

Inspection of Kents Hill Infant Academy

Kents Hill Road, Benfleet, Essex SS7 5PS

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Gemma Thurston. This school is part of South Essex Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Catherine Stalham, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julie Mulcahy.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Kents Hill Infant Academy as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. However, the academy received a no formal designation monitoring inspection under section 8 of the Act on 13 September 2016. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Kents Hill Infant Academy is a welcoming and inclusive school where pupils are happy. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe in the nurturing environment that staff have created. They follow the school's rules, 'ready, respectful, safe,' which are built into everyday life.

The school has the same ambition for all pupils. Pupils enjoy learning because lessons are fun. This motivates them to do well. Pupils are proud of their achievements. They wear the badges they get for doing well, with pride.

Pupils play happily together in the playground. They are kind to each other. Pupils know that any unkindness or bullying, which is rare, will be dealt with quickly by teachers.

Pupils talk maturely about the law, rules and the school community. They vote for classmates to represent them on the school council. Those on the school council are proud to have been selected.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have opportunities to represent the school in various sporting activities locally. There are clubs available to all pupils. These contribute towards developing pupils' various talents and enriching their extra-curricular experiences.

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

The school has developed a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that starts in the early years. It is carefully considered from Nursery to Year 2, with clear guidance that supports teachers to help build pupils' knowledge over time. The school has provided staff with training in how to teach the curriculum. Consequently, teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach the planned curriculum well. However, teachers have not focused on ensuring pupils can communicate consistently well what they know through their writing in all areas of the curriculum. As a result, a few pupils cannot demonstrate what they have achieved in their written work.

The school ensures that reading is a high priority. Staff are well trained. Staff make sure pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning. This helps pupils in the early stages of learning to read, and it helps those who are falling behind to quickly gain the knowledge they need to become confident readers. Pupils rise to the challenge of reading regularly.

The school has recently adopted an agreed process of how learning is taught in lessons. The way lessons are structured helps pupils to remember more. Pupils have the opportunity to revisit key knowledge, and new learning builds on what they already have learned. Teachers use careful questioning to check on what pupils know. The school checks pupils' work regularly. This helps teachers to identify any

gaps in pupils' learning, which are quickly addressed. Teachers use this information to put in place extra support to ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are narrowed.

Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND so that their learning is well matched to pupils' needs. Some pupils access additional support, where the learning is broken down into smaller steps to ensure that they learn well. Others have additional activities that help them to settle and continue to access their learning.

In the early years, children are supported well to develop social interactions and make progress in their learning from the start. Adults plan activities that stimulate children's interests and provide meaningful opportunities to learn. Adults show children how to behave towards others, so they are polite to their peers, both in the early years and to others they meet in the school.

The positive relationships between staff and pupils create a strong basis for pupils' learning. Pupils are cooperative and keen to participate. In the main, pupils follow clear routines. On occasions, in lessons, some pupils lose focus on their learning and, therefore, do not always follow teachers' high expectations of behaviour. Teachers re-engage pupils successfully so that they get back on track. Pupils' strong attendance reflects their positive attitudes to learning.

The school has implemented a well-planned programme for personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils learn about healthy difference, different faiths and tolerance of the beliefs of others. They remember what they have learned about fundamental British values, such as democracy and law. They learn how to stay safe, for example through topics such as online safety and road safety. Pupils articulate the importance of staying safe.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They appreciate that leaders are considerate regarding their well-being and workload. As a result, staff feel supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, some staff do not ensure pupils are able to effectively communicate what they have learned through their writing. The standard of a small number of pupils' writing is inconsistent and does not show what pupils know and remember. Leaders should ensure the quality and expectations of pupils' writing across the curriculum are consistently high, so pupils are able to successfully demonstrate what they have achieved in all subject areas.

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	137395
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10240843
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Mulcahy
CEO of trust	Catherine Stalham
Headteacher	Gemma Thurston
Website	www.khiacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2016

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school converted to be an academy in 2012 and is part of the South Essex Academy Trust.
- The school introduced Nursery classes after the COVID-19 pandemic due to the closure of four Nurseries and local community requests.
- The school has created a class for pupils with an education, health and care plan but does not have a place in a special school where the curriculum is adapted to meet their needs. This is not a local authority specialist resourced 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 a range of leaders, including senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with local board governors and trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- The lead inspector spoke to the local authority school effectiveness adviser on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and the senior leadership team, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work in the range of subjects taught.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took into account the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which leaders had created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents and policies, including the school improvement plan and minutes of the local governing body and trust board minutes.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of staff through Ofsted's staff surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Suzanne Thrower, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nina Kemp	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector

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