

Inspection of Ightham Primary School

Oldbury Lane, Ightham, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 9DD

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

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	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is at the heart of the local community and has community at its heart. The values of caring, respect, tolerance, responsibility, aspiration and honesty are evident at every turn. Pupils know what these values mean. They show this in the way they learn, behave and treat others.

Leaders and staff have the highest expectations. Pupils thrive because of the consistently high quality of education they receive throughout their time at school. They work hard in lessons and achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum. Teachers provide pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with outstanding support. This means that they can access the same opportunities as their peers.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They feel safe and extremely well cared for. Pupils told us bullying is rare. If they are concerned about something they say they can talk to any adult as they trust them all. Pupils work and support each other to learn very well.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. Comments such as 'the staff are always approachable, understanding and strive to do the best for the children and families' reflect the views expressed by many.

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

Staff and governors share the headteacher's clear vision for the school. Together, they are determined that every pupil will achieve as well as they possibly can. Leaders continually seek to improve what the school offers. This has enabled Ightham to improve significantly since the last inspection.

Leaders have created a very well-structured curriculum. It is carefully thought through and connected across all subjects. Teachers meet regularly to check what pupils have learned before. They find out what pupils will need to know to be ready for the year above. As a result, pupils can explain how lessons build on what they have already learned. They make links across subjects and apply their learning to new situations.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive training to become experts in their field. Staff work together effectively to agree their approach to teaching across the curriculum. All pupils understand what they need to do in lessons. They relish the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning and do so with great maturity. Staff skilfully check pupils' understanding. Expert questioning by adults supports all pupils to reflect and improve their work.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are highly motivated in all lessons. They display a thirst for knowledge and the utmost commitment to

learning. They are eager to challenge themselves and take risks. Teachers ensure that pupils broaden their vocabulary in all subjects. As a result, pupils can express their understanding of complex ideas with fluency.

Leaders and staff prioritise the teaching of reading throughout the curriculum. The teaching of phonics is highly effective. Teachers quickly identify pupils who fall behind in the phonics programme. These pupils receive the help they need to catch up. Pupils use their phonic knowledge to help them to read and spell from the start. Staff draw on their expert knowledge to make sure all pupils read with ease. Pupils know how each aspect of the reading activities helps them to improve.

Children flourish in the early years. They soon settle and become effective young learners. Leaders' expectations for learning and behaviour are clearly established from the start. Children love to learn. This is because the early years curriculum is thoughtfully planned, stimulating and exciting. For example, children worked together enthusiastically during a classroom visit to decide that pouring water on a block of ice was the best way to release the superhero toy trapped inside.

The school is deeply inclusive and nurturing. Pupils with SEND are welcomed. Staff are meticulous in making sure that the support pupils from this vulnerable group get makes a real difference. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders have planned the curriculum to consistently promote pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities across the wider curriculum to learn about keeping safe, including when online. Leaders and staff seize every opportunity to ensure that pupils understand their cultural heritage and their place in the world. Pupils know that all people should be treated equally. The close link between the school and a school in Malawi supports pupils to develop their understanding of diversity and respect for others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take safeguarding seriously. Leaders make sure that safeguarding training is regular and ongoing. As a result, staff confidently identify pupils who may be at risk and report their concerns promptly.

Leaders always follow up safeguarding issues. They keep thorough records to maintain a clear overview of vulnerable pupils. They use their knowledge about pupils very well when assessing levels of risk. Leaders make sound decisions about appropriate next steps. They work closely with other agencies to help pupils and families get the support they need.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	118293
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10122214
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paula Freeman
Headteacher	David Sherhod
Website	www.ightham.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been no relevant changes since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, class teachers, staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- We looked at a range of safeguarding documents, including behaviour logs. We checked the school's register of pre-employment checks and records of statutory training for all staff.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and craft, and history. We visited lessons where these subjects were being taught. In addition, we held discussions with senior and subject leaders to find out why these subjects were being taught in the way they were. We held discussions with pupils while reviewing the work in their books. We also met with class teachers and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Linda Taylor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jonathan Shields

Ofsted Inspector

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