

White Cliffs Primary College for the Arts

St Radigund's Road, Dover, Kent CT17 0LB

Inspection dates

8–9 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- The principal is held in high regard by parents, staff and pupils. Her passion and determination to provide the very best educational experiences for pupils are shared and understood by all.
- The trust and academy board demonstrate an incisive understanding of the school. They carefully evaluate the effectiveness of the school's development and provide well-considered support and challenge to leaders.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Leaders and staff know pupils well and are highly alert to their needs. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils and families receive the care and support they need.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the high number of disadvantaged pupils make strong progress because they are supported well.
- Pupils behave well. They have respectful relationships with each other and with the staff. This is an inclusive and friendly school.
- Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. They are confident that their children are safe, happy and well-cared-for.
- Current pupils make good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching overall is good. Teachers and support staff appreciate the many opportunities leaders give them to develop. As a result, staff constantly strive to improve their practice. However, not all teaching is consistently as good as the best.
- The most able pupils do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable because teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough.
- The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to learn across a range of subjects. These are further enriched by creative opportunities. However, leaders recognise that their vision for the curriculum needs to be shared more widely with staff.
- Children get off to an outstanding start in the early years because of the high-quality care and provision that they receive. Children settle into school quickly and happily.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching by ensuring that it is consistently as good as the best in the school.
- Pupils' learning is challenged and extended more fully across all areas of the curriculum, particularly for the most able, so pupils reliably reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Further develop a shared vision for the curriculum so that it successfully develops pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal and the leadership team provide effective leadership. They are not complacent and work efficiently together, united in their clear vision to provide the best possible educational experiences for pupils at White Cliffs Primary College for the Arts.
- Dover Federation for the Arts Multi-Academy Trust (DFAMAT) provides highly effective support and challenge to school leaders. This is based on an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Staff work as a cohesive and motivated team in which everyone feels valued and involved. As a result, staffing is stable and pupils benefit from the continuity that this provides. Many staff extol the approachability of leaders and say that their views are sought out and listened to. Every member of staff spoken to said they felt that the school is a 'special and unique place' in which to work.
- Leaders routinely ensure that staff receive appropriate and useful training to improve their practice. They support and encourage staff to be reflective practitioners. Teachers and support staff appreciate the helpful training they receive and the many opportunities they are given to develop professionally.
- Partnerships between the school and the community lie at the heart of the school's success. Relationships between leaders, staff and families are positive and strong. The open and welcoming ethos of the school means many pupils and families are provided with the support they require.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers actively look for ways to creatively combine different subject areas. For example, pupils made cardboard shields linking to their Anglo-Saxon topic and environmental arts week. However, leaders do not yet have a clear and shared vision for the curriculum and how this effectively develops pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across all subjects.
- Leaders ensure that provision for the high number of disadvantaged pupils is effective. Additional funding is used innovatively to support these pupils successfully, academically and pastorally. Leaders show an unwavering determination to support and champion disadvantaged pupils, providing exactly the support they need. Provision for these pupils is tracked rigorously and carefully to ensure that their needs are met well. As a result, this group of pupils is making strong progress.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are cared for well and that this area of the school's work is led exceptionally well. Leaders' firmly held belief that 'every teacher is a SEND teacher' means that this group of pupils receives the necessary support in class. The school is highly inclusive, and pupils are encouraged and supported to take part in all aspects of school life. Staff are well trained to provide specific interventions to support the learning of individual pupils. Pupils are provided with appropriate and helpful resources to aid learning. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.
- Additional government funding for sport is used effectively. Leaders have improved the quality of physical education (PE) teaching through appropriate training. An increasing and impressive proportion of pupils take part in a range of after-school sports clubs,

such as squash and girls' football. Pupils enjoy the increased number of sporting resources purchased by the school. For example, a key stage 1 class was observed learning the skills needed to throw a javelin. An increasing number of pupils take part in a range of competitive sports and tournaments, and the school has a growing reputation for sport. Pupils speak of their recent sporting successes with great pride.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils show a good understanding of Christian values as well as other cultures and faiths. Pupils relish and rise to the responsibilities they are given, such as becoming e-cadets, prefects and house captains. The head boy and head girl regularly lead assemblies, and older pupils act as positive role models for younger pupils. 'College Councillors' work with leaders to improve the school. For example, pupils are very proud that their 'voice' has resulted in the installation of a new trim trail.
- All parents spoken to were highly positive about the school. They appreciate the efforts of leaders and staff and feel that the school plays a central and important role within the community. Parents say their children are happy and thriving, and they appreciate the welcoming atmosphere of the school. One parent spoke for many, saying, 'They [the staff] go that extra mile,' and 'This is a brilliant school where the children are well cared for and learn.'

