

Inspection of a good school: Highbank Primary and Nursery School

Winscombe Mount, Clifton Estate, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG11 9FP

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

Outcome

Highbank Primary and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They treat each other with kindness. In the early years, children quickly learn that their teachers have high expectations of their behaviour. They are 'as quiet as mice' as they move from one activity to the next. Pupils learn to work well together in lessons. At breaktime, many older pupils enjoy the climbing frames, while others practise their ball skills or talk with friends.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know how to stay safe when using a computer and what to do if they have concerns about what they encounter online. They know the names of the 'safeguarding crew.' The school saying, 'Say no, go tell,' is well understood. Pupils are confident they will receive help if they are worried. Leaders take the rare complaints of bullying very seriously. Pupils are supported to put things right if they make wrong choices.

In lessons, pupils enjoy and remember their learning. They relish the challenges provided by teachers. They use the right vocabulary to talk about their work. Pupils appreciate the opportunities that leaders provide for them to try something different. During the inspection, pupils met an author and a scientist who were visiting the school.

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

Leaders have created a well-organised and relevant curriculum which starts in early years and prepares pupils well for their next steps in education. Leaders ensure that teachers have the guidance they need to plan and deliver effective learning activities. There are regular opportunities for pupils to review what they have learned so that they do not forget important knowledge. Pupils who join the school during the academic year or who need help are quickly assessed and receive extra catch-up teaching.

Leaders were disappointed with the attainment of Year 2 pupils in reading in 2022. These pupils missed a lot of face-to-face teaching because of the COVID restrictions. Leaders have invested in a new curriculum for early reading. Staff are well trained. They are now

using the new materials with consistency and expertise. This new approach helps children in the early years to quickly learn the basic sounds and how to blend them. Once pupils can recognise all of the sounds, leaders ensure that pupils learn how to read skilfully. Staff match books well to pupils' needs. Pupils regularly practise their reading skills.

For older pupils, leaders' enthusiasm for reading shines through the entire curriculum. Interesting stories and non-fiction books are linked to the topics studied. Many pupils continue reading about the different topics at home. In 2022, pupils in Year 6 had made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

Leaders have responded well to the different special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of some pupils. Pupils with SEND are fully included in the classroom and life of the school. Leaders accurately identify pupils' needs without delay when they join the school. Teachers plan appropriate support for these pupils. Pupils with SEND say they are happy at the school.

Staff ensure that pupils are focused on learning. They use the same signals consistently to let the pupils know when to listen, when to discuss and when to read or write. All pupils respond very quickly to these directions. Pupils in every year group are able to work undisturbed by distracting behaviour. They cooperate well with each other and their teachers. Pupils understand that they make choices which have consequences. Rewards such as being at the front of the line for a week are particularly popular.

Staff provide pupils with enriching opportunities to learn about themselves and the wider world. Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership roles in the school. They understand the importance of values such as equality, diversity and democracy, which are important in modern Britain. Pupils also develop key characteristics which are central to the work of the school.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They have seen the school develop and improve over the last few years under current senior leaders and governors. They appreciate leaders' approach to managing their workload. Many subject leaders are new. Some leaders do not gather the information they need or systematically analyse the impact of their work. However, leaders are extremely ambitious for the school. They strive to make sure that the school is an exciting and vibrant place which local families will choose for their child.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to be alert to possible risks to pupils. They deal with safeguarding concerns swiftly and appropriately. Leaders work well with external agencies to make sure that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need. The designated safeguarding lead is tenacious when necessary.

Pupils learn how to stay safe at school, at home and online. They know how to report concerns if someone online makes them feel uneasy.

Leaders carry out background checks to determine the suitability of adults working at the school. Governors scrutinise leaders' safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that they are carried out effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In 2022, pupils' attainment of the expected standard in reading at the end of Year 2 was low when compared to national averages. This means that too many pupils were behind with their reading and not fully ready for key stage 2. Leaders were disappointed and have already invested in a new phonics programme. Leaders should continue to ensure the new programme is implemented consistently and skilfully so that more pupils reach the expected standard in the national phonics screening check and key stage 1 reading assessment.
- Senior and subject leaders do not always fully check and evaluate the strategies they employ to achieve the school's improvement priorities. As a result, they do not always know accurately how well the school's priorities are being implemented. Support and challenge for leaders or teachers, including from governors, is consequently less precise. Senior, phase and subject leaders should ensure that their evaluation of a range of information linked to improvement strategies is thorough, informing a more strategic analysis of strengths, weaknesses and next steps for the school.

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 June 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

Unique reference number	140017
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10240799
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Munro
Executive Headteacher	Lee Noble
Website	www.highbankpriandnursery.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is an academy in the Transform Trust. It is led by an executive headteacher, who is shared with another school in the same trust, and by a head of school.
- There is a breakfast club which is run by the school.
- School leaders do not use alternative provision.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, a range of activities were carried out. These included a check of the quality of education using deep dives into early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed relevant safeguarding documentation.

- The inspector visited the breakfast club and observed pupils during breaktime and lunchtime and around the school site.
- The inspector met with the leader responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND and visited lessons to see how the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector met with governors and the chief executive officer of the trust. She reviewed minutes from meetings held by those responsible for governance.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires. She also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Jo Ward, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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