

Inspection of a good school: Herons' Moor Academy

Highlands Lane, Locking Castle, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset BS24 7DX

Inspection dates:

4–5 March 2020

Outcome

Herons' Moor Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders believe that 'happy children are successful children'. Pupils told me that this was their experience of their school. Pupils regularly set targets for themselves based on the school's values. They say that this helps them to 'become better people.'

Pupils also develop the attributes that make them successful learners. These are captured in the qualities that make a 'Herons' Moor learner' in key stage 2, and an 'Achievosaur' in key stage 1. As a result, pupils achieve well when compared to what is typical nationally.

Relationships between pupils and adults are typically positive. Those pupils who find behaviour expectations hard to manage receive support. There is a 'chill out' club during lunchtimes for pupils who find things too difficult to cope with. Pupils say that staff deal with any bullying effectively.

The school is a vibrant and positive environment. Pupils value the interactions with the pupils who attend the special school which shares the school's site. This helps pupils to appreciate diversity and equality.

Pupils take part in many activities, such as chess competitions and visits from theatre companies. They like to see their achievements celebrated in classrooms, corridors and assemblies. House competitions are hotly contested in the fields of sporting and creative endeavour.

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

Leaders have adopted a clear and methodical approach to the planning of the curriculum. Their aspiration is to design a curriculum which is 'joy filled'. They also understand the rigour needed to help pupils build successfully on what they have done before and prepare for what will come next. The move to the new multi-academy trust has been instrumental in providing the expertise to support the school with its ambitions.

Staff have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn in each subject and the end points that they want them to reach. In history, for example, teachers encourage pupils to think like a historian. Pupils learn the important content that they need to know. They then use their knowledge to create a balanced argument to take part in considered historical debate.

Subject leaders are knowledgeable about their curriculum area and how best to teach it. This means that they can support their colleagues effectively. However, in some subjects planning is at an earlier stage. Subject leaders do not yet have a comprehensive enough oversight of the quality of pupils' learning, particularly whether the curriculum goals are challenging enough.

Staff have relished the professional opportunity to work collaboratively with staff from other schools. They have seen the positive impact on pupils' learning, especially in their confidence to use subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers are working hard to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are equally well planned. However, they say that leaders are mindful of their well-being and the implications on their workload.

Staff promote the enjoyment of reading. For example, during the inspection, pupils and staff dressed as their favourite literary character to celebrate World Book Day. When children begin in Nursery, they begin to recognise the sounds that letters make through songs and rhyme. Children then build successfully on this knowledge as they move into Reception. The majority of pupils meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.

From this strong foundation, pupils continue to develop as confident and fluent readers. They are skilled in finding the meaning of unfamiliar words and can comment on a writer's choice of vocabulary. They then use these skills to craft their own writing for different audiences and purposes.

Over recent years, teaching has improved pupils' mathematical fluency. This is now a strength of the school. Staff encourage pupils to learn from their 'marvellous mistakes'. Pupils can explain their mathematical approaches and can confidently present, analyse and interpret data.

The special educational needs coordinator is an effective advocate for pupils. Trained staff provide support for pupils with social, emotional and therapeutic needs. Many pupils flourish because of this. Teaching is planned so that pupils follow a curriculum that is suited to their academic needs.

Many parents who responded to Parent View commented on the care and nurture that their children receive. However, some expressed their dissatisfaction about the support in place for their children. At times, some parents feel that when they raise a concern this is not acted on promptly.

Pupils are attentive and respectful during times of reflection. They consider the beliefs of other faiths and cultures. They know how to eat healthily and how to keep fit. Pupils are

taught how to keep themselves safe when they are out and about on their bicycles, or when near water or railway lines.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have received training so that they are alert and watchful for any indication that a pupil might be at risk of harm. They know how to report concerns to the designated safeguarding leads.

Leaders have identified that an increasing number of pupils require additional support. They have therefore strengthened the in-school support available. They also work proactively with other agencies to help pupils and their families access the support that they need. Leaders are reflective about how they can continue to improve their arrangements to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils, particularly as they share the site with other organisations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, curriculum plans and the use of assessment are not as well developed as in others. Therefore, pupils' understanding and skills vary in different areas of the curriculum. Subject leaders need to continue to work to ensure that all subjects are planned equally well and that pupils are learning effectively as a result.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable and well-equipped to lead in their areas of responsibility. However, they do not yet have a sharp enough overview of the impact of their plans on pupils' learning. Subject leaders need to routinely review and evaluate how well the coverage and sequencing of the curriculum help pupils to build up their knowledge and skills over time.
- While leaders understand the importance of cultivating positive relationships with parents, there are some parents who express dissatisfaction with aspects of the school's work. Leaders should explore how they can extend opportunities to engage with parents in a positive and constructive way.

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 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 inspection. 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Herons' Moor Community Primary School, to be good on 22–23 November 2011.

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

Unique reference number	138603
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10135543
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	443
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Airlie Fife
Headteacher	Julie Fox
Website	www.heronsmoor.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 March 2016

Information about this school

- In January 2019, Herons' Moor Academy joined the Cabot Learning Federation, a multi-academy trust consisting of eight secondary schools, one all-through school for pupils aged from four to 16 years old, one studio school and an alternative provision.
- The local governing body has been replaced by an academy council.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer and the executive principal from the multi-academy trust. I also met with a representative from the academy council, senior leaders and groups of staff.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. I discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited.
- I evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding, checked the schools' single central record and scrutinised policies relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. I met with the designated safeguarding leads and reviewed a sample of case files. Telephone

calls were made to the designated officer and to the local authority children's safeguarding partnership.

- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their school.
- I considered 115 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 69 additional free-text responses. I also met with a parent.
- I took into account 28 responses from staff and 18 responses from pupils to the questionnaires issued at the beginning of the inspection.

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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