

Inspection of a good school: Istead Rise Primary School

Downs Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA13 9HG

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 February 2024

Outcome

Istead Rise Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Steve Payne. This school is part of Swale 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, Michael Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Goodman.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They love learning in this vibrant and exciting environment. Staff set high expectations of pupils' achievement, and pupils enjoy rising to the challenge. The values of the school shine through in the way that pupils persevere with their work. One pupil expressed the views of many, saying, 'I love the endlessly interesting learning opportunities.'

Inclusivity runs through all aspects of school life. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive highly effective support when they need it. These pupils thrive here, and are fully involved in classroom learning and the many wider opportunities on offer. Pupils treat each other kindly and with respect. They value and listen well to the opinions of others. Warm relationships between staff and pupils mean that all pupils know that they are safe, cared for and valued as individuals.

Staff care deeply about pupils' well-being and preparedness for future life. Pupils have opportunities to apply for roles on the school council, where they learn how to put forward pupils' views and make a positive difference to the school community. There are many other meaningful positions, such as digital ambassadors, who run assemblies for the school on e-safety.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is academically ambitious and exciting. Reading is at the heart of the school. Subjects are rich in opportunities to develop both reading and writing. The recent focus on developing pupils' vocabulary even further is

proving effective. Pupils discuss ideas eloquently and use technical language that is specific to each subject or concept.

Staff teach early reading with precision. Starting in Reception, children quickly learn to read well. They develop a love of reading through exciting story times, library use and book events throughout the year. Across the rest of the curriculum, learning builds well on what pupils already know, helping them to develop increasingly sophisticated knowledge throughout their years in the school. Opportunities for pupils to discuss and share their thinking are embedded in all lessons. Pupils frequently revisit prior learning and, as a result, remember what they have been taught. For example, older pupils can explain renewable and non-renewable energy, and link this to knowledge of climate change.

Pupils achieve well at all key stages. The school has ensured that all teachers have secure knowledge of all areas of the curriculum. This means that teachers explain ideas clearly and model new learning accurately for pupils. While there are routines for checking what pupils know and addressing misconceptions, this does not always happen as effectively as it could. Sometimes, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified, and sometimes these are then not addressed quickly enough. This means that, at times, errors in pupils' thinking or work persist. The school already has in place a sequence of training for staff to improve the consistency with which pupils' understanding is checked, and for then addressing any gaps in knowledge.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They value the experiences that they have here. Pupils' attendance at school has improved significantly in recent years. This is due to impactful and supportive work with pupils and families, and because pupils love coming to school, where learning is the priority. Lessons are purposeful and pupils habitually follow instructions exactly. Children in Reception demonstrate sustained focus, which sets the tone for the rest of their time at the school. Pupils here are ambitious and focused while being kind and inclusive.

The school ensures that pupils develop into well-rounded, interested and respectful young people. Pupils learn about the world of work through events such as 'Aspiration Term', where adults in the community come to speak about their jobs as vets or engineers. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to celebrate learning while raising money for charity, such as 'Number Day' or 'World Book Day'. Pupils have mature attitudes to tolerance and diversity. They learn about different faiths and cultures, celebrating differences within the community and the wider world.

Staff are immensely proud of their school. The vision for the school and ambitions for all pupils are palpable across aspects of the school. Governors and the trust have high expectations of leaders and hold them to account effectively. There have been significant improvements to the quality of education and the wider development of pupils in recent years. High-quality training for staff is purposeful and effective, directly improving the experience of pupils at the school. Everyone involved in the school is restless to continue to improve and build on the significant progress already made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not consistently check what pupils know as effectively as they could. This means that misconceptions or gaps in pupils' learning are not always identified and addressed as quickly as they might be. The school should ensure that all staff check pupils' understanding and then adapt subsequent teaching to address any gaps in knowledge. While pupils achieve well, this will help ensure that pupils achieve even more highly.

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 September 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	142052
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296414
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Goodson
CEO of the trust	Michael Wilson
Headteacher	Steve Payne
Website	www.isteadrise.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2020.

Information about this inspection

The inspector 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders of the school, governors and representatives of the trust.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at pupils' work and the curriculum in geography.
- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils during playtimes and in lessons.
- Responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, including parents' free-text comments, were considered. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- 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.

Inspection team

Ally Aldridge-Gibbons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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