

Inspection of a good school: Highfield Community Primary School

Blacon Point Road, Blacon, Chester, Cheshire CH1 5LD

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 July 2022

Outcome

Highfield Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Highfield Community Primary School is a welcoming, family-orientated school where pupils thrive socially and academically. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy attending.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and children in the early years, live up to the high expectations that leaders have for them. Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects.

Classrooms are calm and orderly. This allows pupils to concentrate and do their best in lessons. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They move around the school in a sensible manner. There are numerous high-quality displays in corridors and in classrooms which bring many aspects of the curriculum to life.

Pupils feel safe and share warm relationships with staff. They understand that adults will support them if they are anxious or worried.

Leaders expect pupils, including children in the early years, to behave well, and they do. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. Pupils are fully aware of rules, rewards and sanctions. Staff act quickly and successfully to resolve any instances of bullying.

Pupils have access to a wonderful range of activities and opportunities to develop their love of sport. They take an active role in decision-making within the school through their roles as school councillors and sports ambassadors.

Almost all parents and carers hold school leaders and staff in the highest regard. They are delighted to be part of the Highfield family.

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

Leaders, governors and staff share a common purpose. They want all pupils, including those with SEND to achieve to their best. Working together, they have designed an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils well, including those with SEND. Subject leaders have identified the key pieces of knowledge from the early years to Year 6 that they want pupils to learn. The curriculum introduces this knowledge in a logical manner.

In lessons, teachers explain new learning clearly. They use assessment strategies well to check that pupils have understood what has been taught before moving them on to more complex learning. Pupils, including children in the early years, listen well in class and have opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas.

Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their current and prior learning in subjects such as mathematics and physical education (PE). Pupils are beginning to make connections in their learning, recognising that their knowledge in one subject often supports their learning in another.

Staff have accessed a range of subject-specific training to keep their teaching skills fresh and up to date. Some subject leaders frequently monitor in depth how successfully the intended curriculums are being delivered in practice. However, these procedures are not as well developed in other subjects. As a result, some subject leaders' overview of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum is not as clear.

In some subjects, there are appropriate assessment systems in place to check pupils' progress as they learn more and remember more. However, these systems are at an early stage of development in many other subjects, for example history and geography. Consequently, leaders do not have an accurate overview of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Books are beautifully displayed around the school. Each class, including in the early years, has a book area which is well stocked with quality texts.

Leaders have made sure that staff in the early years and in key stage 1 are trained to deliver the school's new phonics programme well. Teachers introduce new sounds to pupils in a logical order. Pupils, including those with SEND, read books that are well matched to the words and sounds that they know. Leaders ensure that pupils who are struggling to read get the support that they need to help them catch up with their classmates. Older pupils confidently talk about their favourite authors and the different types of books that they like to read.

Staff are skilled in identifying pupils with SEND. This ensures that these pupils get the help and support that they need to learn successfully.

The curriculum is enhanced further through a broad range of opportunities beyond the subjects that pupils study. They enjoy a wide variety of exciting clubs before and after

school which broaden their awareness of the world around them. Through their links with a local zoo, pupils learn about conservation and what they must do to help look after the planet. Pupils learn about mutual tolerance and respect. They gain an understanding about a range of faiths and cultures that are different to their own. Pupils' physical and mental health is promoted well.

Governors are supportive of school leaders. They successfully challenge leaders to develop the curriculum and to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They find leaders supportive and approachable with regard to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are well trained and have a secure understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. They can identify when pupils are showing signs of distress and when there is a change in their demeanour. Staff are fully aware of procedures to follow should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare.

Leaders ensure that vulnerable families are well supported by the school and other agencies. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online. They understand the importance of not disclosing personal information or speaking to strangers when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders have not had the opportunity to check in depth that some curriculums are being delivered well. This hampers their ability to provide appropriate support for some teachers to deliver certain aspects of subject curriculum content. Subject leaders should ensure that staff benefit from appropriate support to deliver these curriculums effectively.
- Systems to check the progress that pupils make as they move from year to year are at an early stage of development in the foundation subjects. This means that leaders do not have an accurate overview of how well pupils are achieving in different year groups. Leaders should develop these systems further so that they have a secure understanding of how well pupils are learning the curriculum 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2012.

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	131421
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10211084
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rebecca Edwards
Headteacher	Nicola Dowling
Website	www.highfield-blacon.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for any pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector met with three members of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- She scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. She also spoke to staff about safeguarding, their workload and well-being.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school, in class and in the outdoor play area.
- She considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the Ofsted's questionnaire to staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire to pupils.
- The inspector conducted deep dives into early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of

lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult. She also spoke with curriculum leaders in some other subjects.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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