

# Inspection of Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary School

Balmoral Close, Towcester, Northamptonshire NN12 6JA

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Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

At Nicholas Hawksmoor, a rich and broad curriculum in the arts enables pupils to flourish. All pupils experience visits to the theatre, concerts and art galleries. Pupils are proud of their artwork, on display around school. A variety of extra-curricular clubs, such as choir, rock orchestra and recorder groups, enables pupils to develop their interests and talents further. All pupils have the opportunity to get involved in school performances, which parents and carers describe as 'exceptional' and the highlight of the school year.

Pupils are proud of their school. They respond well to routines and to adults' instructions. They say there is little falling-out. Bullying is rare. When any issues occur, pupils understand whom they can go to for support. Occasionally, pupils are not able to learn as well as they should because of the behaviour of others. Pupils who need it get support to help them manage their behaviour.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive of the school. They comment that it is a 'fantastic school with caring teachers'. They receive regular updates on the progress their child makes. Leaders work with families who need extra help to ensure their children have a positive experience of education.

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

Leaders have clear and ambitious intentions for the curriculum. In most subjects, they have identified the end points that pupils should reach. In a few subjects, leaders have not translated their long-term goals into detailed short-term plans.

In music, and art and design, specialist teachers have ensured that curriculum plans outline the small steps needed for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to know and remember more over time. Pupils have rich experiences in these subjects. Leaders ensure that all pupils experience art and music first hand. Visits to national galleries and classical musical events link to pupils' learning in class. Leaders in these subjects have thought carefully about how to build pupils' knowledge steadily, from the early years to the end of key stage 2. Pupils become increasingly skilled and confident in applying their knowledge of different art and musical techniques.

Not all curriculum plans are as detailed as these. Some do not show how pupils' learning builds on their experiences in the early years.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They check regularly how well pupils have learned and remembered important knowledge. They use this information carefully to refine the curriculum and teaching when needed.

Leaders have ensured that all staff have received training in delivering the new phonics programme. There are still some inconsistencies in how well staff deliver the programme. Children start learning to read as soon as they start school. Those who

fall behind get extra help to catch up. Leaders are in the process of making sure that every book, for every pupil, is well matched to the sounds they know.

Children are polite and respectful to each other during playtimes. Year 5 pupils value the opportunity to be playground leaders, while Year 6 act as sports crew. Pupils take such responsibilities seriously and are positive role models for younger pupils. On occasion, behaviour in class is not as good as it should be. This is usually when teachers pitch the learning at the wrong level and pupils lose focus.

Pupils learn about mental health, healthy relationships and how to be safe on and offline. Parents comment that these opportunities help their child to grow 'intellectually, mentally and physically'. However, pupils are less confident in their understanding of different faiths and religions.

Children in the early years develop strong relationships with their peers and with adults. They understand right and wrong and are proud to be 'on the rainbow' for their good behaviour. Early years staff build a curriculum based on high expectations, in preparation for moving to Year 1. Adults in the early years ensure that basic knowledge is secure. For example, one child commented how she had learned to hold the pencil correctly because it 'was the way her teacher had shown her'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff receive training to understand the school's procedures for recording concerns about pupils. Leaders regularly ensure that the welfare of pupils is discussed, and that relevant information is shared with all staff. All staff are vigilant and promptly report any concerns relating to pupils. Governors and trust leaders regularly check and review the systems used to ensure appropriate adults work in school. Leaders have ensured that checks are made on other organisations that are used to support pupils in school time.

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

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

- Some curriculum plans do not identify the key knowledge that pupils need to know. Some plans do not include the early years. This does not help teachers to make accurate choices in activities to help pupils know the essential knowledge. Leaders must ensure that all curriculum plans outline the key knowledge from early years to Year 6 so that all pupils, including those with SEND, know and remember more over time.
- Some subject leaders are new to role. Further training is required to ensure that they have a strong overview of their subjects. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders receive the necessary support to develop as effective leaders who

will have the knowledge and confidence to monitor the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning.

- Some pupils who are at the early stages of reading do not receive effective strategies to help them decode words successfully. This means they do not learn to read quickly and efficiently enough. Leaders need to monitor early reading in order to support staff with training and ensure that the new reading scheme is established quickly.
- Pupils' knowledge of different faiths and cultures is less strong than other aspects of their personal development. Leaders should ensure that pupils are able to broaden their knowledge of different faiths, so they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

## 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>	136480
<b>Local authority</b>	West Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200211
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	415
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Karen Falvey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrea Curtis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.nicholashawksmoor.co.uk">www.nicholashawksmoor.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in governance and leadership. The headteacher now leads over three schools within the trust. A head of school and assistant headteacher have been appointed.
- A significant number of staff are new to the school as existing leaders have moved to other roles within the trust.
- The school is part of the Hawksmoor Learning Trust.
- The school uses one alternative provider to support the needs of pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including representatives from the local governing body and the board of trustees. A meeting was held with the school's special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- Deep dives were conducted in a broad range of subjects including early reading, mathematics, geography, computing and science. The deep dives involved meeting with subject leaders to discuss curriculum plans, visiting lessons, meeting teachers, speaking to pupils and sampling pupils' work.
- Information on attendance, behaviour logs and safeguarding records was analysed. Meetings with leaders and different staff across the school were held to discuss the safeguarding of pupils. This included a visit to an alternative provider used by the school.
- Pupils' behaviour was considered at various times of the day, including breaktime, lunchtime and after-school clubs.
- Views of parents, pupils and staff shared through the Ofsted surveys, and by meeting parents during the inspection, were also considered.

### **Inspection team**

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Fitzwilliam	Ofsted Inspector
Jackie Stirland	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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