

Inspection of The Discovery School

Discovery Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4GJ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 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

Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected since November 2008.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in this highly ambitious, vibrant and inclusive community. They are unanimous in their praise, with one pupil describing it as a 'privilege' to attend this school. Leaders' high expectations are rooted firmly in all areas of their work. The values of 'friendship, perseverance, honesty, respect and kindness' weave seamlessly into every aspect of daily life here.

Pupils engage with enthusiasm in their learning and achieve exceptionally well. This begins in the early years, where right from the start, children develop a love for play and exploration. They learn to take risks through the 'daily challenges' set by their teachers. This continues into older years where staff harness pupils' resilience and perseverance.

Adults provide thoughtful support and guidance that help pupils develop into responsible, articulate and impressive young people. Pupils are kind, considerate and welcoming of all. Bullying is rare. Leaders are quick to act on any incidents of unkindness, resolving issues swiftly.

Pupils relish the range of leadership opportunities available to them such as digital leaders. They delight in the numerous opportunities provided to take part in a range of clubs or learn a musical instrument. Participation in these activities is high for all pupils.

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

Pupils receive a first-class education. They achieve remarkably well across all areas of the curriculum. Leaders have crafted precisely what pupils will learn and remember from early years to Year 6. They continually review and improve the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils. Subject leaders are highly informed and provide teachers with skilled guidance in all curriculum areas.

Teachers have expert subject knowledge. They design activities that engage and challenge pupils in all subjects and areas of learning. They know precisely what support each pupil requires to learn new subject content. Teachers' checks are highly effective. As a result, staff know the individual needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure pupils have a secure understanding before introducing ideas. For example, pupils recall prior learning in video 'floor books' before beginning a new topic. This ensures they make strong connections both within their learning and across subjects.

Pupils love reading. The library and class reading corners are brimming with a variety of books. Pupils speak passionately about the books they are reading, many of which are recommended by their peers. Leaders build on this enthusiasm through the use of high-quality texts throughout the curriculum, including the early years. Early reading is expertly taught. Leaders have a precise understanding of the needs

of the least fluent readers. These pupils are prioritised to receive exactly the right support they require to make rapid progress to catch up.

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes toward their learning. In lessons, they are calm, focused and engrossed in their learning. They take pride in their work and are keen to share what they have learned. Routines are quickly established in the early years where, for example, children use a 'waiting list' whiteboard to take turns on outdoor activities. Children learn to share equipment and work cooperatively with their friends. Across the school, pupils see the long-term value in learning and are aspirational. As one pupil explained, his learning in mathematics will help him achieve his goal of becoming an architect.

The promotion of personal development is exceptional. The 'curriculum guarantees' ensure all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, can take part in a rich range of extra-curricular activities. A bespoke personal, social and health education programme ensures pupils learn about relationships and difference in an age-appropriate way. Pupils have a strong appreciation for equality. The diversity group works with leaders to challenge stereotypes. Pupils learn about diverse global communities through partnerships with different schools around the world. They interact and learn from pupils in Kenya and Devon. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate their commonalities and differences. This gives them a firm appreciation for the wider world they live in.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have a relentless focus on promoting high-quality learning for all pupils that starts with what is best for the most vulnerable and those with SEND. Staff are proud to work at the school. They are overwhelmingly positive about the support and guidance they receive from leaders. Many parents praise the work of the school. One, summing up the views of many stated that staff have created 'a safe and loving space for the children to learn and grow'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is well embedded. Across the curriculum, pupils learn how to stay safe including online. They learn how to manage screen time and tackle online bullying. Pupils know to report any concerns to their trusted adults.

All staff and governors receive thorough training to understand their role in keeping children safe. All staff know exactly what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders keep meticulous records and act when they need to. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the help they need.

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	134057
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10242289
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	627
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Annabel Cornall
Headteacher	Tina Gobell
Website	www.discovery.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 November 2008

Information about this school

- The governing body manages before- and after-school childcare provision.
- Currently, the school does not use alternative provisions.

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 met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, art and computing. 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.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised a wide range of information, including a selection of the school's records. They also spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn to keep themselves safe.
- Inspectors met some parents to gain their views of the school. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Daniel Botting	His Majesty's Inspector
Claire Martin-O'Donoghue	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Fisher-Pink	Ofsted Inspector

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