

Inspection of Fern Hill Primary School

Richmond Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 5PE

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

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Adam Scott. This school is part of Kingston Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the executive director, Sophie Cavanagh, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Graham Willett.

What is it like to attend this school?

Fern Hill Primary School is a place where pupils thrive. They benefit from positive and nurturing relationships with staff and other pupils. Their opinions are regularly sought and listened to. For example, the school council made suggestions on how to improve the school and helped to choose the new lunch caterers. Pupils take on a range of leadership opportunities, including the eco-committee, play leaders and reading champions.

Pupils enjoy learning a curriculum that is highly ambitious and stimulating. They consistently produce high-quality work across subjects and achieve very well. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the education and care their children receive.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. This is because staff have consistently high expectations for behaviour, which pupils rise to meet. This starts in early years, where children learn to be considerate and kind to each other. Pupils understand the importance of accepting others for who they are. They feel safe and are kept safe at school.

A diverse offer of additional activities ensures that pupils' talents and interests are carefully considered. Pupils enjoy attending clubs such as film, sewing, chess, and gardening. They participate in a wide range of local sports competitions. Staff are diligent in ensuring that pupils never miss out.

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

Reading is at the heart of this school's curriculum. Children in Nursery learn how to be aware of the sounds in words. Phonics lessons begin in the Reception Year and, over time, pupils learn to read fluently and confidently. Staff are well trained in reading. They ensure that the phonics programme is delivered consistently. Pupils who need help to catch up get swift and carefully planned support from knowledgeable staff.

Leaders have carefully chosen core texts for each year group. These ensure that pupils read a range of high-quality, exciting literature, including books that promote equality and diversity. Pupils are inspired by the well-established culture of reading in the school. For example, they get to take part in a range of events, such as the '100-book challenge' for each year group, author visits, workshops and visits to libraries. This all helps them to develop a love of books. Pupils are motivated readers, and they enjoy discussing the stories they have read and what they have learned from them.

The school has developed a rigorous and aspirational curriculum that, in many subjects, exceeds the breadth and ambition of what is expected nationally. Leaders have identified important knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to be taught. The curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced so that pupils deepen

their understanding. For example, in Reception, children are taught the correct mathematical terms for the properties of two-dimensional shapes such as 'quadrilateral' and 'vertices'. This helps them to develop an exceptionally strong base on which to build in Year 1. The curriculum has been planned in a way that provides pupils with meaningful links between different subjects. For example, in design and technology, pupils in Year 6 applied their mathematics and science knowledge to make models of trench shelters.

Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong. This is because there is a rigorous professional development programme in place that supports all staff to implement the ambitious curriculum consistently well. Staff check that pupils have understood what they have been taught. They build on this learning, enabling pupils to access more complex content with confidence. In lessons, teachers routinely identify and address misconceptions to ensure these do not limit pupils' understanding. This helps pupils to develop strong subject-specific understanding over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified swiftly and effectively. These pupils are well supported to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

The school has a calm and orderly atmosphere. The school's values underpin its well-established routines for behaviour. These are explicitly taught and well understood. Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes towards learning, and low-level disruption is very rare. Leaders have effective systems in place to support families to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.

Leaders provide a wide range of carefully planned enrichment opportunities. These take place at lunchtime and after school to ensure that all pupils can attend. There is a high take up of this offer. Leaders go beyond the expected to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Their work on developing character through celebrating diversity is exemplary. During 'respect week', pupils devised the motto of 'with empathy and respect we connect'. Pupils enjoy the regular opportunities to discuss and debate important topics, such as through 'FERN SPEAK', the school's annual public speaking event.

Leaders, including trustees and those responsible for local governance, have created an ambitious culture that puts pupils' learning at the centre of everything they do. Leaders at every level are committed to continuous school improvement. They are reflective and rigorous in their work. Staff are extremely positive about working here. They feel very well supported to manage their workload and to develop professionally.

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	148798
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	10255317
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	646
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Willett
Headteacher	Adam Scott
Website	www.fernhill.kingston.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Fern Hill Primary School is part of the Kingston Educational Trust.
- Fern Hill Primary School converted to become an academy in January 2022. When its predecessor school, Fern Hill Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not make use of 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 the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other school leaders. They also met with members of the local governing body, chair of trustees, executive director and a representative of the local authority.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, French, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Sabrina Edwards, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Amanda Carter-Fraser	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Rai	Ofsted Inspector
Sam Johnson	His Majesty's Inspector

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