

Inspection of Crays Hill Primary School

London Road, Crays Hill, Billericay, Essex CM11 2UZ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 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?

There are many pupils who join Crays Hill Primary School across the year. These pupils receive a warm welcome. Feeling comfortable in school helps pupils get their education off to a strong start. Pupils explain keenly about what they learn, for example enthusiastically retelling the story of Ganesh, or reciting their times tables.

The mascot, 'Eric', inspires pupils to demonstrate the school values: effort, respect, independence and communication. Pupils like it when staff spot them behaving like 'Eric' so that they may complete their 'Eric card' to win a prize. In time, these behaviours become a natural way for the pupils to conduct themselves.

Pupils learn about bullying. They know that it is repeated unkind behaviour that happens over time. Pupils know leaders will put consequences in place to ensure the bullying stops. Bullying does not happen often at the school. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe.

Pupils jump at the chance to represent the school competitively. This includes contests involving art, science and sports. Though the school is small, pupils still fare well against the larger schools at the trust-wide competitions. In this way, pupils realise staff's aspirations for them to achieve their very best in all aspects of life.

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

Leaders, including trustees and governors, understand the needs of Cray Hill Primary School's unique community. Open and honest communication means leaders work well to tackle challenges together. Trustees provide valuable training for governors. It helps governors check the school's curriculum and wider systems carefully. School leaders, too, call upon the support of the trust. This assures school leaders that developments are successful. Pupils, parents and staff recognise how leaders make the school a place in which to thrive.

Ensuring all pupils learn to read is the main aim at the school. Leaders' enthusiasm and drive to continually strengthen reading provision is infectious. It shows itself in how teachers and support staff work hard to teach pupils the sounds they need to know. Over time, pupils read books with increasingly more challenging vocabulary. Children in the early years thoroughly enjoy staff reading aloud, using puppets themselves to act out stories they learn. When pupils need extra support, staff arrange it promptly. Leaders check that it makes a positive difference.

Leaders' planned curriculum mostly works well. Where it works best, for example in mathematics, leaders provide teachers with helpful training and curriculum resources. Teachers use these to teach concepts well. They also make careful assessments of pupils' understanding. Teachers work collaboratively to group pupils by ability across the school. This ensures gaps in pupils' knowledge are efficiently addressed. As a result, pupils' recall of key mathematical facts is sound. There are a few subjects where leaders have only broadly set out what they want pupils to

learn. Some teachers find it difficult to plan a clear sequence of learning in these subjects. This shows itself in pupils' recall of concepts being weaker.

Staff cater well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders act swiftly when parents or staff identify concerns about a pupil. They work together to set up suitable support. Leaders recognise when external agencies' expertise will best meet a pupil's needs. Leaders work tirelessly to ensure this support is in place. Consequently, many pupils with SEND progress well with their behaviour and learning.

Many pupils behave respectfully. This starts in the early years. Considered use of language and modelling of routines help children demonstrate staff's expectations. Many pupils start schooling later than the early years. Leaders train staff well to quickly build kind and supportive relationships with these pupils. Those pupils needing extra support to regulate their behaviour receive timely intervention from skilled staff. Pupils themselves identify how this support helps improve behaviour.

The personal development programme meets pupils' needs. This includes learning age-appropriate content about how humans grow and change, as well as different family structures. Pupils learn lots about culture. For instance, they learn about famous artists and take part in online events to learn about life in other countries. Pupils learn to be charitable through fundraising and community events. For example, Year 6 pupils welcomed elderly residents into school for an afternoon tea to honour the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This gave pupils the opportunity to practise their social skills with adults they would not otherwise have met.

Pupils have ideas about how to make their school even better. Currently, there are few opportunities for pupils to lead on aspects of school life. This makes it difficult for pupils to make their ideas a reality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are suitable pre-employment checks on all staff and volunteers. Due to considered training, staff know what to look for to identify pupils at risk of harm. Because staff form positive relationships with them, pupils share worries freely. All staff follow the processes for reporting concerns.

Leaders refer swiftly to external agencies. When leaders disagree with the outcome of a referral, they follow this up. Trustees and governors check and support the work of school leaders well. Leaders' tenacity ensures vulnerable pupils get the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not set out clearly what pupils will learn. As a result, teachers take broad aims and determine what specifics to teach. How well teachers do this varies, meaning some pupils have misconceptions about vocabulary and concepts leaders want them to know. Leaders should make the necessary changes to their planned curriculum, so teachers know what to teach, and what to check pupils know, to inform their teaching.
- Not all pupils feel able or are able to take on responsibilities at the school. As a result, some pupils do not become fully engaged in the life of the school community. Leaders should review the opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life and learn about responsibility.

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

Unique reference number	145772
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10240599
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	108
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Eileen Patching
Headteacher	Hayley Dyer
Website	www.crayshill.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Crays Hill Primary School converted to become an academy school in May 2018, joining the Berlesduna Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, Crays Hill Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- There is a breakfast club run by school staff and managed by school leaders.

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 held meetings with leaders, including the chief executive officer of the trust, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and three governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art.

- For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leads, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some support staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including curriculum plans, development plans and records of meetings.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. The lead inspector viewed records relating to safeguarding and reviewed the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with teachers, support staff and pupils.
- Inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils. The lead inspector also reviewed the results from the school's pupil survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- An inspector spoke to a few parents at the start of a school day. The lead inspector also reviewed the results from the school's parent survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them. The lead inspector also reviewed the results from the school's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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