

Inspection of Highbury Primary School

Dovercourt Road, Cosham, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 2RZ

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents welcome the emphasis that staff place on pupils' personal development and being a good citizen at Highbury. As one parent commented, 'The school really focuses on building the children as good people.'

Staff use animal heroes linked to the school values, such as 'confident Clyde', to help pupils understand how they are expected to behave. Even the youngest children talk knowledgeably about these values as they are an integral part of school life. As one Year 6 pupil explained, 'The headteacher encourages us to live these values.'

Pupils learn to treat everyone with respect. As one pupil commented, 'I like the huge diversity of children. We are all inclusive.' They understand how important kindness is. Pupils know that adults will help them to resolve any problems, including the rare occasions that bullying happens. This helps pupils to feel safe and happy.

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and speak proudly about their learning. They work hard in lessons, rising to leaders' expectations that they will be resilient and aspire to achieve well. Pupils work hard and relish the different opportunities provided by the school. For example, they enjoy their pond-dipping experiences in forest school.

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

Children get off to a strong start in Nursery. Leaders ensure that all staff prioritise developing children's communication skills. Staff give children opportunities to listen to songs and rhymes and to play games. This helps to improve their listening skills so that they are ready to learn to read. From the very start of Reception, staff teach phonics in a well-ordered way. Pupils read books that are matched to the sounds they have learned. This helps them to develop confidence and fluency when practising their early reading skills. Weaker readers are all given support and practice to help them catch up. Leaders know that this needs further strengthening.

Teachers successfully help older readers to develop their reading skills when exploring challenging texts. Leaders have planned out carefully which books pupils will read so that they learn about important issues, such as refugees. Staff help pupils to learn ambitious vocabulary from these texts, which they use in their own writing.

Teachers follow well-sequenced plans in mathematics in order to help pupils learn age-appropriate knowledge and methods. Most teachers have strong mathematical subject knowledge. They provide clear explanations and check pupils' understanding carefully. This helps pupils to learn well. The subject leader is effectively supporting a few staff to further develop their subject knowledge.

Staff value how leaders have made changes to planning to help reduce their workload and understand how pupils' learning develops. Leaders have ensured that in most subjects the curriculum sets out the sequence of learning which includes the essential knowledge and skills for pupils to learn. This is yet to be completed in a few subjects.

Where plans are complete and teachers have strong subject knowledge, they make sure that pupils learn new skills and knowledge in the right order. Staff use clear models and explanations to help pupils build on what they have learned before. Some subject leaders evaluate how well pupils are learning the most important knowledge and skills. These checks are not yet in place across the curriculum.

The special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator supports staff well to identify and support pupils with special educational needs (SEND). She ensures that staff receive high-quality training. This helps teachers to effectively adapt learning in most subjects. The different tasks, resources and adult support help these pupils to learn well. Staff adaptations in a few subjects are less strong, and, consequently, pupils with SEND do not always learn as well as they could.

Leaders have developed a positive culture that enables pupils to flourish. Almost all staff use a consistent approach to effectively manage behaviour. As a result, in most classes, low-level disruption is dealt with swiftly and effectively, so pupils can concentrate on their learning.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' social skills and preparing them for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about democracy through the pupil parliament. When teaching about healthy relationships, staff use a range of scenarios to help pupils understand what to do in different situations. Some pupils attend a lunch club in which they learn important life skills, such as practising how to give and receive compliments.

Governors support leaders to manage resources appropriately while maintaining a focus on the quality of education. They provide strong challenge to leaders about how well pupils are learning in English and mathematics. Governors recognise that they need further information on how well pupils are learning across the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff spend time getting to know families before pupils even join the school. Parents value the pastoral support provided for pupils.

All staff receive quality training so they can recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They use this knowledge to monitor pupils closely. Staff know their responsibilities and how to report concerns. Leaders work effectively with a range of external agencies to help keep children safe.

The curriculum helps pupils to learn about the different risks they may face and how to manage them. This includes understanding how to maintain positive mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few subjects are not planned well enough to give sufficient guidance to staff. This means that pupils are not always building on prior learning. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans from Nursery to Year 6 are coherently planned so that teachers understand what knowledge and skills they are aiming to build over time. Leaders have already taken action to address this weakness over the coming year. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Beyond English and mathematics, some subject leaders are checking that curriculum plans are being used but not how effective they are. Consequently, they are not aware of gaps in pupils' understanding. Senior leaders should ensure that all subject leaders are able to evaluate how well the curriculum is being implemented and whether pupils recall the most important content.
- Teachers do not provide adaptations for pupils with SEND in all subjects. This means that pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could across the whole curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers know how to adapt teaching effectively so that pupils with SEND can consistently learn alongside their peers.

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	144191
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10200844
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Longmore
Headteacher	Ashley Howard
Website	www.highburyprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In July 2017, the school converted to become an academy and joined the University of Chichester Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust.
- When the predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2012, it was judged to be good.
- The headteacher started in his role in September 2019.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The local governing body manages before- and after-school childcare provision on site. They also manage the on-site nursery.

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 headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team also looked at curriculum plans, spoke to leaders about some other subjects and looked at pupils' books from other subjects. They also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and on the playground.
- The lead inspector met with four members of local governing body, including the chair of governors. She met with three representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and written comments from parents. Inspectors considered the views of staff during meetings with them and took into account their responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- Inspectors reviewed school documents relating to safeguarding, including safeguarding records and training logs, talked to pupils and staff and met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and pastoral lead.

Inspection team

Laurie Anderson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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