

# Inspection of a good school: Hillsgrove Primary School

Sidmouth Road, Welling, Kent DA16 1DR

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Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

## Outcome

Hillsgrove Primary School continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Ms Kathryn Laurie. This school is part of the Amadeus Primary 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 (CEO), Mr Peter Rhodes and overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Mr Paul Allen. There is also a Director of Education, Mrs Sarah Young, who is responsible for this school and five others.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their school. They said they are happy here and like all the learning opportunities given. Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils. Pupils particularly appreciate activities provided for them outside of lessons, such as using playground equipment at breaktime and football and dance clubs. The school makes sure that no pupils miss out on these experiences.

The school's core values, pursuing excellence, engaging minds and inspiring futures, encourage pupils to conduct themselves sensibly around the school. Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. The school's new reward system helps everyone to behave well. Pupils are proud to take on responsibility as school ambassadors.

At breaktimes, pupils play well together and look out for each other. They are pleased to be able to choose whether to sit in a quiet place, play games and sport, or join an indoor club. Pupils feel safe and are well cared for by all staff. They behave with respect and consideration towards each other and work collaboratively in and out of lesson times. When there are any disagreements, adults deal with them promptly and successfully.

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

The school's curriculum reflects the ambition of the national curriculum. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know and be able to do. The school makes sure that teachers know what to teach throughout the year. Teachers introduce pupils to new subject content in a logical order. This helps pupils to build their understanding

and remember important knowledge. Curriculum thinking in a few subjects is not as securely embedded because it has been developed very recently. In early years, the school helps children to develop their skills and knowledge securely ready for the start of Year 1. Leaders treat language development as a priority in early years.

Children start to get ready for reading as soon as they join the school and in Reception, they learn phonics. Teachers make sure that children practise their phonics knowledge regularly. Pupils read books that match the phonics sounds that they know, as well as texts that they enjoy reading. Staff are trained well to teach early reading. They identify any pupils who fall behind and help them to catch up. By the start of Year 3, pupils mostly read fluently and understand what they read. Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading and to read regularly. Pupils spoke about their favourite authors and the sorts of books that they like to read.

Teachers adapt teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND study the same curriculum content as their peers. Generally, learning resources and teaching for pupils with SEND are carefully adapted to suit their needs. Occasionally, teaching does not check routinely the learning of pupils with SEND and, as a result, misconceptions and gaps in their understanding are not picked up and addressed quickly.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. For example, well-planned experiences and activities enable pupils to explore what it means to be a good citizen. The school's values underpin this work. Pupils rightly said that this is an important part of their education here. Unsettled behaviour rarely gets in the way of pupils' learning. In early years too, children are ready and keen to learn.

The school has ensured that pupils' learning is not affected by changes in staffing. The school makes sure that staff receive professional development and training to support them in their roles and to teach the school's curriculum. The trust and principal provide strong and ambitious leadership. Their work has made sure that pupils continue to receive a good quality of education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Curriculum thinking in some subjects is recently introduced and, therefore, not as well established as in other subjects. The school must ensure that new curriculum thinking is thoroughly implemented as leaders intend.
- Occasionally, teaching does not check routinely the learning of pupils with SEND and, as a result, misunderstandings and misconceptions are not picked up quickly. The

school should ensure that the learning of pupils with SEND is checked routinely, so that any misconceptions are quickly identified and addressed.

## 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 March 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142295
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290300
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	372
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Allen
<b>Principal</b>	Kathryn Laurie
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hillsgrove.apat.org.uk">www.hillsgrove.apat.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Amadeus Primary Academies Trust.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for up to eight pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school has experienced several changes in staffing since the last inspection. Many new staff, including senior leaders and subject leaders, have joined the school since that time. The principal was appointed in October 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, the director of education, the CEO, subject leaders, groups of staff, members of the governing body and trustees.

- The inspector spoke with various groups of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- A wide range of documentary evidence was scrutinised. This included the school's own self-evaluation and the school's development plan.
- 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 considered the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views expressed by parents during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Ann Pratt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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