

Inspection of Pickhurst Academy

Pickhurst Lane, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0HL

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Andrea Rampton. This school is part of Chancery Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Matt Rampton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Philip Jeffries.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this ambitious, happy school. Leaders expect all pupils to achieve excellent outcomes, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who attend the additionally resourced provision (ARP). All staff get to know pupils' needs well, supporting them to learn the school's rich curriculum and enjoy the many high-quality opportunities it provides.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They demonstrate high levels of respect, courtesy and care for others. They speak with conviction about how important it is to look after one another and to appreciate difference in their community. One pupil, who reflected the pride many expressed in their school and particularly the ARP said, 'Our school is special because everyone is included here.'

Leaders provide a wide range of enriching experiences to all pupils, including clubs such as choir, karate and sewing, which pupils attend regularly. Visits bring pupils' learning to life, such as an outing to the Royal Observatory when learning about the solar system in Year 5. Residential excursions are a highlight. For example, in Year 6, pupils experience an outdoor adventure in Norfolk. Roles of responsibility, such as well-being ambassadors, eco-warriors and anti-bullying ambassadors, allow pupils to make a strong contribution to their school.

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

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils. Leaders have identified precisely the knowledge pupils need to learn in order to excel at complex tasks in each subject. The curriculum is broken into carefully considered steps that help pupils build their knowledge securely over time, making links to previous learning and across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 use their prior learning about tropical, temperate and polar climate zones in geography, and about evolutionary adaptations in science, to consider the impact of environmental issues on the Amazon River and its inhabitants.

Leaders provide strong training and support that develop teachers' expertise across the curriculum and their skills in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers and other adults use their knowledge to design tasks and to present information to pupils clearly, teaching knowledge in small steps where needed. They check pupils' understanding rigorously, correcting misconceptions and taking every opportunity to build on what pupils already know. The school is rightly proud of its work. The school takes careful account of the workload of staff to ensure that they can focus on the most important tasks to benefit pupils.

Reading is treated as a priority here. Pupils learn daily to appreciate a wide range of literature including poetry, whole novels and non-fiction. They interpret texts with increasing sophistication. For example, pupils begin comparing basic events and characters in texts in Year 3 in readiness for comparing the themes that arise in two whole texts by Year 6. Teachers regularly discuss themes in texts, such as 'children's

mental health' and 'identity', with pupils. As a result, pupils discuss literature in informed, sensitive and interesting ways. Leaders identify any pupils who join the school at an early stage of reading and ensure that they receive regular phonics input, as well as reading practice using well-matched books. They catch up quickly, including pupils with SEND and those who are in the ARP.

Pupils learn in highly organised, well-managed classrooms, free from disruption. Pupils cooperate exceptionally well with one another, both in and outside the classroom. They are safe and well cared for.

Leaders expect regular attendance from all pupils. Should any pupil miss a day of school, leaders seek to understand the reasons for this and offer support where necessary.

Leaders have devised a comprehensive curriculum to teach pupils extensively about healthy relationships, physical and mental health, world and local issues. Pupils visit places of worship to learn about different faiths. Pupils recall this learning with ease and discuss issues such as discrimination and stereotyping with great sensitivity.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Unique reference number	137070
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10267936
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	507
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Jefferies
Headteacher	Andrea Rampton
Website	www.pickhurst.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in August 2011 and is part of the Chancery Education Trust.
- Since the last inspection of the predecessor school, Pickhurst Junior School, when it was graded to be outstanding overall, there have been changes to leadership, including a new headteacher.
- The school has additionally resourced provision for pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and design technology.
- 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.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum information in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including leaders who work within the trust. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for SEND, behaviour and attendance and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body and the trust board.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Rebecca Iles-Smith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
David Boyle	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Bernard	Ofsted Inspector
Aliki Constantopoulou	His Majesty's Inspector

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