

Inspection of Platts Heath Primary School

Headcorn Road, Platts Heath, Maidstone, Kent ME17 2NH

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This small village school, with its warm and caring ethos, sits at the heart of the community. Everyone is welcome and feels like they belong. Pupils love the time they spend at Platts Heath. They hurry through the gate each morning with smiling faces. Pupils feel safe because of the positive relationships they form with the supportive staff. Bullying is not something that pupils worry about. They know that staff are always on hand to listen, and quickly help them to sort out any worries.

Staff have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils, including the youngest children, live up to these high expectations. They behave well and work hard. At breaktimes, pupils interact and play happily together. They enjoy taking part in a range of games that keep them active.

Staff encourage pupils to be independent and responsible. Through taking on responsibilities, such as the 'well-being warriors', school councillors and 'eco-warriors', pupils make a purposeful contribution to the life of the school. Pupils enjoy taking part in the different clubs and activities that are available. Currently, pupils are very excited that trips to places such as Leeds Castle are being reintroduced.

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

Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for all pupils, including children in early years. They are determined to provide pupils with rich experiences that broaden their horizons and help them flourish. Staff are skilled at identifying pupils with SEND. Through carefully planned support, these pupils access the full curriculum and everything that the school has to offer. Governors use their knowledge and expertise effectively to hold leaders to account for all aspects of school life.

Leaders have created a broad and rich curriculum that ignites pupils' curiosity about the world around them. Across subjects, leaders have identified the essential knowledge, skills and key vocabulary they want pupils to know and remember well. They have thought carefully about how to organise the curriculum so that it meets the needs of pupils from different age groups who are in the same class.

Leaders provide effective training for staff. Leaders and teachers also work collaboratively to share expertise across the schools in the federation. In most subjects, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to ensure that pupils, including children in early years, learn and remember the essential knowledge well. However, in subjects such as art, music and design and technology, staff are at an early stage of implementing the revised curriculum. In these subjects, teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders are addressing this.

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Staff are well trained to teach phonics. As soon as children join early years, they learn and practise the sounds they need to

know well. Staff revisit tricky sounds so that pupils remember them. Pupils practise the sounds they have learned by reading books that match the sounds they know. They use their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. This helps them to become confident, fluent readers. Staff are quick to identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind. This includes pupils at the early stages of reading in key stage 2. Effective support is put in place, which helps them to catch up quickly.

Leaders have created a positive culture where pupils thrive. Pupils, including children in early years, are polite and well-mannered. Classrooms are hives of activity. Pupils concentrate well, show positive attitudes to their learning and relish challenge. They are proud of their achievements. Staff morale is high. They feel motivated and valued. They appreciate the way leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

Leaders and staff have carefully considered the provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils understand and embody the school's values well. They learn to take care of their emotional well-being, and show great care and consideration of others. Pupils discuss and debate their ideas with an appreciation and respect for different views. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. Pupils learn about the different faiths and cultures in modern Britain. They relish opportunities to make a positive difference. For instance, pupils regularly raise funds for charities, plant bulbs around school and in the village, sing at community events and proudly lead a crisp packet recycling initiative, both across the federation and in the local area.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have effective systems in place to prioritise pupils' safety. The procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are thorough. The regular training staff receive helps them quickly spot any signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. They act promptly to report any concerns that arise. Leaders take swift action in a thorough and sensitive manner. They make timely referrals and work effectively with external agencies. This ensures families and pupils get the support they need.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that helps pupils to manage risks to keep themselves safe, including with regard to online safety and healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In art, design and technology and music, staff are in the early stages of implementing the revised curriculum. As a result, pupils are not embedding their knowledge and skills as deeply or achieving as well as they do in the other subjects. Leaders need to continue their work to strengthen the curriculum further so that all subjects are of equally high quality and implemented effectively. This includes continuing to further develop staff's subject knowledge in these subjects.

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

Unique reference number	118295
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10227332
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Annie Allum
Executive headteacher	Emma Hickling
Website	www.plattsheathkentsch.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the Aspire Federation in September 2019.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has three mixed-age classes.
- The governing body works across all four schools in the federation.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, leaders from across the federation, staff and pupils.

- Inspectors met virtually with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. They also had a telephone discussion with a representative from Kent local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the additional free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector also talked with some parents on the morning of the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered responses to the pupil survey. They met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and the pupil premium funding plan.

Inspection team

Louise Walker, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graham Chisnell

Ofsted Inspector

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