

# Inspection of Halfway Junior School

Halfway Centre, Halfway, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S20 4TA

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Inspection dates: 23 and 24 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**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Halfway Juniors is a caring school where relationships between pupils, staff and the wider community are strong. All the staff are committed to helping pupils do well at school. There are high expectations. Everyone is well looked after. Staff are good role models, and pupils appreciate the care and support they receive. Pupils and their families are proud of their school. Parents overwhelmingly say their children are happy and safe, and their children agree. Staff say that they are proud to work here.

Leaders have introduced pupils to six core values. These promote courage, respect, aspiration, collaboration, resilience and individuality. These are very familiar to pupils and are evident in the life of the school.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are kind and supportive of each other. When fallouts happen, they are quickly resolved. Pupils know what bullying is, and they say that it is rare. Leaders have worked hard to develop a strong culture in behaviour. Attitudes to learning are positive. The vast majority of pupils engage well, and they are participants in lessons. Some pupils are more passive; teachers are developing their strategies to empower these pupils.

Pupils have opportunities for personal development both in and outside of the taught curriculum. A well-considered range of extra-curricular activities are now being reintroduced. Pupils value these opportunities; they are well attended by all.

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

Reading is a priority. The learning environment, and particularly the library, inspires pupils to want to read. Key staff have been well supported by a local primary school. They are effective and confident in developing the skills of those pupils who may not have secured their understanding of phonics and early reading. Careful, ongoing assessment enables staff to provide targeted support to those pupils who need it.

Teachers expose pupils to a range of texts throughout the curriculum. Pupils are keen to explore these carefully chosen books. Pupils say they enjoy reading. They talk eagerly about the range of books that they listen to and read themselves, both in school and at home. Although curriculum plans focus on vocabulary, on occasion too little thought has been given as to when and how new words and phrases are introduced.

The mathematics curriculum is well sequenced. Leaders support staff well. They have developed their strong subject knowledge. This enables teachers to teach well-designed units of learning with agility. Leaders have developed strategies which challenge pupils' thinking. This helps pupils to explore mathematical concepts at depth. Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to revisit and discuss previous learning; pupils value this. Staff continually check what pupils know and

understand in mathematics so that they effectively identify where pupils may have gaps in their learning.

Leaders have grown a team of skilful and knowledgeable curriculum leaders. Their curriculum plans set out the important subject-specific skills that pupils need to learn. However, teachers' plans have less focus on the key knowledge that pupils should know and remember. There are sometimes not enough opportunities for pupils to focus on key knowledge in different subjects. This will provide the strong foundations on which pupils can develop and refine their skills.

Leaders have a particularly strong understanding of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's newly appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is supported by the SENCo from a neighbouring school. This support is impressive and has had a positive impact on how the curriculum is implemented for pupils with SEND. The systems and processes that have been introduced to the school ensure pupils' additional needs are quickly and correctly identified. Furthermore, this enables staff to plan and use relevant resources to good effect. This means staff include pupils with SEND in all lessons, and these pupils see success.

Most pupils behave well and attend school regularly. They form good relationships with each other and with their teachers. Pupils say that bullying is rare, and that staff help them if they are worried. The school's core values are well promoted in all areas of the curriculum. For example, teachers encourage productive group work, reminding pupils of the value of collaboration. Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including when they are online.

Senior leaders, including governors, have created a very positive environment. They have enabled all staff to work together in a cohesive team. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of all they do. Staff feel valued and supported by leaders. Staff say that school leaders are very supportive and mindful of their workload. They receive relevant and helpful professional development. Notably, early careers teachers receive well-tailored support. This school is a nurturing environment for all.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of keeping children safe in this school; leaders have made it their priority. Leaders promptly identify those pupils who need early help. They ensure that they secure support from other professionals and agencies in a timely manner in order to enable pupils and their families to get any extra help should they need it. Regular training and weekly refreshers keep safeguarding a priority in all adults' minds.

Pupils learn about different risks, including online abuse, through the school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum and the relationships and sex

education programme. Leaders have developed a culture where it is safe for pupils to speak to adults if they are worried about anything.

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

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

- Curriculum plans set out the important subject-specific skills that pupils need to learn. Teachers' plans have less focus on the key knowledge that pupils should know and remember. Leaders should ensure that pupils have clearly defined opportunities to be immersed in rich subject knowledge. This will provide the strong foundations on which pupils can develop and refine their skills.
- Teachers expose pupils to ambitious, subject-specific vocabulary. Insufficient thought has been given as to when and how these words and phrases are introduced. This limits pupils' progress. Leaders should ensure that teachers develop strategies for pupils to know and remember new vocabulary and associated meanings.

## **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>	107046
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199589
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Barker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debbie Shepherd
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.halfwayjuniorschool.org">www.halfwayjuniorschool.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous section 5 inspection, there has been a significant change in staffing, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The school is in a federation with Shortbrook Primary School.
- Halfway Junior School is supported by an executive headteacher.
- This school does not use 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 the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors also held meetings with subject leaders, the SENCo, the chair of the governing body and school improvement partners.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult in school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and during lunchtime.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and history. In these, inspectors talked to curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils. They visited lessons and looked at the work of pupils. Inspectors studied curriculum plans for these subjects with school leaders.
- Inspectors examined safeguarding records, including the single central record and recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents by reviewing the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also spoke with parents as they collected their children from school.
- Alongside the responses to the online surveys for staff, inspectors also considered views by meeting with three groups of staff.
- Alongside the responses to the online surveys for pupils, inspectors also considered views by meeting with single- and mixed-sex groups of pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Marcus Newby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Eleanor Belfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

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