

Inspection of Downs View Infant School

Ball Lane, Kennington, Ashford, Kent TN25 4PJ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. The school received an interim visit under section 8 of the Act on 6 October 2020. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love being immersed in learning during their time at Downs View. Staff create opportunities to fire pupils' imagination, especially in early years. Pupils make use of well-chosen resources such as class 'treasure chests' of interesting books. These help to engage and inspire pupils to learn.

Leaders have ambitious aims for what pupils should learn and achieve. These aims are fulfilled in many areas of the curriculum, and particularly in early years. This is because staff know their pupils' starting points and where they need to get to. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who receive highly effective support. All pupils access opportunities which extend and enrich their learning. These include visiting livestock at a local farm or making and flying their own kites.

Pupils enjoy the calm and purposeful learning environment. They are highly respectful of others and contribute to this ethos throughout the school. For example, pupils help to create 'class charters', which set out how they should behave. Pupils can become 'play buddies' to help make sure that games and spaces are shared during breaktimes. In early years, children know exactly what is expected of them thanks to clear routines. This helps to give them the strongest possible start to their time in school.

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

The school enables all pupils to learn to read fluently and confidently. Children in Reception learn how to identify sounds and decode words accurately. They extend their vocabulary thanks to skilful input from staff. Weaker readers are given additional support to help them catch up quickly. Alongside this, leaders promote a love of reading throughout the school. The strength of provision for early reading gives a secure foundation for pupils' further learning.

The school sets out what pupils will learn in a well-structured sequence. In art and design, for example, children in early years explore a variety of ways to express their ideas. As they move through key stage 1, pupils then consider how and why artists have used these techniques themselves. Teachers provide clear and detailed explanations for pupils. They break down important ideas so pupils understand them clearly. For instance, in early years staff use puppets to help children understand 'greater than' and 'less than'.

Teachers use assessment to clarify what pupils understand. This enables them to set out specific next steps for pupils to work on. This also helps the school to identify the needs of pupils with SEND early, and to ensure that pupils' needs are met well. Staff provide clear feedback for pupils and are quick to address misconceptions. Overall, pupils achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils achieve more highly than published outcome data suggests. In many areas of the curriculum, pupils complete tasks which move them towards ambitious learning goals. However, in a few areas

of the curriculum, the work that teachers provide is not always fully aligned with these aims. This means that pupils do not develop their learning to the same consistently high standards throughout the curriculum.

Pupils are highly motivated to learn. Staff support this by awarding 'green cards' for pupils who live up to the school's values. When they are learning, pupils show determination and relentlessly positive attitudes. As a result, pupils' excellent behaviour supports the climate for learning. Attendance is a high priority within the school. Leaders work closely with families to understand and resolve barriers to high attendance. They take effective action to reduce absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

The school plans for pupils' wider education in the same depth and detail as in the academic curriculum. Leaders have constructed a programme which enhances all aspects of pupils' broader learning. In early years, turn-taking and sharing activities support children's social development palpably. Staff help children to understand the language of emotions. This enables them to express themselves clearly. The school also helps pupils to develop perseverance and curiosity. Pupils benefit from extensive opportunities to expand their cultural horizons. Visits, such as to the theatre, support this strongly. Leaders also ensure that all pupils take advantage of the opportunities on offer. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and to manage their emotions. They are taught about British values and the diversity of modern society. As a result, they are as committed to tolerance and inclusivity as the staff are.

Leaders and governors make sure that staff feel valued and respected. Professional development contributes to teachers' expertise in the classroom. Leaders also make thoughtful consideration of workload pressures on staff. Governors support and challenge leaders in setting the school's ethos and direction. Parents are very positive about the school. Their feedback highlighted how much they appreciate the 'caring and nurturing environment'. The school provides purposeful support for parents. This includes early years workshops and shared play sessions to ensure that children get off to the best possible start.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The work given to pupils does not always enable them to meet the high ambitions set out in the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not consistently develop their knowledge and skills as strongly as they could over time and across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the work teachers set is consistently aligned with the exceptional aspirations that the curriculum entails.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 118523 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10287918 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 229 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Diane Turner |
| Headteacher | Mrs Tracy Kent and Mrs Sarah Collins (Co-Headteachers) |
| Website | www.downs-view.kent.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 9 and 10 June 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, including the co-headteachers. The inspectors also spoke with a representative from Kent local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, history and English. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also discussed the curriculum and provision for pupils with SEND.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, governors, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts the pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Daniel Botting, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Adnan Ahmet | Ofsted Inspector |
| Baljit Bhabra | His Majesty's Inspector |

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