

Inspection of Bearsted Primary Academy

Popesfield Way, Weaving, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5GA

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 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

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their new and 'kind' school. Older pupils show a maturity beyond their years as they forge the pathway that others will follow. They have enquiring minds and enjoy learning 'great new things'. Pupils are reflective. One told the lead inspector that he wanted to improve himself by being 'more principled and caring'. When quizzed, it was clear that he fully understood what this laudable aspiration meant.

Pupils behave well here. They know what is expected of them. They know the rules and are disappointed when they are broken. They told inspectors that they feel safe, including from bullying.

New pupils say that they feel the school is welcoming and accepting. Discussions with pupils revealed that they are equally proud of their school and of their work. Classroom visits showed that a strong learning culture has been established over a relatively short period of time. Children in early years are encouraged to be inquisitive and to see themselves as learners from the start. They love working together to solve problems and were very enthusiastic when recalling making 'moving dragons' linked to their enquiry about Chinese New Year.

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

This is an exceptional school in many ways. Senior staff lead by example. They have ensured that much ground has been covered to establish an ethos that strives for excellence. Crucially, they recognise that excellent schools need to be built on firm foundations.

The support of the multi-academy trust has been instrumental in the school's success. This comes in many forms and layers. Clarity of purpose and clear strategic direction are provided by those in positions of governance. This includes from the trust board. Officers from the trust provide expert advice and purposeful challenge to leaders and staff. The result is a school that is making a clear difference to the pupils it serves, no matter what their background or their individual barriers to learning.

The curriculum is bespoke and ambitious. It is closely aligned to the national curriculum and the requirements of the early years foundation stage. Staff deliver high-quality learning through the framework of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme. Pupils study a full range of traditional curriculum subjects, delivered through programmes of inquiry linked to key questions.

The school uses a consistent approach to teach pupils to read and become confident mathematicians. Phonics teaching is delivered with high fidelity in all phases of the school. This means that children get off to a solid start in early years, where the quality of provision is particularly strong. Older pupils enjoy reading and being read

to. Younger pupils are equally happy to talk about their love of the classic stories they have shared with each other since joining the school.

Mathematics teaching draws on a commercial scheme of work that teachers know and understand. Other curriculum subjects, such as history and modern foreign languages (in this case, Spanish) are also taught well because staff plan learning that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A key strength of the school is the ongoing professional development that staff can access. This is delivered internally by school leaders or through curriculum experts from the multi-academy trust. Additionally, the school also has its own expert teaching staff who head various subjects with increasing success. The school's Nursery and Reception Years are also beacons of excellence because of the energy, dedication and expertise of leaders and staff. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds also benefit from a range of assistance facilitated by the school or through the multi-academy trust. This includes a range of specialist assessments, therapies and interventions for pupils who need extra support.

Work to further pupils' personal development is strong, especially when the school's relative infancy is considered. Pupils learn about peer pressure and understand the benefits and potential pitfalls of using the internet to learn and to play. The inquiry-led approach to learning also develops pupils' independence, resilience and confidence. Pupils rolled their eyes and laughed when they recalled their nervousness when they sang in the local community before Christmas. They enjoy the after-school clubs that are led by staff. A well-thought-through collection of core texts linked to the curriculum supports pupils' understanding of equalities and the challenges others face in modern Britain and around the world.

The very large majority of those who responded to Ofsted Parent View were positive about the school. The staff survey was equally positive, including about leaders' support for staff well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know pupils well. They have a clear understanding of pupils' varying backgrounds and the additional challenges that some families face. Systems and procedures are in place to identify and support pupils who may be at risk. This includes pupils who do not attend as often as they should.

The school is supported well by governors and officers from the multi-academy trust with oversight of safeguarding. Staff are well informed and benefit from ongoing training and updates. These include for record-keeping and ensuring that everyone is aware of local contextual updates as well as national statutory requirements.

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

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| Unique reference number | 147866 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10256257 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy free school |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 263 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Frank Green CBE |
| Principal | Jane Tipple |
| Website | www.bearstedprimaryacademy.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- This is an academy free school and is part of Leigh Academies Trust. It opened in September 2020. Leaders intend to expand the school gradually over time. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in Years 5 or 6.
- The school is governed by the trust and by a local academy board with delegated powers.
- The school is authorised as an International Baccalaureate World School and teaches the Primary Years Programme.
- The school does not 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.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with senior leaders, members of the school’s wider leadership team, curriculum leaders, and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of Leigh Academies Trust, who was accompanied by members of the local academy board, including the chair of the board. He also met the trust’s chief executive officer.
- Inspectors met a range of officers from the trust at various stages of the inspection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils’ work and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors also considered elements of other curriculum subjects in making their judgement on the quality of education the school provides.
- The lead inspector heard pupils from Years 1 and 3 read to a member of staff.
- Inspectors checked a range of policies and documents, including the school’s single central record. They also reviewed the school’s website and other records regarding the welfare and health and safety of pupils and staff.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils’ behaviour, the school’s wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. The lead inspector also met formally with a representative group of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers submitted through Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were also considered through Ofsted’s confidential staff survey.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

David Harris

Ofsted Inspector

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