

Inspection of Heron Park Primary Academy

Dallington Road, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 9EE

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They explain that everyone is welcome 'because of our values'. Pupils try hard to show these values of being respectful, curious, independent, resilient and aspirational. They are delighted when these positive behaviours are spotted and recognised by nominations, especially from their friends.

Pupils are happy at school. Mostly, they get along well together. Bullying is rare, but sometimes pupils can be unkind. When this happens, teachers help resolve things quickly. Pupils trust staff to deal with any concerns that they may have, and this helps them to feel safe. They are reassured by the presence of worry boxes to help them raise any problems.

Pupils have opportunities to develop responsibilities in the school, including becoming prefects, play leaders or helping to look after the chickens or goats. Pupils have lots of ideas which they are keen to share once pupil parliament gets going again, after a pause during the pandemic.

Leaders, staff and governors are a dedicated and ambitious team. Together they have brought about considerable improvement to the school. Pupils now benefit from a good standard of education.

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

Despite a number of staff changes, senior leaders, supported by the trust, provide clear strategic leadership. They have successfully prioritised the right things to improve the quality of education for pupils. Leaders have made the development of staff a key priority. They have targeted training well so that, for example, reading is taught consistently and expertly. Staff feel well supported by leaders.

Leaders have made English and mathematics a priority. In these subjects, the curriculum is well ordered so that pupils build knowledge well. Teachers know what to teach and when. They quickly spot any gaps pupils have in their knowledge and provide the support pupils need to understand and catch up. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are carefully supported so that they experience success.

Leaders, working with the trust development team, have designed an ambitious curriculum for pupils. They have considered the important knowledge for pupils to learn. They have sequenced this carefully. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is new and is not yet fully in place. This means that pupils do not know as much as they could in all subjects. Leaders have accurately identified these subjects and are working to make the necessary improvements. Subject leaders are being developed so that they can support staff as these curriculum changes are made.

The curriculum in the early years is developed well. Children get off to a good start. Language development is interwoven through all activities. Children chat happily

with staff and with each other as they learn. Leaders know that the early years curriculum needs careful alignment to the wider school curriculum as it is developed.

Pupils are excited by the new school library. This sits at the heart of the school. It symbolises the importance placed on learning to read. Teaching phonics is an important part of this. Pupils learn these phonic skills quickly and well. Anyone who struggles or starts to fall behind is identified promptly and given the help they need to catch up. All pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from books that match their needs well. This helps them to be successful and gain confidence. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the stories that staff read to them. Staff provided videos for parents during the pandemic to share ways of helping children to enjoy books.

Pupils mostly work hard and behave well during lessons. Occasionally, they can lose interest and behave less well or become distracted. Teachers are usually quick to deal with this and to re-engage pupils in their learning. Leaders have been working closely in partnership with parents to help emphasise the importance of pupils coming to school regularly and on time.

Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development is planned for carefully. As a result, pupils remember much about staying healthy and keeping safe. Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs and activities, such as trips that enhance the curriculum.

Governors have recently been given more information to help them further understand the work of the school. They are using this to question leaders. This has increased their capacity to help drive the school forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that everyone is aware of the importance of safeguarding and of what to do to help keep pupils safe. Staff are vigilant. They make sure to record and report any safeguarding concerns.

Warm relationships with pupils and families help ensure that needs are known. Leaders make sure that help is secured quickly and reviewed regularly for those who need it.

The curriculum is adapted to respond to risks as they are identified, such as online safety. Pupils regularly learn how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet as effective as it could be in some subjects. The revised curriculum is not yet fully in place. As a result, pupils do not learn and remember the planned curriculum fully. It is clear from leaders' actions that they are well underway with their work to implement the refined curriculum, but there is still more to do. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Some leaders are new to their roles or have not yet seen the new curriculum plans. This means they are not able to support teachers to deliver the intended curriculum consistently well across the school. Senior leaders should provide further training so that the curriculum for all subjects is implemented consistently and is enabling pupils to learn successfully and achieve well over time.

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	138390
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10227460
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tony Blaker
Headteacher/Executive headteacher	Joanna Richardson/Thomas McMorrin
Website	www.heronparkprimaryacademy.org/
Date of previous inspection	8 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Aurora Academies Trust.
- The headteacher left the school in April 2022. An acting head of school is currently in place and additional support is provided from an interim executive head.
- The school does not currently 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with school leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust and had a meeting with members of the local advisory board.

- The inspectors conducted deep dives into reading, English, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed curriculum planning with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils reading.
- Records associated with safeguarding were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. The inspectors spoke to staff about their safeguarding training and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff questionnaires. An inspector spoke to parents at the school gate.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff to discuss their views about the school, including with regard to workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons, in the playground and around the school.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Lovatt-Young	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemary Keen	Ofsted Inspector

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