

Inspection of a good school: Highgate Infant School

Gaywood Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 2PS

Inspection date:

26 April 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Highgate work and play in a learning environment where everyone is included. They understand that every individual is different, and they celebrate this. Even the youngest learners reflect positively on the range of languages their peers can speak.

Pupils engage well with their learning in lessons. They work happily in smaller groups, and this helps them to have variety in the way learning is set up. Although lessons do not always offer the best opportunities for pupils to practise and remember what they are learning, they show willingness and interest.

Pupils describe their peers as kind. They know what bullying is but say this is not common. They know that adults in school can be trusted. They are certain that adults in school will help sort out problems if they arise.

Pupils enjoy learning and exploring in outdoor spaces, including visiting the school's allotment. They have the chance to cook with and eat this produce throughout the year. Exposure to nature encourages pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them. Pupils talk excitedly about the life cycles of frogs when discussing the tadpoles living in their classroom.

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

Leaders have embarked on an ambitious journey to establish a relevant curriculum for pupils. They have thought carefully about the specific needs of pupils in devising an interesting curriculum. Lesson content is sequenced to make sure pupils' knowledge develops in progressive steps from the moment they start in early years. Teachers have a secure and increasing body of specialist knowledge to support pupils to learn across all subjects.

Leaders' plans for what pupils will learn are clearly set out. However, lessons provide a variable quality of learning for pupils. They do not consistently get enough opportunities to practise and apply what they are learning. This is because the subject knowledge of support staff guiding pupil groups is not consistently secure. Leaders have identified the training needs of staff and have plans underway to improve consistency.

Pupils receive daily phonics lessons to help them build the knowledge they need to begin to read. They have the chance to apply what they have learned in both their reading and writing tasks. However, as with other areas of the curriculum, pupils do not have enough high-quality practise and rehearsal of what they have learned. Books that pupils use to practise reading are matched well to their current knowledge. This is supporting their fluency and enjoyment of reading. Pupils also enjoy the opportunity to choose books that interest them from the school library.

Across the curriculum teachers use assessment effectively. This contributes towards them being able to spot where and when pupils need additional support. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide effective guidance to the staff in school. This ensures that wherever possible, pupils with SEND can learn alongside their friends in class. Planned interventions provide precise opportunities for pupils to receive extra help. Pupils with gaps in reading knowledge are provided with regular opportunities to read to an adult in school. The support they receive is improving pupils' confidence. However, adults do not always have the secure expertise to make the best use of these reading sessions. This means pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge are not catching up as quickly as they need to.

Children in the Reception Year are empowered to explore and learn through carefully designed activities. Adults working with them are skilled to get the best out of each individual child. The use of outdoor spaces is well considered to support all pupils' wider social development and positive mental health. As a result, pupils play happily together at playtimes in mixed-age groups. Pupils are respectful and have positive relationships with the adults in school. Pupils are beginning to develop confidence in their voices and opinions. For example, school council actions have led to the introduction of a 'friendship stop' on the playground, which pupils value.

Leaders, with the support of governors and the trust, have secured improvements in the school. They are focused on making sure this work continues. The trust has identified the need to build capacity in the governing body. This is to make sure governors can support and challenge leaders most effectively.

Staff in school report the high levels of satisfaction and are proud to work in the school. They are united in making the changes needed to further improve the experience of pupils.

In discussion with the headteacher, it was agreed that the implementation of the curriculum may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have arrangements for safeguarding that are well understood by staff and pupils. Staff know how to log concerns, and the importance of doing this swiftly. Leaders immediately follow up any concerns and seek additional support from external agencies if required.

Leaders have comprehensively considered the risks to pupils' safety in school. Risk assessments are used effectively to ensure that learning environments, including the off-site allotment, are safe spaces to learn and play.

Through lessons and assemblies, pupils gain an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and how to stay safe online. Pupils are happy to approach any adult in school if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum does not consistently match the ambition of leaders' established intent. This results in some variability in the quality of lessons that pupils take part in. Leaders must ensure that all staff involved in supporting learning have the expertise to deliver the planned, sequenced curriculum. Teachers and support staff must use their specialist knowledge to support pupils to build accuracy and fluency with the knowledge they are learning across the curriculum, including in reading. This is especially important for pupils with gaps in their reading who need additional practice to keep up or catch up.
- Trust leaders should complete the work started to ensure that the governing body has the capacity to fulfil its role effectively, to support and challenge leaders in their progress towards the agreed priorities.

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 predecessor school, Highgate Infant School, King's Lynn, to be good in October 2013.

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	145530
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10227557
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Edward Colman
Headteacher	Cheryl Kirby
Website	http://www.highgate.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Highgate Infant School joined KWEST Multi Academy Trust in February 2018, and subsequently Unity Education Trust in June 2021.
- There is a before- and after-school childcare provision on the school site which is managed by the governing body.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision to meet the needs of pupils.

Information about this inspection

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 of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and special educational needs coordinator. A meeting was also held with the chief executive officer and director of education of the multi academy trust.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, who is the school's designated safeguarding leader, the school administrator, and other staff to discuss safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans, safeguarding and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered three responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and two free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. Inspectors also observed the behaviour of pupils across the school site.

Inspection team

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Isabel Davis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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