Governance of the school

- Members of the academy board have a precise and accurate understanding of the school. They regularly undertake monitoring visits, checking leaders' assertions for themselves so that they are well placed to challenge and support. They sensibly receive regular training and have the required skillset and experience to carry out their statutory duties effectively.
- The academy board's attention to safeguarding is impressive. Board members monitor this area of the school carefully, for example by undertaking regular safeguarding audits, and the trust provides extensive support and supervision for staff.
- Academy board members rigorously challenge school leaders. They ask well-informed questions to highlight areas that could further improve. They regularly probe for information, inviting staff to their meetings, speaking to staff and pupils to understand better the work that the school does.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Leaders hold this in the highest regard and are acutely alert to the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable.
- Staff training in safeguarding is frequent and up to date. Leaders make sure that safeguarding matters are discussed on a weekly basis. Thus, all staff are well informed and understand that they have a collective responsibility to keep pupils safe.
- Staff have an in-depth knowledge of their pupils. They are well trained to identify and report any concerns that they may have about pupils' welfare. These are acted on

swiftly with leaders taking robust action, including working successfully in partnership with external agencies to help pupils and their families when concerns do arise.

- Health and safety checks are undertaken rigorously by leaders and academy board members. Pupils say they feel safe and know what to do in the event of a fire or a major incident. They are taught about how to keep themselves safe outside of school, for example, by learning about road safety.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to learn about staying safe online. Pupils who are e-cadets work closely with their peers and younger pupils, helpfully educating them about how to use the internet safely. The curriculum and whole-school assemblies also provide many opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of e-safety.
- All pupils spoken to say they feel safe in school and most parents confirm that their children feel happy and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils work hard and want to do well. Pupils demonstrate an evident thirst for learning, and teachers successfully engage pupils' interest in a broad range of subjects.
- Teachers ensure that pupils develop resilient attitudes to learning. Work in current pupils' books coupled with pupils' positive attitudes in class demonstrate their growing confidence and self-belief. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers follow the school's assessment policy accurately and consistently. They benefit from opportunities to check the accuracy of their assessments with other teachers within the school and more widely across the trust.
- Teaching overall is good and expectations are, on the whole, high. However, there is some variability in teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Some pupils, including the most able, are on occasion not provided with appropriate challenge or encouraged to think more deeply to extend their learning. As a result, these pupils do not achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Study support managers are very effective in supporting pupils' learning. The trust-wide strategy for the recruitment and professional development of this group of staff has resulted in a highly skilled workforce. They are rightly trusted to teach small groups of pupils as well as providing high-quality support for individual pupils.
- Effective phonics teaching in the early years and key stage 1 ensures that most pupils use their phonics skills confidently to tackle unfamiliar words. Pupils read widely and enjoy using the 'Book Barn' at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Teachers provide pupils with a wide variety of interesting topics to motivate them to write. For example, pupils in key stage 2 were asked to consider the role of an army chaplain in World War 2. Pupils are encouraged to develop their vocabulary in a variety of different subjects. Using high-quality texts, pupils in Year 6 were supported skilfully to work out the meanings of words such as 'forlorn' and 'quayside' and to apply these in their own writing.

- Pupils enjoy mathematics. Leaders have carefully considered how mathematics is taught. Teachers ensure that pupils are provided with helpful resources to develop their mathematical understanding. The recent whole-school initiative to improve pupils' recall of their times tables is showing early signs of success.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. Older pupils value the many responsibilities they are given and execute these maturely. For example, older pupils help mentor and guide younger pupils.
- Pupils and families receive an impressive array of support for their well-being, including their mental and physical health. School lunches offer a range of healthy choices and staff pay great attention to pupils' eating habits, ensuring they eat healthily. The very popular gardening club enables pupils to gain a better understanding of where food comes from.
- All staff and members of the academy board have received useful training on mental health and are therefore able to offer expert support to vulnerable pupils and their families. The range of help offered by the school extends beyond the school gates. One parent commented, 'The staff go above and beyond for us and my child.'
- Pupils and staff enjoy warm relationships. Staff know pupils extremely well, helping to nurture and guide their development. Interactions between pupils and adults are heartfelt and genuine. In return, pupils treat the staff with the utmost respect. Pupils flourish within this trusting and caring environment.
- Leaders and staff skilfully celebrate each pupil's individuality. In return, this enables pupils to show respect and tolerance to all, appreciating each other's differences. One pupil confidently commented, 'It's not about what is on the outside; it's about what is on the inside.' Pupils are clear that everyone is treated equally, saying, 'No-one is the boss of anyone else. We are all the same.'
- The school is adept at supporting the high number of pupils who join the school after the beginning of the school year. Many pupils arrive speaking little English or from other areas of the country, and staff skilfully ease their transition into school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils conduct themselves well at breaktime and lunchtime and when they move around the school.
- Leaders and staff model the conduct they expect from pupils. Consequently, pupils show excellent manners and greet visitors warmly, opening doors and politely offering a welcome. Pupils are keen to talk to visitors, and they speak confidently about their learning.

