

Inspection of a good school: Valley Invicta Primary School at Holborough Lakes

Holborough Lakes, Pollyfield Close, Snodland, Kent ME6 5GR

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

The headteacher of this school is Lisa Vickers. This school is part of Valley Invicta 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, Richard Hayden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Matthew Fletcher.

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 be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this warm and inviting school. There is a strong sense of belonging and the school is centred at the heart of the community. Parents and carers value the nurturing relationships that staff build with their children. One parent said: 'The school feels like part of the family and the staff are very supportive.'

The school is passionate about helping all pupils to achieve their best. Trusting and caring relationships exist among staff and pupils. As such, pupils feel safe and happy and enjoy attending school regularly. The school also provides educational visits and clubs to enrich the curriculum. Pupils are keen to learn because their lessons are interesting and relevant.

Behaviour across the school is exemplary and learning in lessons is rarely disrupted. Children in the early years learn routines quickly. Older pupils act as excellent role models for younger pupils. They relish playing together, making breaktimes joyous and friendly.

Pupils take pride in the range of leadership roles they can undertake. These involve being playleaders, reading buddies and 'autism ambassadors'. They understand what it means to be a responsible member of the school. Pupils are keen to make positive contributions that benefit the school community. They are very proud of their school.

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

Staff are passionate about helping pupils develop a love of reading across the school. They ensure that reading is threaded through the curriculum. Teachers carefully select a range of interesting texts and books for pupils to explore. Pupils across the school say that they love the time they spend listening to adults who read exciting stories to them. Phonics teaching starts as soon as children join Reception. Leaders have made sure that pupils have frequent opportunities to read books that match the sounds they know. The school provides regular training opportunities to those staff who teach phonics. Consequently, staff are experts in teaching pupils how to read. They provide effective support for pupils who may be falling behind to ensure that they catch up with their classmates quickly.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study an ambitious curriculum. The school regularly works with professionals from external agencies to provide extra help for pupils with SEND. These pupils receive support to help them to learn what is set out in the school's curriculum. Pupils in the 'Wallaby' class attend the specialist resource base and have detailed support plans. These plans help to ensure that staff know exactly how to support individual and specific needs. As such, pupils with SEND achieve highly alongside their peers.

The curriculum is carefully sequenced from the early years to key stage 2. In places, this curriculum exceeds the breadth and ambition of the national curriculum. Staff have identified the most important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn and use. Pupils spend time each day practising what they have already learned. Staff expertly guide pupils to use what they know. This in turn helps pupils develop their knowledge and skills as they move up through the school. For example, in mathematics, pupils can remember important mathematical vocabulary. They have frequent opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills. Staff have a high level of expertise because of the effective professional development provided by trust and school leaders.

The school establishes trusting relationships with families as soon as children start school in the Reception Year. Staff quickly identify any additional educational needs that children may have. Effective support is then given to ensure that children have the help they need to succeed. The early years environment provides rich opportunities for children to develop early language and mathematical skills. Children learn to explore the world around them through play. Adults teach children how to cooperate well and share. By the end of early years, children have the knowledge and skills that they need for Year 1.

Pupils rise to the school's high expectations daily and are eager to learn. They listen carefully to adults and work well with each other. There is minimal disruption to learning and most pupils try their hardest in lessons. They value the rewards and positive recognition they receive from staff.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education is well designed and bespoke to pupils' needs. Pupils learn how to stay safe online as well as when out in their local area. Pupils are respectful of different cultures and beliefs, preparing them well for life in modern Britain. They speak with maturity about complex issues such as diversity,

equality and discrimination. Pupils use this knowledge carefully to explore many interesting topics as they ready themselves for the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 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

Unique reference number	140431
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10313354
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matthew Fletcher
CEO of trust	Richard Hayden
Headteacher	Lisa Vickers
Website	www.holboroughlakes.viat.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Valley Invicta Primary School at Holborough Lakes is part of a multi-academy trust called Valley Invicta Academies Trust.
- The school has a specialist resourced provision for pupils who have an education, health and care plan relating to autism. There are currently 18 pupils enrolled.
- 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 her evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, the inclusion lead, teachers, support staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and with members of the trust board. She also had a meeting with the deputy chief executive officer.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. In each subject, the inspector met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to some pupils read to adults. Other aspects of the school's curriculum were also considered.
- 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 took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor and trustees' minutes.
- The inspector considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text comments that were submitted. She also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Nuamera Anwar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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