

Inspection of Hannah Ball School

Philip Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 7JS

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils enjoy being challenged to learn new things. They participate in a wide range of trips and workshops which link to what they learn in the classroom. However, not all pupils learn as much as they should. Some pupils who struggle with reading are not helped to catch up effectively enough.

The school's values of kindness and respect are evident in the way children interact with each other and their teachers. For example, pupils walk calmly in corridors and hold open doors for each other. Bullying is dealt with effectively by leaders, and pupils are helped to resolve their differences with the support of an adult.

Leaders and teachers help pupils to develop personally as well as academically. One parent summed up the school's approach: 'My children receive encouragement and support at all times. They have become resilient, inquisitive, kind, well-rounded young people.'

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

Leaders have begun to make ambitious improvements to the quality of education pupils receive. They have decided what they want children to learn in each subject. This work is further along in some areas, such as maths and science. In these subjects, pupils learn quickly because each lesson builds on what they have learned before. This is also evident in the early years, where children are getting off to a good start. However, some of the focus on improving the curriculum is very recent. Leaders rightly recognise that there is still work to do to ensure that their plans are being delivered consistently.

The school has recently adopted a new approach to teaching reading. This is being delivered effectively in the early years but is inconsistent in Years 1 to 6. As a result, pupils in these year groups who struggle to read are not being enabled to catch up quickly enough. Some of the adults supporting the weakest readers are not trained well enough. This means that the additional support these pupils receive is less effective than it should be. Sometimes pupils are given books which are too difficult and do not enable them to practise the sounds they have learned in class. This lack of consistency is an additional barrier for pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders, teachers, pupils and parents all describe how the school's new behaviour policy has had a transformative effect on the way pupils behave. Pupils focus well in lessons when listening to their teacher or working independently. Leaders make sure that the routines children follow are applied consistently. This helps pupils to behave well throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate good manners and are polite to each other. They learn about the importance of tolerance and respect. This work begins in

the early years. Children in reception learn as a result of adults modelling polite language and behaviour.

Leaders have made pupils' personal development a priority. Pupils learn about how to stay safe in their local community as well as when online. They appreciate activities and workshops run by a wide range of visitors. There is a strong focus on how to look after their mental and physical health, and this begins in the early years. Some pupils enjoy the opportunity to take on a leadership role, such as joining the school council. There are lots of opportunities for all pupils to contribute to decisions about the school. For example, pupils recently voted on what to name their school houses, and on how to improve the playground. Pupils participate in a range of well-attended clubs, including karate, football, science and sewing.

Leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching. Teachers benefit from regular opportunities to discuss what works best in the classroom. They appreciate learning from each other. They know that leaders think about their well-being and workload when making decisions.

Leaders have introduced a large number of initiatives. While many of these are proving effective, they have not made sure the most important areas are prioritised. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and take decisive action in response to information they receive. However, they do not always check that leaders' actions are having their desired impact.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff are trained in how to identify and report safeguarding concerns. As a result, issues are spotted and passed on promptly, following the school's system. Leaders act quickly and effectively to keep children safe by using their knowledge of pupils and their families. Leaders work with external agencies, drawing on further support and expertise where required. Leaders' actions are effective in keeping children safe. However, sometimes the way these actions are recorded is not detailed or clear enough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the teaching of phonics is consistently effective. Some teachers and support staff working with children who are struggling do not have the expertise they need to help them to catch up. Sometimes the books pupils are given are not at the right level. Leaders must provide training to ensure that teaching and additional support are effective. This will help those pupils who are struggling to become fluent readers.

- While leaders' actions to keep children safe are effective, they must make sure that the documentation to support them is detailed and robust. This will enable them to ensure that absolutely nothing is missed, particularly when children move schools.
- Leaders and governors have not brought about quick enough improvement in the quality of education at the school, particularly reading. Many of the developments to the curriculum are very recent and some are not implemented consistently. Leaders must focus more precisely on the things that will make the greatest difference to pupils. Governors must assure themselves that leaders' actions in these areas are having their intended impact.

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

Unique reference number	110324
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10200864
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jo Warnock-Horn
Headteacher	Nicholas Hingley
Website	www.hannahball.bucks.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection of the school to be completed 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 leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, and governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons,

spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- Inspectors met with safeguarding leaders, looked at records and policies relating to safeguarding and talked to pupils, staff, governors and the local authority about this aspect of the school's work. Inspectors also reviewed the school's employment checks on staff.
- Inspectors met with many pupils to discuss their views of the school and took into consideration responses to the pupils' survey.
- Inspectors also met with a wide range of staff and took into account their responses to the confidential survey for staff.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, their evaluation of how well the school is currently performing, minutes of governing body meetings, and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- Inspectors met with some parents and considered their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential parents' questionnaire, including a number of free-text responses.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Simon Francis

Ofsted Inspector

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