- The school's clear behaviour policy is understood by staff and pupils. It is applied consistently and fairly. Leaders track behaviour patterns carefully, putting in place personalised programmes where necessary. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour are low and reducing.
- Behaviour in lessons is positive. Pupils pay attention to their teachers and contribute keenly in lessons. They cooperate well together, for example working in groups to solve mathematical problems or taking turns to listen to each other read. Occasionally in lessons where teaching lacks challenge or slows in pace, some pupils lose concentration.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Overall attendance is high and above national figures. Leaders track attendance carefully and rigorously. They provide a range of incentives, as well as working closely with families to support good attendance. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils shows a marked improvement and is now broadly in line with the attendance of their peers. Leaders provide individualised and intensive support for pupils whose attendance is low. The school rightly takes a firm line where necessary, particularly for the increasing number of requests for holidays during term time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The teaching of early reading is effective, and pupils quickly get to grips with the skills needed to read successfully. In 2018, an above average proportion of Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check. This high percentage has been comfortably sustained for over three years.
- Pupils achieve well as they move through key stage 1, following their strong start in Reception. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 was above that seen nationally. However, one of the school's top priorities is to improve the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in all subjects at the end of this key stage as current percentages lag behind figures seen nationally.
- In 2018, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 showed significant improvement from the previous year, particularly in mathematics, and is now broadly average across reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was in line with national figures, but dipped slightly in reading. Leaders are now working effectively to ensure that pupils' comprehension and vocabulary are being further developed.
- In 2018, key stage 2 outcomes show that a lower proportion of pupils achieved the higher standards in reading and mathematics than that seen nationally. While work in current pupils' books shows that the most able are making progress, leaders recognise that more work is necessary to ensure that this group makes better progress than in the past and that they deepen their understanding across all subjects.
- In 2018, disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing and mathematics was broadly average. Currently, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. This is because well-trained staff provide high-quality pastoral support and precisely planned activities that meet pupils' needs well.

- Pupils' work in books and the school's own assessment information indicate that current pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. This is because the assessment of pupils' progress is accurate and teaching is well planned, responding carefully to gaps in pupils' learning.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children get off to a very strong start in early years. Many children start school with skills below those expected for their age. By the end of Reception Year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been consistently above the national average for the past three years. As a result, children are well prepared to start key stage 1.
- The leader of early years has a strong vision for the children in her care. This vision is implemented well and begins with children's highly effective transition into Reception Year. This vision and good practice are shared widely with and supported by other schools within the trust.
- Children make rapid progress because of the excellent teaching, which is based on accurate assessment of children's needs. Adults are adept at developing children's resilience and supporting them to become curious learners.
- Teachers plan activities that challenge and interest children. For example, children were engrossed in making space rockets, planning their construction work or hunting for aliens.
- Children get on extremely well with each other and enjoy imaginative play together. They show an impressive level of respect and care towards each other. For example, helping each other put resources away and supporting each other kindly with their learning.
- Children enjoy learning in a safe environment. Adults receive appropriate and valuable safety training. Children are very well cared for. Staff supervision is highly effective in providing a safe and nurturing environment.
- Despite the physical limitations of the outside area, adults ensure that there is a wide range of activities for children which enable rich learning opportunities such as a mud kitchen, construction and water activities and many opportunities to be physically active.
- The teaching of early reading is effective and includes structured daily phonics sessions. Adults develop children's vocabulary and their speaking skills through skilled questioning. Children are encouraged to read through stories and picture books. Children have many opportunities to apply their knowledge of letters and sounds to their writing.
- Children's mathematical skills are developed well. Children learn how to count and create simple mathematical sentences. Adults ensure that helpful mathematical resources support their learning.
- Strong routines and clear expectations mean children know what is expected of them. They respond quickly and sensibly to adults' instructions. For example, they know the routines for snack time and how to prepare themselves for outside play.

- Leaders forge positive relationships with parents. They offer numerous opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning, for example, by using electronic communication to share children's work frequently. This is greatly appreciated by parents who are unanimously positive about their children's school experience. Typical comments include 'my child is coming on leaps and bounds' and 'my child is doing exceptionally well and loves coming to this school'.

School details

Unique reference number	138168
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10046560

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	308
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Barry Williams
Principal	Sue Knight Fotheringham
Telephone number	01304 206 174
Website	www.whitecliffs-primarycollege.com
Email address	sfotheringham@wcliffs.dfamat.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in June 2012. It is a member of the DFAMAT. The school is overseen by members of the academy board, two of whom are trustees. Trustees and members of the academy board work together to set the strategic direction of the school.
- The number of pupils on roll is increasing due to the recent completion of a new building which provides extra classrooms and a new outside area for Reception children. Currently there are two classes in each year group from Reception to Year 4, with one class in Year 5 and one class in Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is significantly above the national average for primary schools.
- Most pupils are white British.

- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below national figures.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- The school is in one of the most deprived areas nationally.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- Pebbles Nursery is on the school site and is run by DFAMAT. This is inspected separately and receives a separate inspection report. Most children who attend Pebbles join the school in Reception Year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Almost all observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of DFAMAT and members of the academy board.
- Parents' views were considered through face-to-face informal discussions and through the 14 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and met with a group of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6.
- An inspector observed a whole-school assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and met with a range of staff to gather their views.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including leaders' 'Self Evaluation and Establishment Development Plan' and documentation showing the work of DFAMAT and the academy board.
- Inspectors examined the school's records of current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Safeguarding procedures were also reviewed, including the arrangements for keeping pupils safe and for recruiting staff.

Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sean McKeown	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Fisher-Pink	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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