

Inspection of a good school: Kingswode Hoe School

Sussex Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3QJ

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 March 2022

Outcome

Kingswode Hoe School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. It is a friendly, safe place to be. Pupils say: 'We all get along well together, school feels like a family. Staff make sure we all get the help we need.' Parents who shared their views would recommend the school to others.

Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. Bullying is rare. They feel they can approach any staff for help if they have concerns. Pupils care for, and look after, one another. In assemblies, they applaud and cheer for those gaining achievement awards. Increasingly, pupils joining the school with more challenging behaviour are managed well.

Primary-age pupils learn well in the caring, nurturing environment provided. Early reading is well established. A minority of older pupils lack confidence in reading and need more help. Older pupils enjoy a good blend of academic study and work-related learning. This boosts their confidence and prepares them well for the next stage.

Design and technology and physical education (PE) are popular with pupils. Working in the school shop, training as baristas, work experience and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award add significantly to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school.

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

All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Staff know their needs and interests well. Leaders provide a curriculum that prepares pupils for purposeful and successful engagement in learning. They gain valuable employability and personal skills, and accreditation needed for the next stage.

Reading is suitably prioritised. Resources to teach phonics are used consistently. High-quality texts during guided reading and staff reading aloud in lessons stimulate pupils' interest in and love of reading. Older pupils receive additional support during tutorials. This is not enough to help them decode words correctly.

The school is calm and orderly. Behaviour records and pupils' views confirm that bullying happens rarely. Very few pupils are excluded. At times, a small minority of pupils can display challenging behaviour. 'The Pod' and 'The Snug' provide space for them to calm down and reflect on their behaviour. Not all staff understand the causes of this behaviour or how to manage it effectively.

Primary-age pupils benefit from good care and support in a nurturing environment. Staff use a good range of teaching resources. They are adept at balancing teacher-led learning in small groups with opportunities for pupils to play and learn independently. During lessons, pupils have regular access to outside areas for learning. They make good use of the school grounds and play equipment.

Pupils joining key stage 3 are tested to gauge what they have learned previously, and to identify areas where they need further help. Learning is organised in short, meaningful bursts to retain their interest and engagement. Pupils make progress from working alongside adults and learning by themselves.

Older pupils study a broad range of subjects and gain essential employability skills. Sports leadership lessons give pupils the confidence to coach physical activity to others. Work experience at a nearby farm and a local supermarket helps to teach pupils about the expectations of the workplace. In school, they learn how to deal with customers, prepare and serve drinks and clean up afterwards. Pupils talked enthusiastically about working with other schools to recycle plastics. In the school shop, pupils learn retail skills, how to manage budgets and market goods online. They manage accounts of the credits pupils accrue each week and oversee what they choose to spend their credits on in the school shop.

The curriculum is enhanced through a Friday afternoon programme of enrichment. Pupils choose to cook, sing and dance, draw and paint, play games, work on computers or join in football coaching. These activities are popular and highly valued by pupils.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that extending phonics teaching to older pupils who need it and providing further training for staff in managing the most challenging behaviour may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All of the necessary checks are made when appointing adults to work with children. Systematic procedures are in place for staff to raise safeguarding concerns and enable leaders to check that they are followed up properly. Senior leaders and all staff are suitably trained in safeguarding. Links with a range of local agencies involved in protecting pupils from harm are firmly established. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of older pupils do not see themselves as readers. They lack confidence and need more help. Some additional support is provided during tutorials, including teaching them phonics systematically. This is not enough to help them to regularly decode words correctly. Leaders have recruited new staff to help develop a whole-school strategy to improve this. Leaders should continue this work so that pupils can catch up and become fluent readers.
- Not all staff and parents understand the reasons for the challenging behaviour displayed by a small minority of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Not all staff have been fully trained in managing this type of behaviour. Leaders are aware of this. They have begun to raise awareness about why this behaviour happens, and how to deal with it effectively. This staff training should be continued.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2014.

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.

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	144897
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10212036
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ruth Sturdy
Headteacher	Alice Constantine
Website	www.kingswodehoe.com
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and additional, complex learning needs, including autism, speech and language difficulties and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Significant changes have taken place since the previous inspection in 2014. The school has grown in size. A new headteacher now leads the school. It converted to an academy in 2017 and is part of the SEAX Trust.
- The school makes use of the following alternative, off-site provision: Rallysport Engineering, Essex.

Information about this inspection

- 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 and other senior leaders, a range of middle leaders and support staff, a group of pupils and two members of the Seax Trust, including its chief executive officer.
- An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of Essex local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, design and technology and PE. This included discussions with leaders, scrutiny of planning documents, visits to lessons, meetings with selected pupils and staff and scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and met with the designated leader for safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and 23 free texts from parents. They also considered 37 responses to Ofsted's survey of staff. Ofsted's survey of pupils' views was not used.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Varney

Her Majesty's Inspector

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