

Inspection of The Ferns Primary Academy

Field Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 9FX

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Ed Gittins. This school is part of The Kite Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jeremy Meek, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Matt Woodruff. There is also an executive headteacher, Dee Hughes, who is responsible for this school and others within the trust.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils strive for success at this school. They are happy and feel safe. The school's ambition for all pupils to achieve their very best is at the heart of its work. Pupils rise to the school's high expectations for behaviour and learning.

The school has transformed pupils' behaviour. Pupils can now focus on learning without any distractions. In lessons, pupils listen well and work hard. When pupils find something difficult, they show real determination and perseverance to be successful. Respectful behaviour permeates the school. Pupils are well mannered and polite. They play harmoniously together at breaktimes, enjoying the wide range of activities available.

In recent years, pupils have not achieved as well as they should. National test results have been too low for many pupils. However, the school has improved the curriculum and how it is taught. These improvements are making a real difference to pupils' learning. While published test results do not yet reflect this, pupils now achieve well.

Trips to places of interest enhance the curriculum. For example, visiting a local outdoors centre introduces pupils to adventurous sports such as canoeing and archery. In addition, workshops, such as in circus skills, develop pupils' talents and interests further.

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

This school is improving rapidly. There is an absolute determination that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will achieve their best. Since the previous inspection, the school has made many positive changes to the way it works. All members of staff appreciate these changes. Support for pupils with SEND is well considered. The school identifies pupils' additional needs precisely. Effective partnerships with parents and carers and other organisations ensure that these pupils get the extra support that they need.

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. This sets out the important knowledge and skills that pupils must learn right from the start of Reception to the end of Year 6. Pupils benefit from carefully planned opportunities to revisit their learning and practise their skills. This helps them to remember what they have learned and achieve well. For example, in science, pupils use technical vocabulary, learned over several lessons, to explain their ideas in writing. Furthermore, in history, pupils learn about migration through time. This helps to deepen their understanding of diversity in modern Britain.

Reading is a clear priority. All pupils read a wide range of high-quality literature. This develops their vocabulary and knowledge of language. The school aspires for all pupils to read fluently as swiftly as possible. Children in Reception make a strong start to learning how to read. Teachers teach phonics well. The school ensures that all pupils who need extra help with reading receive appropriate individual support to improve their reading fluency quickly.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They present new information clearly and design activities that help pupils to learn. For example, in mathematics, teachers give pupils sufficient opportunities to practise what they know before introducing something new. Staff use appropriate strategies to enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum effectively. Pupils with SEND therefore make positive progress through the curriculum. They enjoy talking about their learning using appropriate subject-specific language.

Teachers make regular checks on what pupils know and what they can do. However, sometimes, teachers' checks on pupils' learning do not pick up on pupils' errors precisely enough. Furthermore, on occasion, planned checks do not happen. This means that, at times, teachers do not know whether pupils have gaps in their understanding before they move them on to new learning. When this happens, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils follow the school rules and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Children in Reception learn the school's routines right from the start. This has enabled them to settle quickly and make a positive start to school life. Pupils' attendance is improving, although some pupils still do not attend school as often as they should. However, where this is the case, the school is using a range of effective strategies to improve the attendance of pupils who are absent too much.

The school provides a range of opportunities to support pupils' personal development. Visitors into school, such as a Paralympic medallist, develop pupils' understanding of how perseverance can lead to success. Pupils learn age-appropriate knowledge of healthy lifestyles and relationships. For example, children in Reception are encouraged to think about the importance of eating well and exercising. They also benefit from thoughtful activities which develop social skills such as turn taking, conversation and teamwork.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, pupils' understanding is not checked precisely enough to ensure it is secure before moving on to learning something new. This means that, on occasion, pupils develop misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge. The school needs to ensure that teachers know how to check for and address gaps in pupils' understanding effectively so that pupils learn well across the curriculum.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147128
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10322035
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matt Woodruff
CEO of the trust	Jeremy Meek
Headteacher	Ed Gittins Dee Hughes (executive headteacher)
Website	www.ferns.kite.academy
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The school is part of the Kite multi-academy trust.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2024.
- The members of the trust executive team have all taken up post since September 2023.
- The school currently uses two unregistered providers of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with leaders from the multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer, representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair of the trust and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through the online staff and pupil surveys, as well as in-person interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Sue Keeling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christine Bulmer

Ofsted Inspector

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