

Inspection of Highfield Junior School

South Hill Road, Shortlands, Bromley, Kent BR2 0RL

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Highfield Junior School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and love coming to Highfield. They described the school as a friendly and safe learning environment, and a place where staff care for them. Through daily school life, leaders promote the school's values, which include confidence, responsibility, determination and creativity. Pupils demonstrate these values as they learn and play.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are impeccable. They are courteous, respectful and welcoming of visitors. Any problems, including potential bullying, are resolved early. Pupils said that bullying is rare, but should it occur, staff are quick to deal with it. Pupils and staff have positive working relationships. All of this contributes to the calm and orderly atmosphere in school.

Staff have high expectations of all, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils meet these expectations and achieve well. However, in a few subjects, pupils' achievement is not as strong.

Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership responsibilities, such as those of house captains, eco-leaders and school council members. They value how these opportunities enable them to contribute to the school and local community. For example, pupils raise funds for a local hospice and organise donations to a foodbank.

Pupils can take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including flute lessons and choir, as well as hockey, korfbal and boxing.

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

Leaders have designed a comprehensive curriculum that outlines the knowledge and skills that pupils need to acquire. The curriculum is both extensive and well rounded. Leaders have examined curriculum content carefully, especially in mathematics, history and English. In these subjects, leaders have refined the curriculum further. In the reading curriculum, for example, leaders have introduced a more diverse and rich range of authors for pupils to study.

Leaders and the trust make sure that teachers access suitable professional development. They prioritise developing teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers demonstrate secure knowledge as a result. They typically know how to help pupils learn subject content. In history, for example, teaching focuses on making sure that pupils can remember knowledge learned in earlier lessons. However, in a small number of subjects, teaching does not help pupils to retain important knowledge and ideas over time. Typically, teachers check pupils' understanding effectively.

Leaders prioritise the development of reading. If required, pupils receive explicit teaching of phonics from Year 3. This is centred on ensuring that pupils learn and practise how to decode words accurately. Pupils who struggle with reading receive

timely support so that they can catch up. Staff promote reading for pleasure and the development of vocabulary.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. Leaders provide staff with training to ensure that pupils' needs are identified accurately. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers, and they learn well.

Leaders have designed an effective curriculum that supports pupils to develop their understanding of relationships, mental health, well-being and equality. Pupils learn about citizenship and the diversity of the wider world through well-planned assemblies, workshops and personal, social and health education.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development through carefully planned activities. Some of these are chosen specifically to support pupils to deepen their learning in each subject. For example, pupils recently visited a local river as part of their learning about physical features in geography. Pupils attend a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including for lacrosse and science.

Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning. In lessons, pupils follow the class rules and know routines well. Learning takes place without any disruptions. Pupils are polite and work well together. They are respectful towards staff, their peers and visitors.

The trust board and local committee are knowledgeable and experienced. They understand the school's priorities for improvement. They offer appropriate support and challenge to school leaders. Staff feel supported because leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding pupils is a priority and is a shared responsibility for all staff. Staff understand their responsibilities well. They are knowledgeable about what to look out for and how to report concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders ensure that rigorous recruitment checks are carried out on staff.

The trust provides regular safeguarding training and updates for governors and staff. Leaders work alongside external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. Pupils said that they feel safe and know how to keep safe in different situations, for instance when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teaching does not concentrate on the important concepts that pupils need to know and remember. As a result, pupils do not learn some subject content securely. Leaders should support teachers to help pupils to retain more of their learning 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.

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	140257
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10242301
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	370
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Chandler
Headteacher	Allison Morris
Website	www.highfield-jun.bromley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 January 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Highfield Junior is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Highfield Junior School converted to become an academy school in October 2013. When its predecessor school, Highfield Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- In 2017, the school joined the Nexus Education Schools Trust (NEST). NEST consists of 15 schools.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2019.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, inclusion team, members of staff and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer, the chair of the local committee and a member of the local committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors had discussions with subject leaders about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited some lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work in geography, art and French.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school improvement policy, the school's self-evaluation, other policies and records of the work of governance.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school during break- and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers on both days of the inspection and talked to a group of pupils formally about their learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised information about the school's safeguarding procedures for recruiting staff, the single central record, policies, records associated with safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and arrangements for keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Also, inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jeffery Quaye, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Pratt	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Franklin	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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