

Inspection of a good school: Hillcrest Primary School

Cemetery Road, Totterdown, Bristol BS4 3DE

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 January 2022

Outcome

Hillcrest Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the centre of this inclusive school. Leaders are determined that all pupils reach their full potential. Staff put in place strong pastoral support. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's nurturing environment.

Pupils like coming to school. They enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being house captains and members of a wide range of pupil committees. They know that their voice is heard. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs enhance pupils' personal development.

Pupils show respect for staff and each other. They behave well in lessons and low-level disruption is rare. On the rare occasions when pupils become distracted, staff deal with these quickly so that learning is not interrupted. Pupils say that bullying does not happen. They are confident that if it did happen, staff would manage it well.

Pupils develop a strong understanding of tolerance. They appreciate the variety of cultures and beliefs within their community. They form strong, trusting relationships with staff. Pupils feel valued and appreciated.

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

Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for all pupils. Staff value the support and collegiate approach that leaders encourage. Staff unanimously agree that they are well supported and valued. Those new to the profession appreciate the guidance provided.

Leaders prioritise reading. Reading is seen as the key to learning. Leaders have thought carefully about their phonics programme. Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start in Reception. Staff use a consistent approach to teaching phonics. Pupils' books are matched to the letters and sounds they are learning. Careful assessment ensures that those who are at risk of falling behind catch up quickly. As a result, pupils are developing into confident and fluent readers.

Older pupils enjoy reading. The school has invested in high-quality texts that support pupils' understanding of diverse communities. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to read regularly and for enjoyment. Pupils are confident when talking about a range of different genres and authors.

Pupils follow a well-structured mathematics curriculum. They enjoy mathematics. The curriculum provides pupils with the right level of challenge. In the early years, children use mathematical vocabulary well. Adults regularly check pupils' understanding. Consequently, pupils are confident when talking about where they are in their learning.

Across the curriculum, leaders have worked systematically to identify what is to be taught and when. However, in a few subjects it is not clear how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to ensure they learn the most important knowledge. For example, in history, the key knowledge pupils are expected to know is not prioritised. As a result, some struggle to understand what they need to know and why.

Staff know pupils well. Pupils with the most complex needs receive tailored help. Adults ensure pupils' individual needs are identified early. Staff set precise, relevant and clear targets. Strong links with external agencies support the school well.

Pupils behave well. They understand what is expected of them. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful place to learn. Pupils say that most children follow the 3Bs: 'Be safe, Be kind, Be respectful'. Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. They understand the difference between this and minor disagreements they may encounter.

Pupils recognise the school's work to support their personal development. They understand equalities and fairness towards others. They appreciate the diversity of their mixed and varied community, which they celebrate. Pupils see everyone as equal and 'no one is an outsider'.

The local governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge to leaders. Governors understand their monitoring role. Teamwork is a strength of the school. Adults ensure that communication systems are effective. Leaders support teachers' workload. Staff know that leaders make decisions in the best interests of children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure there is a strong culture of keeping children safe. Staff receive regular and up-to-date training. They know how to identify a child who might be at risk of harm and what action to take. Staff know that leaders take their concerns seriously. Pupils are confident to talk to staff if they have a concern. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff.

Pupils and parents agree that the school is a safe place to be. The curriculum supports pupils' understanding of staying safe in various situations, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects within the wider curriculum, Pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could. It is not clear what these pupils are expected to know and by when. Leaders need to ensure that teachers identify the component steps and prioritise essential knowledge so pupils with SEND know more and remember more over time.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2016.

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	131522
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10199895
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matthew Hodge
Headteacher	Bridget Norman
Website	www.hillcrest.bristol.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the designated safeguarding lead, the special educational needs coordinator, groups of staff and members of the governing body. The inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector looked at how the school keeps pupils safe. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The inspector considered 216 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 150 free-text comments. The inspector also considered 143 responses to the pupil online survey and 40 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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