

Inspection of a good school: Handford Hall Primary School

57 Gatacre Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2LQ

Inspection dates:

11–12 February 2020

Outcome

Handford Hall Primary School continues to be a good school.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

What is it like to attend this school?

Handford Hall School is a very caring, friendly and inclusive place. Pupils love coming to school. Staff care deeply about pupils and teach them exceptionally well. Pupils' work is of very high quality and they achieve very well. This is because leaders have carefully organised what pupils need to learn and when.

Pupils live up to staff's very high expectations. Pupils are very confident in describing what they know and can do across a range of subjects.

Pupils who join the school during the year are made to feel welcome and settle in quickly. Staff ensure that pupils new to the school have what they need to do well.

The behaviour of pupils is excellent. Pupils say that bullying very rarely occurs. If it does happen, they say that their teachers make sure that it is sorted out quickly.

Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to enjoy diverse cultural experiences such as participating in a singing event at a local theatre.

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

Leaders and staff want every pupil to have high aspirations of what they can achieve and to enjoy learning. To reach this aim, leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and well organised. Leaders make sure that pupils learn the right things and in the right order. Teachers and teaching assistants provide activities that build on what pupils already know and can do. As a result, most pupils achieve very highly and are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Leaders have high expectations of the quality of communication. Teachers demand that pupils use sophisticated language when speaking and when writing. Pupils are proud of

their work. It is of a very high quality across the curriculum and particularly in subjects such as mathematics and science.

The teaching of reading has very high priority. Children learn to read quickly and well. The early reading curriculum is well structured and designed to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers are trained to be experts in teaching phonics. Phonics lessons are exciting, with a range of different games and activities so that pupils easily remember what they have learned.

Pupils say that they love reading and talk about their reading books with enthusiasm. These books are closely matched to the sounds that they know. Teachers make sure that older pupils know about a wide range of books. Pupils rapidly develop their confidence and skills. Pupils read fluently, accurately and with appropriate expression.

Leaders and staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils and understand their needs extremely well. Staff provide a suitably tailored provision for pupils who require it. Teachers meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils extremely well. They ensure that pupils overcome whatever challenges they face. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. They achieve exceptionally well, both within the curriculum and personally. Parents are highly positive about the inclusive nature of the school community.

Leaders have identified that there is further work to do to enable all pupils to achieve as highly as possible in the end of key stage 2 tests for reading and writing. They have rightly prioritised providing suitably demanding activities so that some pupils can achieve even more. It is clear from the evidence in lessons, in pupils' books and in discussion with teachers and pupils, that this work is progressing well.

Leaders ensure that all pupils, regardless of their background or abilities, can take part in clubs. Pupils say that they love the clubs that are offered.

Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, pupils enjoy being part of the class councils and road safety leaders. These pupils have worked closely with the local council to improve the safety of the play area outside the school.

Leaders consider staff well-being and workload extremely well. Teachers recognise this and feel well supported by leaders. Trustees and governors provide effective and high-level challenge and support to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They are taught how to stay safe at school and outside. Pupils can explain how to be safe online. They know who to talk with if they have any worries.

Staff are vigilant for signs of potential harm. They receive regular training and understand the risks that pupils face.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding records are accurate. They also work closely and efficiently with the local authority, the police and medical professionals in the area. Leaders make the appropriate recruitment checks to ensure that adults employed by the school are suitable to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders should continue to make sure that teachers provide work that is sufficiently demanding. This is to enable pupils, who can achieve even more, to make suitable progress through the curriculum and achieve the higher standards by the end of key stage 2.

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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, 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 inspections. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Handford Hall Primary School to be good on 25–26 November 2010.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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

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| Unique reference number | 144212 |
| Local authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 10121422 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 339 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trustees | Jason Kirk |
| Headteacher in charge | Mrs Katarzyna Blake |
| Website | www.handfordhall.suffolk.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected as an academy |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are considered disadvantaged is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The school is part of the Orwell Multi Academy Trust. The trust contains six primary schools. The school also has a local governing body.

Information about this inspection

- I did deep dives in reading, writing and geography. This involved a meeting with curriculum leaders, visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and listening to pupils read.
- I held meetings with the head teacher, senior leaders, governors and representatives of the trust.

- I held formal and informal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times
- To determine the effectiveness of safeguarding, I reviewed the school's checks on the staff recruitment. I evaluated the school's safeguarding policy, files and records of child protection.
- I considered 40 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 25 responses to the staff survey and 34 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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