

Inspection of a good school: Hawthorn Tree School

Toot Lane, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 0PT

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

Hawthorn Tree School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Every morning, senior leaders and staff are on hand at the front gate to welcome pupils into this nurturing school. As pupils rush into their classrooms in anticipation of what they will learn today, teachers remind them to show how they feel using the feelings boards. Teachers check on pupils who indicate that they are unhappy to see how they can help. Pupils feel both safe and happy at this school.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Many pupils get involved in extra-curricular activities. Pupils talk enthusiastically about residential visits. There is a focus on developing pupils' talents and interests. There are many opportunities for pupils to demonstrate leadership. There is a clear sense that staff and pupils live by the school motto: 'where everyone is somebody'.

Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare, and many pupils have never witnessed it. Pupils know that, at this school, bullying is not tolerated.

Parents speak very highly about the school and the support teachers give to pupils. One parent summed up the views of many, when they said: 'Fantastic school, going from strength to strength. An amazingly dedicated, passionate group of teachers who work hard for all the children.'

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

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum. It encompasses all the subjects and aims of the national curriculum. Subject leaders have identified the most important knowledge in each subject. They have structured the curriculum so that pupils revisit themes. For example, in geography, pupils in key stage 1 learn about local human features such as the types of housing that surround the school. As they get older, they conduct country studies and compare how these human features might differ in other European countries. This helps pupils learn as they build on what they already know.

Teachers teach most subjects well. They present subject matter clearly and match activities closely to what pupils need to learn. Teachers check pupils' understanding through skilled questioning. In many subjects, pupils gain a depth of knowledge. A few foundation subjects have recently been redesigned. Teaching is not yet as effective in these subjects as it is in all other subjects. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they could in a small number of subjects.

Leaders identify pupils' learning needs. They ensure that teachers understand how to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers skilfully support pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum as other pupils. The targets for pupils with SEND are regularly reviewed to ensure that they progress as well as they should.

Children start to learn to read as soon as they start in the Reception Year. The curriculum for early reading is well planned and teachers are early reading experts. Teachers use assessment well and deploy intervention when pupils fall behind. On occasion, the intervention strategies used are not as precise as they could be. Leaders are aware that a few staff need further training. The books pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. This helps them build confidence and become better readers quickly. Older pupils also read widely and often. Carefully chosen texts, such as 'Goodnight Mister Tom', support pupils' understanding of other curriculum areas. Some pupils act as story leaders and read to younger pupils during lunchtime. These initiatives help maintain a strong reading culture at the school. Pupils develop a love for reading.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. Teachers ensure that all activities support children's development and prepare them well for the next stage of their education. For example, children share tablet computers to take pictures of rectangles and triangles around the school. This supports children to develop socially and gives them the building blocks to study mathematics and computing in key stage 1.

Behaviour in the school is orderly. Classrooms are calm and pupils can spend every moment learning. Pupils understand the consistently used behaviour system. Pupils are polite, respectful and behave well.

Teachers encourage pupils' broader development. Pupils receive age-appropriate relationships education. Carefully considered assemblies allow pupils to develop morally. For example, pupils can talk about the devastation caused by the recent floods in Pakistan. They said it was their moral obligation to help people in times like these in any part of the world.

Staff are proud and motivated to work at this school. Teachers say that leaders do all they can to reduce workload. The well-being of staff is one of leaders' priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide teachers with regular safeguarding training and planned updates. Teachers use their training to remain vigilant. They report any signs that may indicate that a pupil could be at risk of harm.

Safeguarding leads are tenacious in their approach to keeping pupils safe. Leaders have developed further capacity in the school to provide pupils with early help if needed. Safeguarding leads work in partnership with external agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils.

The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe. Pupils are confident in reporting their own concerns and worries and know how to do this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Reading intervention for pupils who are falling behind is well targeted. This helps most pupils catch up quickly. On occasion, the strategies deployed during intervention are not as precise as they could be. Some pupils do not catch up as quickly as they should. Leaders must ensure that all adults trained to deliver reading interventions use the most effective strategies to support pupils who fall behind.
- A few foundation subjects have recently been redesigned. Teachers are not yet teaching these subjects as effectively as other subjects. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils do not get the depth of knowledge they could. Leaders should ensure that they continue to support all teachers to teach all subjects effectively.

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 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 school to be good in November 2016.

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

Unique reference number	120424
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10211590
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	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Walmsley
Headteacher	Michelle Palmer
Website	www.hawthorntree.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- A new headteacher took up her substantive role in September 2021.

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 carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. For these subjects, he checked the work that pupils had produced and looked at subject plans.

- The inspector met with leaders responsible for: behaviour; personal development; the early years foundation stage; and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils from key stages 1 and 2.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents related to safeguarding, including the school's single central record.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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