

# Inspection of a good school: Heybridge Primary School

Rowan Drive, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4TU

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Inspection dates:

2 and 3 November 2021

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to be at Heybridge Primary School. Many parents comment on how much their children enjoy the school. Pupils are well cared for. They are friendly and confident with each other and with adults.

Pupils understand the high expectations leaders have for their behaviour. Consequently, pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. In the early years, children follow clear routines and quickly learn to organise themselves.

Pupils learn to respect others, including those from different backgrounds to themselves. They say that bullying is rare, but that if it does happen leaders deal with it well.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to learn about the wider world, for example an annual trip to London. While in the short term the pandemic has affected these opportunities, pupils recall these fondly. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and get a lot of support with their mental health and well-being, for example they visit the school's 'Heybridge Café'.

The quality of education does not always support pupils to achieve well. In subjects other than reading and mathematics, pupils' learning is not always well planned. This results in pupils not having a secure grasp of important knowledge they need to be able to learn and remember more.

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

In reading and mathematics, leaders have put in place a well-considered curriculum. In these subjects, leaders identify the important knowledge pupils should learn, starting from the early years. Leaders ensure that this builds on pupils' prior learning so their knowledge develops well over time.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to be confident readers. Leaders train staff well so that they know how to teach phonics effectively. From an early age, pupils learn sounds in a well-planned order. The books pupils read match the sounds they know. When pupils fall behind, they receive effective help to catch up. As soon as pupils are fluent readers, teachers continue to help them choose books they can understand and enjoy. Consequently, older pupils talk with pleasure about the books they are reading.

The development of other curriculum subjects is at an early stage. Some subject leaders are newer to their roles. They have not received training to ensure the planning in place for the subjects they lead contains the knowledge required for pupils to use what they know to learn more. For example, pupils study text extracts containing subject-specific vocabulary which they have not learned before. Consequently, in these cases, pupils do not understand what they are learning. Therefore, the quality of education is not ensuring that pupils achieve consistently well throughout the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not get the support that they should. Leaders identify pupils' needs accurately, and produce well-considered plans for pupils with SEND. However, teachers have not been trained to best help pupils with SEND. Teachers are not effective at helping pupils with SEND access the curriculum and understand their learning. As a result, too many pupils with SEND are not achieving as well as their peers, from their individual starting points.

Too many of the most vulnerable pupils miss too much of their education because they do not attend school regularly enough. This results in pupils falling behind with their learning. In part, the pandemic has impacted upon this. However, leaders' actions have not made enough difference in helping vulnerable pupils attend better.

Staff comment on the degree of their workload. While this is the case, staff also say they feel helped by leaders in managing this.

Governors have the skills they need to fulfil their role as a 'critical friend' to leaders. Governors offer challenge to leaders on areas such as safeguarding. The Kemnal Academy Trust (the trust) monitors leaders' work on the curriculum closely. The trust knows the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is aware it has more to do to support leaders in addressing these, for example in providing subject leadership training.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that training for subject leaders, support for pupils with SEND and improving the attendance of the most vulnerable pupils may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a rigorous culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders have put in place processes that ensure information about pupils is shared effectively. This means that the best-informed decisions can be made about safeguarding cases.

Leaders respond to concerns quickly. They make prompt referrals where they need to. Leaders have put in place interventions to support pupils' well-being following the pandemic. This has made pupils who may be anxious feel safe.

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to gain the knowledge and understanding to keep themselves safe, for example when online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some subject leaders are not confident in their understanding of the curriculum intent because they are new to their leadership roles. Because of this, pupils' learning in these subjects is not well planned. Leaders need to ensure subject leaders get the training they need to plan learning effectively, and they are able to support teachers to implement the plans so that pupils achieve well.
- Leaders do not make sure pupils with SEND get the quality of support they need. As a result, pupils with SEND do not achieve well. Leaders must make sure teachers understand the needs of pupils with SEND so they know how to support these pupils effectively to access the same curriculum as all other pupils.
- Leaders have not been effective at addressing the low attendance of many of the most vulnerable pupils. These pupils miss too much of their education and, consequently, do not achieve well. Leaders need to review and put in place more rigorous processes that ensure the most vulnerable pupils attend school more regularly.

## **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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in 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 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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138994
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199813
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	374
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gaenor Bagley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Waltham
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.heybridge-TKAT.org">www.heybridge-TKAT.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The large majority of pupils in the school are White British.
- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils on Free School Meals.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils and those responsible for governance.
- Reading, mathematics and history were considered in detail to evaluate the quality of education. The inspector carried out meetings with subject leaders and lesson visits, held discussions with staff and pupils, and looked at pupils' work.

- The inspector reviewed the school's single central record, and met with the designated safeguarding leader, as part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documents, including the school self-evaluation form and improvement plan, curriculum plans and school policies.
- The inspector reviewed the 39 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and also considered the 30 free-text responses from parents. The inspector also considered 17 responses to the Ofsted staff survey. There were three responses to the pupil questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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