and high aspiration permeates the school. This is because staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour.

Pupils get on well with each other and show high levels of respect for staff. Bullying is incredibly rare, but it is dealt with well. One pupil commented: 'If you are nice to someone, they will be nice to you.' Engaging lessons that keep pupils interested lead to them demonstrating high levels of concentration. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school because they know that this is the 'Aylesford Way'.

One parent echoed the views of many parents and carers in saying: 'My child feels successful, happy and safe at school.'

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

An ambitious, exciting and well-thought-out curriculum ensures that pupils learn many different subjects. Learning in each of these subjects is carefully organised from Reception to Year 6 so that pupils learn as much as possible about a range of different topics and concepts. Consequently, pupils talk confidently about what they learn. For example, during the inspection, pupils in a Year 4 art lesson explained to the lead

inspector that they had learned about an artist called Daniel Mackie. They went on to demonstrate how they had used his artwork as inspiration for their own sketches of animals in their natural habitats. They talked with confidence about the different techniques of hatching they used, including cross- and contour hatching.

Children in early years respond with excitement and enthusiasm to the many activities staff organise for them. They get off to an excellent start so that they are ready for key stage 1. However, leaders acknowledge that the links between what children learn in Reception and Year 1 could be further strengthened in a small number of subjects.

Staff confidently teach many subjects and have an excellent understanding of the most effective teaching approaches because of the training they receive. Leaders support staff well and ensure that staff workload is manageable. Simple assessment processes help teachers to check pupils' learning regularly. Teachers use this information to help them plan future lessons. They revisit key learning at regular intervals so that it becomes lodged in pupils' memories. As a result, pupils cope well with more demanding work as they move through the school.

Leaders understand the importance that reading has in helping pupils to learn. Consequently, they have prioritised reading across the school. Children start learning to read in the first week of Reception. No time is wasted in pupils starting the school's well-planned phonics programme, which leads to pupils getting off to a flying start with reading. Staff are well trained and know what they need to do to ensure that all pupils, including the weakest readers, become fluent, confident readers. Pupils are motivated to read as many books as possible through the school's 'We're Inspiring a Love of Books and Reading (WILBAR)' initiative. Pupils earn a bear called 'Wilbar' for every 100 books they read. They excitedly strive to collect as many as they can.

A highly inclusive culture enables all pupils to achieve well. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly because of the strong staff-pupil relationships. Leaders think creatively about what will make the most difference to these pupils. The changes they make for these pupils in lessons are subtle so that pupils feel included. This leads to pupils with SEND working towards the same ambitious goals as other pupils. Leaders work closely with other professionals as needed to make sure that the right support is in place at the right time for these pupils.

A wealth of experiences and opportunities for pupils means that they become confident, well-rounded individuals who are ready for later life. An extensive personal, social, health and economic education programme means that pupils develop an impressive understanding of the many important topics they learn about. This includes learning about different faiths and religions. Pupils also participate in a wide range of clubs and activities.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the school's curriculum may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know their pupils and families well. They take the time to get to know the individual circumstances of each pupil. Staff are well trained and understand the risks facing pupils. They know how to spot concerns and how to report them using the school's safeguarding system. Leaders work with other agencies to make sure that the right support is in place for pupils. Occasionally, some of the school's record-keeping lacks detail and precision. Leaders, together with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, have developed a comprehensive action plan to further strengthen the school's record-keeping.

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

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

- What children learn in early years is not consistently taken into account in the curriculum planning of every subject. This means that, in a very small number of subjects, what pupils learn in Year 1 does not reflect accurately enough the knowledge and skills they have acquired in Reception. Leaders should ensure that the links between what children learn in Reception and what they go on to learn in Year 1 are further strengthened in every subject.

## 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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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 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.

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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 140168   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Kent   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10200356   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy sponsor-led  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 337  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Nicholas Ware  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Loni Stevens   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.aylesford.viat.org.uk">www.aylesford.viat.org.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 9 and 10 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005        |

## Information about this school

- Valley Invicta Primary School At Aylesford is part of a multi-academy trust called Valley Invicta Academies Trust.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school offers before- and after-school clubs.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- There is a pre-school situated on the site of the school. This is called Poppy Pre-School & Out of School Clubs. The pre-school is not led or managed by the school and is inspected separately.

## Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and art. He discussed the curriculum with leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read.
- The inspector looked at curriculum planning in a range of other subjects.
- The inspector met with trust leaders, school leaders, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of the board of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- The inspector visited the early years provision.
- The inspector observed the end of the school day and breaktime.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan and records of monitoring visits carried out by the trust and those responsible for governance, as well as external consultants.
- The inspector met with the school's inclusion manager and trust leaders to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector considered the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and comments made by those who responded. He spoke to parents at the end of the school day during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector looked at the school's website and policies, and the trust's safeguarding audit and safeguarding action plan. He met with designated safeguarding leads and spoke with pupils and staff. He scrutinised records of the safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with trustees and governors. He scrutinised a selection of child protection records.

## **Inspection team**

Shaun Jarvis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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