

# Inspection of Halling Primary School

Howlsmere Close, Halling, Rochester, Kent ME2 1ER

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Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are cheerful and confident in this welcoming school. All pupils are challenged through an ambitious curriculum that encourages them to develop into lifelong learners. Pupils respond by showing an eagerness to learn and work hard.

Pupils learn in calm and purposeful classrooms. This is because of the high expectations that staff have for their behaviour. Pupils consistently follow the six 'golden rules'. They learn to be kind and helpful. Pupils enjoy assisting their teachers when setting up activities. Pupils believe that bullying can occasionally happen. However, they know that it is never tolerated and are confident that staff will resolve issues quickly. Pupils feel safe here.

Pupils play an active and valued role in school life. The 'smart school council' ensures every pupil has a voice in creating a happy and harmonious environment. During lunchtime, pupils sit on the 'buddy bench' that they helped design. They socialise joyfully with their friends. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They propose ideas for new clubs. Their teachers gladly agree to these requests, such as starting the bird-watching group. Pupils vote for the 'craze of the week' where they are set exciting challenges by staff to complete in the playground.

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

Leaders have a shared commitment to creating an inclusive school where all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can flourish. Leaders have rapidly rebuilt the trust of parents and the local community in this school, following a turbulent period of changes in school leaders and staff.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development exceptionally well. Through leaders' relentless focus on the school values, pupils develop respect and compassion for each other. Pupils receive weekly 'kindness awards'. These recognise their actions to help their peers. Right from when they join the school, pupils learn how they can play an active role in democratic society. They benefit from frequent opportunities to discuss global issues as part of the 'big debate club'. Topics covered ensure pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils also learn how to be responsible citizens and make a positive contribution to their local community. They hold cake sales to raise money for charity. At Christmas, they hand deliver cards to their neighbours.

The curriculum is broad and stimulating. Leaders have thoughtfully sequenced the knowledge that they want pupils to learn from Reception up to Year 6. Staff responsible for each subject access high-quality training within the multi-academy trust networks. They use this to continually refine their curriculum. Leaders identify where more detailed planning is needed and make changes accordingly.

Teachers are well trained and have the expertise to deliver the ambitious curriculum. Many opportunities are provided to help pupils recap prior learning. This helps pupils make links between new information and previously taught topics. However, sometimes, teachers do not carefully check that all pupils have secured understanding within lessons before moving on. This means pupils do not always have the knowledge they need to understand new learning. In addition, pupils are sometimes not given enough time to reflect upon the feedback they are given and to make any necessary improvements to their work.

Leaders have implemented an ambitious reading programme. Staff receive high-quality training that means they can teach children to read as soon as they start school. Pupils who find reading more difficult, including some pupils with SEND, get extra support to keep up with the programme. All pupils read regularly in school. They enjoy the diverse range of books held in the year group libraries. 'Reading buddies' from Year 6 skilfully support younger pupils to practise reading accurately.

Teachers create opportunities for pupils to collaborate successfully with each other. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding. This support particularly benefits pupils with SEND. The special educational needs coordinator works with teachers to identify pupils who have particular needs at an early age. Teachers know the needs of their pupils well and adapt learning to meet these. This means that pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons and learn well across the curriculum.

From early years, children learn consistent routines. Children sensibly move from the classroom to find the exciting activities set up outside. They enjoy developing physically by cycling on the carefully designed trails. Leaders expertly support pupils to ensure they focus and concentrate on their learning.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders implement effective strategies to encourage pupils who are more frequently absent to improve their attendance. Leaders are keen to widen this work further to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders plan what staff need training on through analysing the results from weekly safeguarding quizzes. Staff are confident in spotting signs that a pupil may be at risk from harm. Pupils know to report any worries they have. Teachers read and respond to any concerns added to the 'think box'. Leaders quickly make referrals to external agencies if they identify pupils are in need of additional help. They keep detailed records of the support secured.

Pupils write a regular e-safety newsletter to share with the school community. This helps pupils learn strategies to keep themselves safe online.

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

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

- In some subjects, teachers do not always check how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Sometimes teachers do not ensure that pupils have secured knowledge before moving on. As a result, pupils do not always confidently learn the intended knowledge and skills. Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently check pupils' understanding in all subjects and adapt their teaching accordingly.

## 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](#)' 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146872
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268138
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	375
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mark Till
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Taylor
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.halling.medway.sch.uk">www.halling.medway.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Since the school reopened as an academy in 2019, there has been a significant change in staffing at the school, including the headteacher. The headteacher took up her post in January 2022.
- This school is part of Aletheia Academies Trust.
- A very small number of pupils attend an unregistered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND, many teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer, governors and trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, geography and physical education. To do this, they met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to teachers. They looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work. They met with pupils to discuss their learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding arrangements, including the school's central record of recruitment checks. They sampled a range of safeguarding documentation. Inspectors also spoke to a variety of staff to check how well safeguarding referrals and systems work.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school site during breaktimes.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and staff to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils, and Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Martin Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lorraine Clarke OBE

Ofsted Inspector

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