

# Inspection of a good school: Drapers Mills Primary Academy

St Peter's Footpath, Margate, Kent CT9 2SP

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Inspection dates:

31 October and 1 November 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Kathleen Davis. This school is part of The Kemnal Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Dr Karen Roberts, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gaenor Bagley. There is also a director of education, Jenny Richards, who is responsible for this school and five others.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are made to feel welcome and special in this school, where they are greeted personally by their teachers every morning. Pupils rightly feel safe, saying they can talk to adults and post messages in the class 'worry boxes' if they need help. They enjoy their roles as classroom monitors, doing jobs for their teachers and reading to younger pupils in the playground.

Leaders make no excuses for the fact that pupils do not attain as well as they should because provision is not currently good enough. They are determined to make the improvements needed so that pupils receive the high-quality education they deserve. Leaders know exactly what must be done and are going about it with vigour and determination. The trust and local governing body are contributing much-needed expertise to ensure that pupils can enjoy school and attend regularly. However, there is more work to be done.

The school has raised expectations for behaviour and trained all staff and pupils so that they understand the new standards. Pupils learn how to help themselves feel calm and know which adults to go to for support. Mostly, pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils who find behaviour difficult get the support they need, saying proudly that teachers help them to 'turn their behaviour around'.

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

The school has made many well-considered changes to overcome barriers that previously hampered pupils from achieving as well as they should. These changes have brought stability and a renewed sense of direction to the staff team. The shared values of resilience, respect, individuality, and aspiration are the driving force behind the recent improvements to pupils' behaviour. The school has trained adults to demonstrate their high expectations through their own behaviour and recognise when pupils might need support to manage their feelings. As a result, many pupils who previously struggled with behaviour now know how to calm themselves down and get ready for learning.

The school is working tirelessly, with the help of the trust, to tackle poor attendance so that it is no longer a barrier to pupils' attainment. Attendance information is analysed meticulously to tailor support for families, and pupils now come to school more regularly.

The school has made reading its top priority. Children get off to a strong start with reading in Reception. Learning routines are established, and pupils concentrate well during phonics teaching. Adults in Reception and key stage 1 help any pupils who are falling behind or who are at the early stages of learning English by reteaching the sounds that have not been secured. However, not all staff throughout the school have had the training they need to teach phonics successfully. This means older pupils who are new to the school or who struggle with reading do not get enough support to catch up or read the ambitious texts used in the wider curriculum. Staff have regular coaching and are growing in confidence as their subject knowledge deepens, but there is more to do. The school has recently introduced a new curriculum for fluent readers in key stages 1 and 2, but it is too early to see the impact of this change.

The school has developed an ambitious and logically sequenced curriculum. However, many pupils struggle to understand it due to gaps in their prior knowledge. The school has introduced several ways to close these gaps. For example, assessments in mathematics and phonics help teachers understand what pupils can remember. Adults then use this information to prioritise areas of the curriculum pupils need to learn most. Teachers are also beginning to check pupils' understanding during lessons and reteach areas where more practice is needed. However, this does not happen consistently across the whole curriculum. As a result, work given to pupils is too easy or too hard, and they lose interest, becoming bored and chatty. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are increasingly having their needs identified and supported. However, because teachers do not consistently adapt learning for them, they do not attain as well as they could. Gaps are also closing through pupils practising basic skills such as number bonds and multiplication tables regularly. Pupils are enthusiastic about this work and enjoy challenging themselves to remember number facts off by heart.

Pupils learn about diverse faiths and their festivals. They are taught to respect everyone, saying, 'It's ok to be yourself, because everyone is different.' They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Pupils develop character, resilience, and an appreciation of nature through regular visits to the forest school for the outdoor learning curriculum.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### What does the school need to do to improve?

#### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff who need it have received training to teach phonics. Because of this, pupils throughout the school who struggle with reading do not consistently get the help they need. The school should continue to develop staff's knowledge and expertise in teaching phonics so that all adults are able to give pupils the expert help they need in reading.
- The school is in the early stages of developing assessment practice. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are not always identified accurately, and the work they are given is too easy or too hard. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment consistently well to identify what pupils need to learn next so that future teaching matches their needs more precisely.
- Pupils' sporadic attendance prevents them from achieving well in school. Some miss out on large parts of the curriculum and have gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that its persistent approach leads to the improvements in attendance that are needed for some pupils.

## 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 add first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

### 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139021
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288031
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	277
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gaenor Bagley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathleen Davis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.drapersmillsprimary.co.uk/">http://www.drapersmillsprimary.co.uk/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Kemnal Academies Trust.
- The school serves a community with high levels of deprivation.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered

the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, they 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. The inspector also spoke with leaders about the work the school is doing to improve pupils' attendance.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers.
- Views of pupils and staff were gathered through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of local governing body and trust board meetings, and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour, and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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