

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Handforth Grange Primary School

Ullswater Road, Handforth, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 3NG

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Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2022

## **Outcome**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils play a big part in making Handforth Grange the welcoming community that it is. They try hard to include everyone so that there are no outsiders in their school. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and at social times. Their conduct helps to create a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school.

Pupils know that there is always an adult close by who will help them if they have any worries. This helps pupils to feel safe and well cared for. Pupils trust staff to deal with any rare incidents of bullying quickly and well.

Pupils are happy in school. They spoke enthusiastically about the range of clubs and opportunities available to them. These activities help pupils to discover and nurture their talents and interests.

Pupils understand leaders' high expectations of them. Pupils arrive at school each day determined to 'be kind, create something beautiful and work hard'. These positive attitudes help pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well in several subjects. In a small number of subjects, leaders' development of the curriculum is at an early stage. Pupils do not build their knowledge as well as they could in these subjects.

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

New leaders have brought fresh impetus to improving the curriculum. They have given careful thought to what they want children and pupils to achieve as they move from the early years through to key stages 1 and 2. This includes pupils with SEND and pupils in the specially resourced provision for SEND (specially resourced provision).

The curriculum is well established in several subjects and in the early years. Leaders make sure that teachers know which content to teach and emphasise. Teachers carefully order this curriculum content. This helps pupils to build secure knowledge within the mixed-aged classes. Teachers regularly check that pupils remember essential knowledge. They help pupils to make connections between what they know already and new learning. Pupils achieve well in these subjects as a result.

In a small number of subjects, leaders have begun to refine the curriculum. However, previous weaknesses in curriculum design still exist in these subjects. Leaders do not provide teachers with the guidance and support that they need to deliver the curriculum as effectively as they should. Some teachers do not choose the most appropriate activities to support pupils' learning. Pupils' knowledge is uneven in these subjects as a result.

Leaders know how important it is for all pupils, including those with SEND and pupils in the specially resourced provision, to read well. Books are celebrated across the school. Pupils benefit from a well-stocked and inviting school library. They read books for pleasure and to broaden their general knowledge. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read with fluency and enjoyment. They are ready for the reading challenges of the key stage 3 curriculum.

Leaders have improved the way that phonics is taught. They have introduced a new phonics programme. Leaders make sure that staff are trained to deliver this programme well. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 build secure phonics knowledge. They apply this knowledge to read unfamiliar words accurately. Pupils read books that closely match the sounds that they have learned. Those pupils who need extra help receive well-tailored support. This helps pupils to develop their fluency and prepares them well for key stage 2.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to identify pupils who may have SEND. This starts in the early years where children's SEND is quickly identified. Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision, access a curriculum that is carefully matched to their needs. Pupils with SEND, and their classmates, learn without interruption.

Leaders provide high-quality opportunities for pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about diversity among people and families. They understand what makes a healthy relationship. Pupils' physical and emotional health are actively promoted by staff. Pupils also take an active role in supporting others. They are well prepared for their future lives.

The members of the newly formed leadership team are knowledgeable and committed. They benefit from the informed challenge and support offered by governors and trustees. Staff, including those who are new to teaching, feel valued and well supported. They are proud to work at the school. Staff appreciate that leaders are highly considerate of their workload and well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that geography and history may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to keep pupils safe. They identify pupils who may be vulnerable and pass on their concerns diligently to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Leaders ensure that pupils and their families get the support that they need. Leaders put in place highly effective support for pupils' emotional health and well-being.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when working and playing online. A range of visits and visitors help pupils, including pupils with SEND in the specially resourced provision, to recognise when a situation may put them at risk. Pupils know that they should speak out if they are made to feel uncomfortable by other pupils or adults.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a small number of foundation subjects, leaders have not defined all of the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. Pupils do not build up their knowledge equally well across the curriculum as a result. Leaders should clarify what they want pupils to learn and ensure that teachers deliver leaders' redesigned curriculums effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to deliver aspects of some foundation subjects well. Pupils' learning is uneven in these subjects as a result. Leaders should ensure that staff build up their knowledge about curriculum content so that they can implement subject curriculums consistently well.

## **Background**

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

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Wilmslow Grange Community Nursery and Primary School, to be outstanding in April 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.

## 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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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 146615  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Cheshire East   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10242492  |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 344   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees   |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Chris Hampshire   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Andrea Booth  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="https://handforthgrange.com">https://handforthgrange.com</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | Not previously inspected  |

## Information about this school

- Handforth Grange Primary School converted to become an academy school in February 2019. The school is part of the Frank Field Education Trust. When the predecessor school, Wilmslow Grange Community Nursery and Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- There have been changes to the leadership team since the school opened as an academy. A new headteacher and two deputy headteachers have been appointed.
- The school has a specially resourced provision base for pupils with SEND. This specially resourced provision base has places for seven pupils in key stages 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection, all seven places were allocated. Pupils' primary need in this base is autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Leaders do make use of alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector spoke with the chief executive officer and other trustees from the multi-academy trust. She also met with representatives of the local governing board, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. She looked at a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. The inspector also spoke to pupils about whether they feel safe in school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- The inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke with leaders and pupils about the curriculum in a small number of other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. She spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. She also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. She considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. This included the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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