

Inspection of Hillcroft Primary School

Chaldon Road, Caterham, Surrey CR3 5PG

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this inclusive and nurturing school. Staff share leaders' ambitious vision for the school and as a result, offer the pupils a thoroughly planned, structured and sequenced curriculum that is very well taught. The curriculum is rich with learning opportunities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The 'STRONG' values of self-control, tolerance, respect, awareness of others, no one left out and growing friendships are deeply embedded at Hillcroft. Pupils demonstrate these in their exemplary conduct around the school. Through these values, there is a clear warmth that pupils show towards one another which is an integral part of the school.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional around the school from early years through to Year 6, during lessons and at breaktimes. Bullying is very rare, and pupils are confident that adults will help them sort out any problems quickly.

Pupils are provided with many opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities and have an active voice in the school's pupil parliament. Pupils enthusiastically told inspectors about their roles and responsibilities and truly valued the fact that they too could be leaders within the school.

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

The executive headteacher and head of school have created a strong community and are passionate about giving every pupil the best possible education they can. Every pupil is included. Staff have high aspirations for all to achieve to the best of their ability. These aspirations are consistently realised. Pupils with SEND are accurately identified and remarkably well supported. Appropriate adaptations are made to ensure that these pupils have access to the full curriculum offer. Leaders are relentless in their drive to ensure that all pupils can attend school and feel safe and cared for.

This unremitting ambition is seen across the school where leaders have planned a highly ambitious curriculum that is extremely well sequenced. Leaders have also developed an approach to teaching and learning that is exceptional. Staff provide a consistently high-quality education for all pupils across all subjects and year groups. Across the school, pupils demonstrate excellent recall and subject knowledge and show a real love of learning. The early years provision is exceptional. Leaders and staff understand the curriculum they have developed and as a result, children are highly engaged and motivated. They are extremely well supported and cared for. The very well-designed early years curriculum prepares children well for the next stage of their educational journey.

Teachers are rigorous in their assessments of pupils' understanding. This enables them to check that nobody falls behind. On the rare occasions that they do, support

is put into place by a highly trained team of staff across the school.

Pupils are confident, fluent readers who appreciate books and enjoy reading a range of genres. All staff share the love of reading and model that joy to their pupils. There is a relentless focus on reading across the school. This starts when children start in Nursery. The school have implemented a clear sequenced phonics scheme which helps all children learn to read with skill and clarity. In other subjects, there are equally high expectations shared by all staff. All curriculum areas are important and, as a result, work in all subjects is of a high standard.

Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and know that it is important to behave well. Pupils' self-control and understanding of positive behaviour were seen across the school. All pupils know who they could go to if they had a concern or worry. Pupils also know about tolerance and respect and have a clear understanding of the behaviour principles of the school. Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' conduct, and this is seen in lessons and around the school.

Pupils have access to a rich personal development curriculum. This not only looks after their well-being but also develops their character exceptionally well. Leaders are passionate about their nurture and well-being provision that encourages pupils to thrive. Leaders ensure that pupils have the space to talk and feel safe. This whole community approach is also equally valued by staff and parents.

Support is readily available for families who may need it. The school's provision is highly valued by the wider community. The life skills curriculum the school has developed ensures that pupils are equipped with the knowledge for life in a global world. Pupils understand British values and what it means to be respectful. Leaders actively ensure that there is a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities available to all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are encouraged to, and do, take part. Leaders rigorously explore funding options to allow this to happen.

Staff love working at Hillcroft and feel really well supported by leaders. Their well-being is paramount. For all staff, there is high-quality professional development and consistent involvement in the school's life. Staff feel valued and are keen to share the work they do by collaborating with other schools in the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all pupils are safe and cared for and as a result, have created a culture within the school where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff clearly understand this and act accordingly. Leaders ensure that they escalate concerns to the appropriate agencies so that families can get the correct help and support they need. Regular training helps provide the necessary knowledge to staff so that they are fully aware of the risks to pupils and the signs to look out for. Pupils learn about keeping safe, including online safety, through the school's life skills curriculum.

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	140880
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10241756
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynne O'Reilly
Headteacher	Louise Summers (Head of school) John Williams (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.hillcroftschoo.org/
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Chalkland cluster of schools within the GLF Schools multi-academy trust.
- The executive headteacher is responsible for five schools in the cluster. The head of school has day-to-day responsibility for running the school.
- The school strategic board has educational oversight of this school, within the trust structure.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.

- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the executive headteacher and head of school. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the trust and members of the school strategic board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and interviewing staff, and through discussions with pupils.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through Ofsted's online surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Simon Woodbridge, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector
Toby Martlew	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023