

Istead Rise Primary School

Downs Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA13 9HG

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since her appointment in November 2016, the executive headteacher and her head of school have committed to improving the school and have set high expectations.
- Senior leaders, with support from the Swale Academies Trust, have successfully transformed this previously underperforming school.
- Governors make regular visits to check the school's ongoing improvements. As a result, they have a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for development.
- Teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across the school. Learning is planned well. It is sufficiently challenging and meets the needs of all pupils.
- As a result of the improvements in teaching and learning, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have significantly improved since the last inspection of the predecessor school.
- Current pupils are making good progress across the curriculum, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- While pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, it is not as rapid as the progress that they make in writing.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Consequently, pupils make good progress and a high proportion reach the expected standard at the end of Year 1.
- Leaders have established a varied and interesting curriculum. The quality of teaching in some foundation subjects, however, is not as strong as the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' conduct and behaviour is outstanding. They are polite, friendly and caring. The school is a calm and orderly place.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning, working with concentration and perseverance. They take great pride in their work, which is consistently presented to a very high standard.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Teachers plan a diverse range of enticing activities to support children's learning. As a result, children learn exceptionally well and make very good progress.
- Leaders have established a robust culture of safeguarding. Consequently, pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The school's ethos and curriculum support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pupils' progress in mathematics and reading so that it is as rapid as their progress in writing.
- Build on the improvements that have been made in teaching and learning by:
 - using outstanding teaching in the school to support teachers to develop their skills further
 - improving the quality of teaching across the curriculum to match that of the best.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Since the appointment of the executive headteacher in November 2016, she and the head of school have led with passion and determination. They have set high expectations for staff and pupils and are ambitious for what they can achieve.
- With the support of the Swale Academies Trust, leaders have implemented significant changes across the school. They have introduced very effective teaching programmes in reading, writing and mathematics and a curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. As a result, they have transformed the quality of teaching and learning, securing teaching that is, at least, consistently good across the school.
- Leaders have established a school-wide, very positive learning ethos. Pupils are excited by a challenge, they take a huge amount of pride in their work, and they work with great enthusiasm and perseverance.
- Leaders' actions have resulted in rapid improvements in pupils' attainment and progress since the predecessor school was last inspected. Over the last three years, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have significantly improved.
- Senior leaders within the school and the Swale Academies Trust have provided middle leaders with appropriate training and support. This has enabled them to lead their subjects with confidence and to play an active role in securing improvements and raising standards. Middle leaders are passionate about their subjects and fully support the vision and high expectations of the executive headteacher.
- Leaders have made effective use of additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are well supported and make good progress.
- Leaders have used the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding effectively to provide high-quality PE teaching. Consequently, pupils' participation and enjoyment in sport have increased.
- Leaders have established a broad, balanced curriculum based around topics that spark pupils' interest. For example, the topics on 'giants' and 'potions' were particularly popular with pupils. Leaders have further enriched the curriculum by introducing forest school activities and a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs. As a result, pupils enjoy learning across a wide range of subjects.
- Parents find leaders 'helpful and approachable' and the vast majority feel that any concerns that they have are dealt with well. Parents have welcomed the changes brought about by senior leaders. One parent reflected the views of many other parents, stating that they had seen 'huge improvements over the last three years'.
- The school's curriculum and the learning ethos support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils learn about different cultures from its links with two other schools, one in Zambia and one in Spain.

Governance of the school

- The executive headteacher ensures that governors are provided with accurate, timely information about the school's performance. As a result, governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and are clear about the actions that leaders are taking to address areas for development. They monitor these actions carefully through their monitoring visits.
- Leaders from the Swale Academies Trust have provided governors with clear guidance and training. Consequently, they are fully equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their duties effectively.
- Minutes of the governing body's meetings demonstrate that governors routinely question and challenge school leaders about the impact of their actions and discuss how further improvements can be made.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have established a very strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure that regular, thorough training is provided for all adults working in the school. As a result, staff have a very good understanding of their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. They know what to do if they have a concern and, consequently, pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders have embedded robust procedures for the safe recruitment of staff. They ensure that all the appropriate employment checks are carried out and maintain accurate, thorough records.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a range of opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when they are online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders and teachers have successfully established a very positive learning culture across the school, based on their high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. They are reflective and work with determination and perseverance.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and have established positive, nurturing relationships with them. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are well supported.
- Adults question pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking well. They engage in effective dialogue with pupils and provide clear guidance and support. Through this approach, they enable pupils to address errors in their work and make improvements. Pupils respond well. They are committed to improving their work and, consequently, they are making good progress across the curriculum.
- The teaching of writing is particularly strong. Leaders have introduced a new teaching programme that gives pupils access to a wide range of engaging texts and a rich and diverse vocabulary. Pupils make very good progress in their writing. They quickly

develop their understanding and use of language to produce writing of a very high quality.

