

Inspection of Hightown Junior Infant & Nursery School

Hightown Road, Liversedge, West Yorkshire WF15 8BL

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 December 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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?

Pupils are happy and said that they feel safe in this inclusive and friendly school. Pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes to learning. Relationships across the school are good. Pupils are reassured that staff will deal swiftly with any worries they have. Pupils told inspectors that any kind of name-calling is rare. They know the importance of reporting concerns to an adult and are confident that they will be listened to. Pupils are encouraged to have a voice. All the pupils spoken to during the inspection were articulate, self-assured and extremely happy to speak to inspectors.

This is a school where difference is welcomed and equality of opportunity is an important part of every school day. Pupils are taught about different types of relationships, healthy lifestyles and the importance of respect and kindness. They are encouraged to make good decisions in life.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on pupils' school life. School leaders have ensured that experiences such as playing musical instruments, and taking part in school productions and school clubs, have quickly been reinstated.

The vast majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted parental text questionnaire and the online survey spoke positively about the school. Of the parents who responded, 98% would recommend this school to other parents. Parents commented that this is a close-knit, caring school where staff go the extra mile. They wrote that communication is excellent and staff are very approachable.

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

Pastoral care is strong. Staff meet pupils' emotional needs well. They communicate effectively with each other, pupils, families and other agencies. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum links with the work that teachers and pastoral leaders do to support pupils' well-being. Throughout the pandemic, teachers and leaders have ensured that pupils do not miss out on things they really look forward to. For example, pupils still received hot chocolate when restrictions were in place, as staff took it to their homes on 'hot chocolate Fridays'. Parents spoke highly of the support the school has given them throughout this pandemic. They wrote of how teachers worked to make the curriculum accessible when restrictions were in place. For example, teachers gave careful thought to how subjects such as phonics and physical education would be taught, and the impact this would have on pupils' learning. A wealth of resources to support learning were made available through regular communication channels.

Pupils learn to read through a well-planned reading curriculum. A commercial phonics scheme is taught by trained staff. This helps pupils to make a good start in learning to read. Children in the Nursery class enjoy their early phonics work for example, as they listen to stories and sing. In early years, the acquisition of

language skills is a high priority. Throughout the school, pupils are articulate and show a growing maturity of vocabulary. Expectations are high and pupils who are not reaching these expectations are carefully monitored and given support when appropriate. Class stories help pupils with their comprehension, and engender a love of reading.

Some curriculum subjects are planned well, for example mathematics, music, reading and physical education. The curriculum documents make clear the expectations of exactly what pupils need to know and remember. Leaders make sure that there are links between lessons, so that pupils get a deeper understanding in these subjects. In these subjects, teachers teach with confidence. Teachers are good at using appropriate pedagogy to deliver learning. They make sure that learning engages pupils and supports good attitudes to learning. Pupils spoke confidently about what they have learned. They can recall what they have learned, which helps them understand new learning. In these subjects, teachers and subject leaders have a much clearer idea of what pupils have learned and what gaps there are in learning. Teachers work with leaders to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given appropriate support to access the curriculum.

School leaders know that in a few subjects, for example history, religious education and geography, more work needs to be done. The lack of clear direction in these subjects means that the subjects are not well taught. Subject leaders do not plan learning that is sequential and builds depth of understanding and knowledge over time. Teachers are unable to focus on exactly what needs to be taught. Therefore, they struggle to identify any gaps in learning. Pupils struggle to remember what they have been taught. This lack of clarity leads to misconceptions and limits learning for pupils.

Staff feel well supported by governors and senior leaders. The response to the Ofsted questionnaire was overwhelmingly positive. Staff recognise how good-quality safeguarding training and information give them a sound knowledge in this area.

Governors are knowledgeable and passionate about the school. They recognise the variability in subject expertise across the curriculum. They know teachers take on a range of responsibilities in such a relatively small school. Governors are extremely reflective. Their concern for the well-being and safety of pupils and staff is evident. For example, they have recently reviewed performance management processes to manage extra burdens that have emerged for staff and pupils, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teaching staff can reflect on their careers and performance in staff appraisals, and consider their aspirations and emotional needs through a self-reflection process.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a priority in this school. Everyone knows it is their responsibility to keep these pupils safe. Regular training and updates, such as the weekly briefing, ensure that everybody is aware of any potential concerns in school, updates in legislation and guidance, and national issues that may be emerging. Pupils spoke well of the pastoral support they receive and how they know they can speak to adults when they are worried or want to report something. Older pupils spoke articulately and confidently about how to stay safe online and what is not acceptable, such as cyber-bullying. School leaders keep confidential records and liaise with external agencies for support or advice when needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the planning of some subjects, there is a lack of clarity on what exactly pupils need to learn. Therefore, teachers do not know what they should focus on when teaching. They are unable to effectively identify gaps in learning and assess if pupils have remembered essential learning. This lack of guidance means that teachers do not teach the subjects well and with confidence. It means aspirations are sometimes too low. Ultimately, pupils do not remember what they have learned in some subjects. Nor do they develop a deep understanding of what they are learning, so they can build on this over time. This does not match the quality of planning across some other subjects. Leaders need to ensure that planning for all curriculum subjects shows clear sequential learning, with specific and aspirational knowledge and skills, throughout all year groups. Senior leaders are already working on improving these curriculum areas, and therefore the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Some leaders do not have the knowledge and skills to lead subjects effectively. Senior leaders need to ensure that they have a clear idea of what is needed in all curriculum areas. They need to ensure that subject leaders develop the knowledge and skills to plan and quality-assure their curriculum areas effectively.

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

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| Unique reference number | 107669 |
| Local authority | Kirklees |
| Inspection number | 10199708 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 219 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Julie Bowdidge |
| Headteacher | Russell Ingleby |
| Website | www.hightown.kirklees.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 20 and 21 April 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- This was the school's first inspection since April 2016, when it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not 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 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 the senior leadership team; governors, including the chair of governors and the vice chair; a representative of the local authority; all teachers; and some teaching assistants.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, studied

curriculum plans, observed pupils learning and spoke to teachers and pupils about the subject and about work in books.

- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to curriculum leaders and teachers about physical education, music, PSHE education, computing and geography.
- Inspectors considered safeguarding by reviewing documentation, including the record of recruitment checks. They also spoke to teaching staff, pupils, safeguarding leaders and governors.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, including those representing the Pupil Parliament and some single-sex groups. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast club and the after-school provision.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s confidential online questionnaires from parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jo Sharpe, lead inspector | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Tim Jenner | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Shan Brough Jones | Ofsted Inspector |

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