

Inspection of a good school: Kents Hill School

Birdlip Lane, Kents Hill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK7 6HD

Inspection dates:

22 March 2023

Outcome

Kents Hill School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy being part of this welcoming school. They have firm friendships and feel supported by the staff. Warm relationships between pupils and staff permeate the school. This helps pupils to feel safe and happy. Parents appreciate the work of the staff. As one parent said, reflecting the opinions of others, 'They give their souls, hearts and minds to the children.'

Leaders have high expectations that pupils will always be ready to learn. Pupils rise to these expectations. They like to work hard and this helps pupils to achieve well. Staff ensure that the class spaces and shared areas are calm and purposeful.

Pupils behave well in lessons and on the playground. They are considerate to each other and playground 'buddies' are keen to help the youngest pupils. Staff deal with any bullying issues swiftly and effectively because it is not tolerated.

Parents value the support the school provides to help their children to be caring. Staff champion and challenge pupils to always be kind towards others. The staff team uses the phrase 'In a world where you can be anything... be kind' as a key focus of the school's work to develop pupils' wider skills and attributes.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. Senior and subject leaders have selected the knowledge that they intend pupils to learn from the early years through to Year 2. Pupils usually achieve well across the curriculum. However, in a small minority of subjects, including mathematics, the sequence in which pupils should learn new knowledge is not ordered well enough.

Leaders have been successful in making sure that the teaching supports the school's curriculum aims. Teachers have strong subject knowledge that they use well. In the Reception class, staff present information and tasks in a way that helps children to

deepen their understanding in the different areas of learning. This provides pupils with a good beginning to their education.

Staff assess pupils' learning accurately. They quickly identify any gaps or misconceptions. Teachers and teaching assistants adapt their teaching and support to address these. As a result, pupils are ready for their next stage in learning. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are given additional effective help and resources. This helps them to quickly learn to speak and read English. Staff, together with senior leaders, check the learning targets for pupils who receive this extra support. The school works well with external services to make sure that pupils get the help they need.

Reading is of high importance in the school and is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders have ensured that staff teach the phonics programme consistently well. Children begin to learn the link between letters and sounds as soon as they start in the Reception class. Pupils read books containing the sounds that they have been taught and know. This helps to develop pupils' confidence and enjoyment of reading. Teachers check how well pupils are improving their phonic knowledge. Pupils who need extra support get the help that they need to become accurate and fluent readers. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn to read well.

Pupils with SEND are identified accurately and achieve well across the curriculum. Staff skilfully adapt their teaching to support pupils to learn the same curriculum. Leaders are rigorous in making sure that all teachers know what they need to do to ensure pupils with SEND succeed. Leaders check carefully the progress that pupils with SEND make. This information is used well to plan future learning.

Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. They, together with leaders, have established a positive climate for learning. Lessons are not usually disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and each other.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong curriculum for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about diversity and they study the celebrations from a wide range of religions and cultures. Teachers follow the effective personal, health and social curriculum to help pupils to understand how to form and maintain healthy relationships. Staff's knowledge of the pupils enables teachers to ensure the development of pupils beyond the academic curriculum. One parent, echoing the thoughts of others, described how the staff 'know every child and make them all feel special'.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, listen to the staff and pay careful attention to their well-being and workload. The staff are a strong team, supporting each other with their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that there are clear systems in place to identify pupils who are at risk. Staff are well trained. They know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil.

Leaders inform staff about how they follow up on concerns that they raise. This helps staff to remain vigilant. The senior leaders work closely with external services to ensure that pupils and their families get the help and support that they need.

The school makes the required checks before staff are employed. Leaders ensure that new staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, including mathematics, the curriculum is not coherently sequenced. This means that pupils do not achieve consistently well across the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that subject leaders have precisely identified what they intend pupils to learn and in what order. They then need to check how well pupils are learning the essential content.

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 June 2017.

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	141271
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10241763
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Penelope Dent
Headteacher	Jane Mackie
Website	www.kentshillschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started in her role in January 2020.
- The school's number on roll has increased, as has the proportion of pupils who speak EAL.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders and governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees and a representative from the multi-academy trust responsible for school improvement.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors evaluated safeguarding documentation, met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also reviewed the 11 staff survey responses.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

David Cousins Ofsted Inspector

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