

Inspection of a good school: Kings Hill School Primary and Nursery

Crispin Way, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4LS

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 December 2022

Outcome

Kings Hill School Primary and Nursery 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 graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this exceptionally well-led school. The agreed values, 'respect, responsibility, courage, resilience, cooperation and kindness', run like a thread through this school community. Pupils are happy and feel safe. A typical pupil comment was, 'We care about people's feelings and look after each other here.'

The curriculum is well planned and provides exceptionally rich learning experiences for pupils of all ages. Staff have very high expectations of their pupils. Pupils relish the learning opportunities provided for them. Children get off to a first-rate start in early years and continue to achieve highly throughout the school.

Pupils behave very well, both in and out of lessons. Pupil prefects, anti-bullying ambassadors and pupil well-being committee members are positive role models for younger pupils. There is virtually no bullying and any that does occur is dealt with effectively by staff.

Parents are highly complimentary about what the school provides for their children. Many say that the school staff go 'above and beyond' and that 'they put children's education and support at the heart of all they do'.

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

This school is highly effective because leadership at all levels, including governance, is very strong. Leaders are not complacent and have an unwavering drive for continual improvement. They ensure that staff are very well supported. Leaders and staff at this school make a unified team. They are determined that every child should be the best they can be.

Since the last inspection, school leaders have introduced nursery provision to extend the early years foundation stage. This is vibrant and well resourced. Staff are highly skilled and make sure that children make great strides in all areas of their learning. As a result, they are prepared very well for starting the Reception Year.

Leaders ensure that there is high ambition for pupils right from Nursery Year through to the end of Year 6. They have developed a well-thought-out curriculum that inspires pupils with interesting activities. The curriculum builds pupils' knowledge step by step. This leads to pupils remembering subject knowledge and skills successfully over the long term. Subject leaders provide clear guidance on what staff should teach and how to ensure that pupils learn effectively. As one subject leader said, 'We want pupils to love learning.' The result is that pupils are engrossed in their learning and there is no low-level disruption. They develop lasting knowledge across the breadth of the curriculum and are well prepared for secondary school.

Leaders make sure that teachers' assessment practices are meaningful and not burdensome. Additionally, teachers have excellent subject knowledge because of the training they receive. Teachers and teaching assistants make a successful teaching team. Together, they keep a close eye on pupils' learning, providing extra support if necessary.

Leaders prioritise reading as a bedrock to the curriculum. The teaching of early reading skills is a particular strength here. Pupils learn phonics from early years in a systematic way. Teaching is highly consistent and pupils learn to read with fluency. Teachers make sure that any pupil that falls behind catches up quickly. Pupils practise their growing phonic knowledge with books of an appropriate level. Staff ensure that there is a positive environment that hooks pupils in to reading. There is a well-stocked library and cosy reading corners in classrooms. Younger pupils are enthralled by story time and teachers read to them enthusiastically. Pupils learn to evaluate reading matter of various genres. This adds to pupils' growing knowledge and vocabulary, grammar and writing skills.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do very well. Staff go to great lengths to identify pupils' needs and put appropriate support in place. As a result, pupils with SEND make confident and successful steps towards their education, health and care plan goals.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development is exceptional. An extensive range of trips, visits, visiting speakers and clubs enrich pupils' educational experiences considerably. Staff work hard to provide pupils with significant experiences to further their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This means that pupils are growing in confidence and have strong understanding and appreciation of life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about keeping safe, including when online, throughout their time at the school. Pupils know how to report concerns to a trusted adult.

The safeguarding culture is strong because staff know pupils and their families very well. Staff are trained to spot any concerns and report any issue promptly. Safeguarding leaders deal with matters quickly, liaising well with external agencies if needed.

Leaders make all the required safety checks on new staff, volunteers and visitors. These checks are recorded meticulously. Governors have robust systems to assure themselves that leaders are following required processes.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

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.

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	130952
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10241857
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	482
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Claire Bermingham
Headteacher	Alice Early
Website	www.kingshillschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In 2020, the early years foundation stage was extended to include a nursery for pupils from the age of two years. There are currently 53 children in the nursery provision.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The chair of the governing body was appointed in December 2022.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with governors, the headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, carried out lesson visits, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The school website was viewed and a number of policies and documents were scrutinised.

- The inspector considered views of staff by speaking with them and looking at their responses to Ofsted’s survey.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers and considered their responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and other safeguarding records. The inspector also met with the designated safeguarding leads and spoke to staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Sue Child, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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