

Inspection of a good school: Highfield Primary School

Marsh Lane, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 0AP

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 March 2022

Outcome

Highfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said that their school is a friendly and caring place where everyone gets on well together. Pupils find learning exciting. They enjoy sharing their ideas in class and they like to discover new things with their friends.

Pupils feel safe at school. They are confident to talk to trusted adults if they are worried or concerned. Pupils know that should bullying ever happen, staff will deal with it immediately.

Staff expect pupils to behave well and to achieve highly. Pupils respond positively to these high expectations. As a result, the school is an orderly place where pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in most subjects.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to follow their interests and enhance their skills. Pupils are especially keen on bench ball, street dance and gymnastics. Pupils are musical. They enjoy honing their guitar and drumming skills and playing in the local brass band.

Pupils look forward to trips to a local farm, a historic castle, museums and the parish church. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 talked enthusiastically about their residential learning, where they found out about the countryside and developed their leadership skills.

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

Leaders and governors have devised an ambitious curriculum. This engages pupils, including children in the early years, and develops their interests well. Leaders are determined that all pupils, including those with SEND, will develop the essential knowledge and skills that they need to become successful learners.

Leaders have made clear to teachers the essential learning that they want pupils to know and understand. Teachers help pupils to acquire the knowledge that they need. For

example, pupils develop their fluency in using number in mathematics. In English, pupils gain the vocabulary that they need to communicate effectively and access their learning across different subjects.

Leaders make sure that assessment systems are in place to assess what pupils know and can do. For the most part, this helps teachers to identify and rectify the gaps in pupils' learning. However, in a few subjects, leaders' assessment systems are not as effective in spotting where pupils' knowledge is less secure. For instance, in geography, some older pupils' knowledge of European countries is not as strong as it should be. This means that these pupils are not well prepared for future learning.

Leaders are supported by a knowledgeable and able governing body. Governors know where the school's strengths lie, as well as what leaders need to do to develop the school further.

Staff work with parents, carers and a range of specialist partners to identify pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Leaders provide a range of support to enable these pupils to access the curriculum alongside their peers.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' reading is highly effective. As a result, across the school, there is a sense of great excitement about reading. Older pupils are familiar with the work of a wide range of authors. They read confidently and with expression. Younger pupils who are still developing their reading skills, including children in the early years, use their knowledge of phonics well to read unfamiliar words. Pupils read regularly in school and at home. They develop into fluent and confident readers.

Pupils behave well in lessons, which are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils, and children in the early years, know that leaders expect them to be considerate and hard working. As a result, the school is a purposeful place where everyone wants to learn.

Leaders extend the curriculum beyond the academic. This enables pupils to hone their cooking, reading and artistic skills and refine their sporting talents. Leaders ensure that pupils understand fundamental British values, including the principles of democracy and respect. Pupils develop their own initiatives to raise funds for different children's charities and a local food bank. Through the school council, pupils develop their debating skills. Year 6 pupils demonstrate that they are responsible citizens as play leaders and eco-council members.

Staff said that leaders and governors are mindful of their well-being and workload. Staff, including those new to teaching, are especially appreciative of the professional development that they receive. For example, they said that their recent phonics training has sharpened their ability to deliver the phonics curriculum.

Most parents praise the school highly. Typically, they told the inspector that leaders and staff are welcoming and that they 'go above and beyond' to make sure that pupils are safe and happy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have comprehensive procedures in place to safeguard pupils. Safeguarding leaders access regular training. They update staff on developments relating to keeping pupils safe.

Staff know how to spot the potential signs of abuse. They understand exactly what to do if they are concerned about the safety of a pupil. Leaders work closely with a wide range of specialist partners. They make sure that pupils get the help that they need when necessary.

Through different aspects of the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know how to use computers and mobile devices safely and responsibly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders' assessment systems are not sufficiently effective in supporting teachers to identify and address the gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not secure some essential knowledge. This hinders them in deepening their understanding of these subjects and does not prepare them well for future learning. Leaders should strengthen their systems to assess what pupils know and remember in these subjects. This will help teachers to identify and rectify the learning that pupils have forgotten.

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 February 2017.

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 | 105182 |
| Local authority | Bolton |
| Inspection number | 10212408 |
| 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 | 415 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Hudsen Daniel-Sam |
| Headteacher | David Glyn-Jones |
| Website | www.highfield.bolton.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 2 and 3 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Leaders do 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector held a meeting with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects. He also spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector spoke with parents to gather their views about the school. He considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, as well as free-text comments from parents. The inspector reviewed responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted surveys.
- The inspector examined a range of policies and documents. He also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy. The inspector spoke to safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents. He also talked with pupils about their safety and welfare.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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