

Inspection of Heybridge Primary School

Rowan Drive, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4TU

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning at Heybridge Primary School. They enjoy their lessons and work hard to achieve the high expectations staff have of them. Pupils love reading and benefit from the opportunities they have to choose their own books from the school library. They are enthusiastic about the stories that teachers read to them at the end of the school day.

Pupils behave well in their lessons and during their break and lunchtimes. Older pupils appreciate the opportunity to have positions of responsibility, such as playground leads and prefects, and they enjoy supporting younger pupils with games on the playground. Pupils like visiting 'Café Heybridge' at lunchtime if they want somewhere quiet and calm to eat and play with friends. Pupils know that if bullying occurs, there is always a member of staff to help them deal with it. Pupils are happy and safe at school.

Pupils know and understand their school values, 'The Heybridge Fives', and demonstrate these throughout the day. They are respectful of each other and look after each other. Pupils take an active role in the school. Democratically elected school councillors are proud to represent their school and contribute to events such as the Remembrance Parade.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. The curriculum sets out the knowledge pupils need to learn and remember. The curriculum begins in the early years and clearly shows where learning will start in the school's pre-school.

Leaders have provided training for staff on how to teach most of the planned curriculum well. Teachers' subject knowledge is, typically, secure. Teachers use precise questions to check pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils learn well and can apply their learning in more complex ways. For example, in geography, pupils talk with confidence and accuracy about current learning on volcanoes and how their previous learning on earthquakes has supported them during recent lessons.

In some subject areas, the curriculum has been introduced more recently than in others. In these instances, teachers do not have as secure an understanding of the curriculum. They are not as effective in checking what pupils know and can do. In some instances, staff do not have sufficient subject knowledge to precisely check how well pupils have learned the planned curriculum and then adapt it effectively. As a result, pupils' learning and understanding is less secure than it could be.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They have carefully planned the texts, books and stories pupils will learn from early years to Year 6. Pupils who find reading difficult are identified quickly. Well-trained teaching assistants provide high-quality support to

help pupils develop their confidence and fluency. Children in the early years are introduced to the sounds letters make as soon as they start school. Staff in the early years share books, stories and rhymes with children. Good-quality language is modelled to children to develop their language skills. There is a range of activities for children to take part in. When activities are precisely planned, they help children to achieve well.

Leaders have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need. There have been significant improvements in the provision for these pupils since the previous inspection. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works with staff to precisely identify what help pupils with SEND need. Specific interventions, use of resources and careful adaptations to the curriculum help pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils respect and celebrate differences between people. They know that everyone is different and that it is 'good to be me'. Assemblies help to teach pupils about themes such as relationships. Carefully planned events, such as visits from chefs and geologists, help to teach pupils more about the curriculum they learn and provide them with inspiration for future jobs.

Leaders have introduced new procedures to reduce the number of pupils who are absent from school. Staff work with parents to provide support and challenge when pupils are frequently absent. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. However, there is still a core of pupils who are missing too much of their education owing to absence.

While most parents are positive about the work of the school, there is a significant minority of parents who do not feel that leaders communicate well with them.

Those responsible for governance have a good understanding of what the school does well and what could be better. Trustees and the local governing board hold leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure they complete all required pre-employment checks on adults new to the school. Staff receive regular training on how to keep pupils safe. They understand the training they have received and know how to identify if a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff raise concerns immediately. Records relating to concerns are detailed and well kept. Leaders ensure that they act on concerns raised in a timely manner. Leaders use appropriate support from outside professionals, and from within the school, when needed, for vulnerable pupils. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some inconsistencies in the subject knowledge of teachers. This means that the planned curriculum is not always taught, assessed or adapted as effectively as it could be. This results in gaps in what pupils know and can remember. Leaders must ensure that all staff are given the training and support they need to teach, assess and adapt the planned curriculum effectively so that pupils have a better understanding of what they have learned.
- Absence and persistent absence have begun to reduce. However, there remains a core of pupils persistently absent from school. This has a negative impact on their learning. Leaders must ensure they securely embed the new approaches to promoting good attendance so that fewer pupils are absent from school.
- There is a significant minority of parents who feel that leaders do not communicate well with them. This means they do not have a clear understanding of how well their child is learning at school or how to support them effectively at home. Leaders must develop effective approaches to engage the parental community when parents have concerns.

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	138994
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10240191
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	447
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gaenor Bagley
Headteacher	Simon Waltham
Website	www.heybridge-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs breakfast and after-school care for pupils.
- In January 2022, the nursery, which was run by an external provider on site, joined the school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the second routine inspection the school 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, computing and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspectors considered curriculum plans and work in other foundation subjects. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school’s record of background checks of adults at the school, and a sample of child protection files. Inspectors also spoke with trustees, the chair of the local governing board, the designated safeguarding lead and staff about safeguarding practices at the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the SENCo, family liaison worker, subject leaders, staff, trustees, governors, the regional director from the trust and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of governing body meetings, governor monitoring reports and school policies.
- There were 65 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered alongside 46 free-text responses. Inspectors spoke with parents as they arrived at school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- There were 35 responses to Ofsted’s questionnaire for school staff. Inspectors also spoke with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Ania Vaughan	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Shadbolt	Ofsted Inspector

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