

Inspection of a good school: Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School

Whitaker Close, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 7QH

Inspection dates:

6 July 2021

Outcome

Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and staff alike are justifiably proud of their school. A parent commented that their child describes it as 'the happy school'. Another said it is a place where they know their children are safe and flourishing. Inspectors agree that leaders and staff put pupils' best interests at the heart of the school.

Pupils told inspectors that they understand what bullying means. They said they were sure it does not happen here. Inspectors saw pupils behaving calmly and sensibly in lessons and around school. Pupils of all ages treat everyone with friendliness and respect.

Leaders and staff encourage pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. There is a good range of activities open to all pupils. Theme days, such as a skipping day and a sponsored 'wheelathon', have proved very popular.

Pupils are confident learners. They said that, 'It doesn't matter if we sometimes get things wrong.' They know that is the best way to learn and remember more. Pupils make a good start with early reading and mathematics. They also enjoy learning about a wide range of subjects because the curriculum is matched to their needs and interests.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have rewritten the curriculum to ensure that it sets out precisely what pupils should know, and when, in all subjects from early years to Year 2. There are clearly stated and ambitious 'end points' for pupils to gain by the time they transfer to the next stage in their education, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers use careful assessments to understand what pupils know and remember. This enables them to plan the next steps and any extra support pupils may need.

In science, pupils are enthusiastic and inquisitive learners. During a lesson visit, pupils in Year 1 were engrossed in learning about plants and flowers. They could confidently

explain that plants need light, water and compost. The work in their books shows that lessons follow a well-planned sequence. The curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils build a secure store of scientific knowledge.

The mathematics curriculum is strong. Pupils said that they sometimes have 'recap lessons.' These help them to apply what they have learned in new situations. Pupils' books show that the curriculum is designed to help pupils to develop deep and lasting mathematical understanding. Support is readily available for any pupils who need it, along with challenge for others.

Since the last inspection, leaders have revised the reading curriculum. Leaders and staff promote a love of books and reading throughout the school. Class reading areas are inviting spaces. The leader has ensured that all staff have been trained in how to teach phonics. She has reviewed the books that pupils are given, to check that they match pupils' reading ability well. When an inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult, they used their phonics knowledge confidently when reading unfamiliar words. There are early signs that the recent improvements are supporting more pupils to become fluent, accurate readers.

Leaders and staff promote pupils' wider development well. There is a strong emphasis on physical fitness, for example pupils go swimming weekly. The 10 minute daily 'track time' encourages a resilient attitude as well as physical stamina. Pupils can take part in community activities such as a walk to the local museum. Visitors introduce pupils to a range of cultures through Indian dance and art, and Afro-Caribbean storytelling. In safer times, pupils take home 'culture bags' to collect and share items that reflect their family backgrounds. Pupils develop a growing awareness of a range of beliefs and cultures.

Staff morale is high. All staff speak warmly about the school and the training and support they receive. They value leaders' and governors' consideration for their workload and well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, it was agreed that early reading and phonics may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture based on the care and trust between staff, pupils and families. Everyone in this small school knows the pupils very well. They are alert to changes and report concerns quickly, however small. Leaders take the necessary actions, liaising with external agencies where appropriate. All staff receive regular training and updates. Governors ensure that they fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Policies and procedures are strong, including staff pre-employment checks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have rewritten the reading curriculum since the last inspection. They are in the process of making the final adjustments to the programme for teaching phonics. There are early signs that the revised approach to reading is having a positive impact on supporting pupils to make a strong start in learning to read. Leaders should ensure that, when finalised, the school's approach to teaching early reading and phonics enables pupils to develop as fluent readers.

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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 7–8 June 2016.

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	122556
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10199061
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katie Stacey
Headteacher	Jo Cook
Website	www.hallcroft.notts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	7–8 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of governors.
- Inspectors looked closely at the quality of education in reading, mathematics and science. This involved speaking with leaders, staff and pupils, visiting lessons and reviewing curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work. An inspector observed pupils who are in the early stages of reading read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and other documents relating to safeguarding. The lead inspector met with the designated senior leader for safeguarding to discuss the school's

policies and procedures. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kirsty Norbury

Her Majesty's Inspector

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