- Teachers provide a range of opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills, to explain their reasoning and to solve problems. Pupils respond well and relish the challenges. They engage in thoughtful discussions with their peers, challenging each other's thinking and clearly articulating their ideas.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Teachers' very good subject knowledge ensures that learning is carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils are appropriately challenged, highly engaged in their learning and they make good progress.
- Teachers make effective use of assessment information to ensure that learning is pitched at the right level for every pupil. Some teachers are very skilful at quickly identifying when pupils are ready to move on to more challenging tasks. At times, however, some teachers do not move learning on as quickly as they could.
- Teachers plan learning that interests and engages pupils. Consequently, most pupils sustain high levels of concentration and work with focus and commitment. Occasionally, however, some pupils' concentration wanes and, when this happens, their progress slows.
- Across some year groups, the teaching and learning in some foundation subjects is not as strong as it is for English and mathematics. As a result of this inconsistency in the quality of teaching, some pupils do not make the progress they are capable of in subjects such as geography, history and religious education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The school's values of independence, respect, perseverance and self-reflection are deeply embedded in the culture of the school. Pupils have a very good understanding of these values and appreciate their importance. These values strongly underpin pupils' approaches to learning and their care for one another.
- Pupils take immense pride in the standard and presentation of their work, working with great care. As a result, pupils' work is consistently presented to a very high standard.
- Pupils feel happy and safe at school. They feel that the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with very quickly and effectively by adults. They also appreciate the work of 'peer mediators', who help to resolve any issues during playtimes.
- Leaders ensure that, through the curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when online and when undertaking exciting 'forest school' activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The culture of high expectations, support and nurture that has been established by leaders has resulted in pupils' exemplary conduct around the school. Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and show high levels of engagement in lessons most of the time. They work with concentration and commitment and persevere when work is challenging. They support one another in their learning.
- Pupils strive hard to ensure that their behaviour is of a high standard and are supported effectively by adults to achieve this. One pupil said, 'When I make the wrong choices, adults help me to make the correct choice.'
- Leaders have taken robust action to address the historic low rates of attendance across the school. As a result, attendance has improved and is currently in line with the national average. Furthermore, the attendance of pupils who have had high levels of absence is quickly improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders' decisive actions have secured significant improvements in pupils' outcomes compared to the consistently low outcomes of the predecessor school. This has resulted in a three-year improving trend in the end of key stage 2 attainment for reading, writing and mathematics. While attainment in mathematics remains slightly below the national average, pupils' attainment in reading and writing is now above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 have also improved over the last three years and are now above the national averages.
- Current pupils are making good progress in securing key skills in mathematics and reading because of consistently good teaching. The progress that pupils make in mathematics and reading, however, is not as rapid as the progress they make in writing. The high-quality teaching of writing is securing rapid, sustained progress across the school and pupils attain very well.
- Leaders have made effective use of pupil premium funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making good progress and achieving the expected standards is increasing, and they are quickly catching up with their peers.
- Effective and carefully planned additional support enables pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make good progress from their starting points.
- Highly effective phonics teaching has resulted in an improving trend over the last three years. In 2018, a high proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

- Pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Pupils' progress in foundation subjects, however, is not as strong as their progress in mathematics, reading and writing.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership of the early years provision is highly effective. Leaders and teachers have established a highly engaging and exciting learning environment that effectively utilises the extensive indoor and outdoor space.
- Adults know the children very well. They make careful and accurate assessments of children to ensure that learning is pitched at the right level and is sufficiently challenging. Children learn very well and make rapid progress from their starting points. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception Year is above the national average.
- Teachers offer children a wide range of well-planned, enticing activities that are designed to promote and support the development of their key skills. Children engage very positively with these activities. They show enthusiasm and perseverance when faced with a challenge. For example, when they were learning to write the letter 's', children worked with real concentration. They enjoyed the challenge and tried hard to succeed.
- Adults are skilful in their questioning of children. This serves to deepen children's understanding, challenge their thinking and move their learning on.
- Adults have formed very nurturing relationships with the children. They are extremely sensitive and supportive when reinforcing required behaviours and when teaching new concepts. Children respond very well to this.
- Teachers have established clear, effective routines which have enabled children to settle very quickly into the early years setting. Children behave very well. They play together harmoniously and are forming firm friendships.
- Induction sessions and home visits, prior to children joining the early years setting, ensured that the transition for children was smooth and well managed. Staff continue to involve parents in the ongoing assessment of their child. They provide parents with opportunities to contribute towards their child's learning journal.
- Leaders have ensured that robust policies, procedures and risk assessments are in place to keep children safe. As a result, children in the early years setting are safe and well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	142052
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10053428

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jean McNeilly
Executive headteacher	Jeannine Olivier
Head of School	Mathew Currie
Telephone number	01474 833 177
Website	www.isteadrise.org.uk
Email address	office@istead-rise.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Istead Rise Primary School is sponsored by the Swale Academies Trust. It joined this multi-academy trust in September 2015. Since then, the school has undergone a change in leadership, with a new executive headteacher appointed in November 2016.
- Swale Academies Trust delegates the governance of the school to its local governing body.
- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school provides childcare through the breakfast and after-school clubs on its site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all year groups and classes across a range of subjects. Most sessions were observed jointly with the school's senior leaders. Inspectors looked at the quality of pupils' work during lessons and through a focused scrutiny of work in books.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, other school leaders and staff. They also met with representatives of the Swale Academies Trust and the local governing body. They met with the school's designated safeguarding leads.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including: information on pupils' attainment and progress; attendance; and behaviour. Information about governance, including the minutes of the local governing body's meetings, was examined. The school's self-evaluation summary, school development plan and supporting evidence were scrutinised, together with information on the school's website.
- Inspectors met with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 69 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, including 40 free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the views of 17 staff who completed Ofsted's confidential online survey.
- Inspectors took account of the view of the one pupil who completed Ofsted's online survey, alongside the views of pupils who had completed the school's own survey.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with pupils in lessons and around the school to gather their views. They also met formally with groups of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, during assembly, around the school, in breakfast club, and during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding records and the single central record of recruitment checks on adults working with pupils.

Inspection team

Leah Goulding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Katherine Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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