

Inspection of Vale View Community School

Vale View Road, Elms Vale, Dover, Kent CT17 9NP

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 April 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
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?

Vale View Community School is a welcoming and supportive place for pupils and their families. The school is a calm, caring community where pupils get on well together at work and at play. They value the friendships they make at school.

Pupils have very positive relationships with school staff. They know that adults are there to help them with their work and to support them if they have any worries. Pupils are happy to come to school. They feel safe and enjoy their learning. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the site. Staff provide effective support for any pupils who need help to manage their behaviour and emotions. Bullying and unkind behaviour are never tolerated.

Teachers are ambitious for pupils. Pupils know that teachers expect them to try their hardest. Pupils work hard to meet teachers' expectations and live up to the motto of 'Being the best I can be', so they typically learn well. Children get off to a good start in early years and leaders are sharpening assessment practices to ensure that these are continued through key stage 1 and beyond.

Pupils understand and actively demonstrate the school's values represented by determined dog, collaborative cat, responsible rabbit, positive penguin and respectful rhino. They know why these qualities are important to help them now and in the future.

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

Before the school joined the multi-academy trust, there had been a concerning decline in its performance. School and trust leaders took rapid and effective action in response to this decline. There was, and continues to be, a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning to deliver the curriculum. This ensures that pupils now receive a good quality of education.

Together, the headteacher and executive headteacher provide well-targeted training and support for staff. Everyone benefits from the collaboration with the other schools in the trust. Teachers feel valued by leaders. Trustees and governors share leaders' vision and aspirations. They know the school well and provide valuable insights, support and challenge.

Subject leaders are further developing their roles and their oversight of the curriculum, in particular to rightly make sure that assessment is effective and work is challenging. The impact of the hard work everyone does is not always clearly identified. Senior leaders need to show that initiatives for improvement are making a difference for different groups of pupils.

The school's curriculum is ambitious and carefully considered and sequenced. Leaders have identified the important knowledge and skills that children and pupils should learn and remember. Sometimes, as pupils move into key stage 1, the

curriculum does not always build as effectively as it could on the knowledge and understanding that children acquire in early years. In mathematics, children in early years have lots of opportunities to explore and talk about numbers. Across the school, pupils learn to use correct mathematical language, answer questions and explain their thinking.

Children often start in Nursery or Reception with underdeveloped communication, speech and language skills. Staff concentrate on improving these skills and developing children's vocabulary. This continues successfully across the school, especially for pupils who join in other year groups with limited knowledge of English. Staff are quick to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are well supported so that they can learn the same curriculum as others, experience success and achieve their best. Staff in Nursery are very knowledgeable about the developmental and emotional needs of the two-year-olds in their care.

Reading is a clear priority for the school and is taught well. Leaders have recently implemented a new phonics programme. Children and pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning. The programme is well organised and structured, and children quickly learn new sounds. Leaders need to continue to check how well the programme is being delivered and its impact, particularly for different groups. This is to ensure that the positive benefits that teachers report so far are sustained.

Children are encouraged to develop a love of books right from the start. In Nursery, the two-year-olds, as well as the older children, love looking at books and listening to stories. Across the school, teachers foster a real love of reading. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and frequently through the academy reading challenge and they develop as confident, fluent readers.

Leaders are determined that pupils should have opportunities to broaden their experiences and personal skills. These include a range of clubs, trips and visits. Pupils are friendly and polite. They enjoy the responsibilities they are given, such as those of school advocates and ambassadors, and take these seriously.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, teachers and staff are all fully trained in safeguarding and understand their responsibilities. Staff know pupils very well and quickly identify any signs that a child may be at risk. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Any necessary action is taken swiftly. Leaders understand local risks and work closely with other agencies when necessary. They make sure that pupils and families get the support they need. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online. The appropriate checks are carried out on adults who work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified precisely enough the impact of their work on different groups of pupils. This means that it is not always clear how effectively initiatives and interventions are benefiting the different groups. Leaders need to use the information from their monitoring to evaluate whether the intended outcomes have been achieved for all groups of pupils.
- In some subjects, assessment to support learning is at an early stage of development. Senior leaders should continue to support subject leaders to develop their work in this area, so that teachers use assessment more effectively to check pupils' understanding, plan the next steps and provide suitably challenging work.
- Sometimes, as children move into key stage 1, the knowledge and skills they acquired in early years are not built on as effectively as they could be. This means that not all the pupils are sufficiently challenged in key stage 1. Leaders need to ensure that pupils' prior achievements are acknowledged in their curriculum planning.

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	145355
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10226953
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alison Mackintosh
Headteacher	Lisa Sprigmore
Website	www.vale-view.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Vale View Community School converted to become an academy school in January 2018. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2013, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is one of three primary schools in the Whinless Down Academy Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school has a nursery that includes provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, executive headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and other staff.

- The lead inspector also met with members of the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees, and a member of the governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also looked at curriculum planning in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with designated safeguarding leads and looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records, and talked informally to pupils and staff.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including written responses.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Jackson Ofsted Inspector

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