

Inspection of Highnam CofE Primary Academy

Wetherleigh Drive, Highnam, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 8LW

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

'An amazing school' is a view shared by many parents, and shows what it is like to be a pupil at Highnam. Pupils flourish at this school and are proud to be part of it. The school vision, 'Inspiring Everyone to Shine', is lived out through the exceptional personal development of pupils. Staff have high expectations of all pupils and, as a result, pupils achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They fully understand the school's value of 'do to others what you would have them do to you'. Pupils are supportive and caring of each other. Bullying is extremely rare. If it does happen, pupils say adults sort it out quickly.

Staff expect all pupils to be responsible, respectful and active members of the school, who contribute positively to it. For example, class ambassadors take their role and responsibilities seriously. This builds their confidence and self-esteem. The school offers pupils a wide range of clubs, from sports to music and drama. These are fully inclusive and well attended by pupils.

Staff offer excellent pastoral support to pupils and their families. This ensures pupils feel happy and safe in school and are ready to learn.

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

Leaders are ambitious for the children and pupils at this school. The curriculum is well planned with the key knowledge that teachers want pupils to know and remember. In most subjects, the planned learning is securely in place. For example, in reading and mathematics, teachers revisit prior learning to help the most important knowledge stick in pupils' memory. Published outcomes for Year 6 were strong in the core subjects in 2022. However, some foundation subjects are not yet embedded as effectively as others. Where this is the case, teachers do not build on what pupils already know and can do. Leaders have plans in place to ensure all subjects are well established, to enable all pupils to gain the depth and fluency of knowledge they need.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum content and experience the same opportunities as their classmates. Leaders identify and assess their needs quickly. In classrooms, pupils with SEND are well cared for. Environmental adaptations and supportive aids are in place for individual pupils. Pupils can explain how these aids help them. This helps pupils with SEND achieve well.

Reading is at the core of pupils' education. Leaders expect that every pupil will be a fluent reader by the end of Year 2. Children in the early years get off to a great start. Staff have a sharp focus on developing children's language and communication. Children learn phonics from the start of the Reception Year. Children confidently practise saying and writing the sounds they are learning. Staff keep a

close eye on pupils who are not keeping up. They provide extra support to help them catch up. Pupils have access to high-quality books across a range of genres, cultures and topics. These books help to enrich the curriculum and develop pupils' vocabulary. Pupils make regular use of the library, classroom libraries and books held in the headteacher's office to select books to read for pleasure and to learn new knowledge. By the time pupils leave school, they are confident and competent readers.

Story time is a firm favourite with pupils. They love the atmosphere teachers create, with the 'roaring fire' and 'twinkling lights', which helps them immerse themselves in the story.

Pupils are exceptionally courteous of both each other and adults. Pupils demonstrate impeccable manners. They know the importance of respect, regardless of people's background, belief or culture. Pupils are positive and enthusiastic learners who embrace every opportunity the school provides. They show commitment to their education through regular attendance and positive attitudes in lessons.

Pupils can recognise the needs of others. For example, they learn sign language to support pupils who find communication difficult. Charity work is integral to the work of the school. This develops pupils' socialisation skills and the ability to work together.

Leaders and staff enjoy a harmonious relationship. Staff comment on how senior leaders value and appreciate the work they do. They are united in their belief that every pupil deserves the very best. Leaders ensure that staff get time, opportunities and guidance to develop their teaching practice. Staff feel well supported. Staff value what leaders do to help them manage their workload and support well-being. Leaders are ably supported by the local board of governors and the wider trust, who provide both support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff, irrespective of their role, are well trained to notice and report any signs of concern. Leaders are swift to support pupils and families in need of help. They do not hesitate to escalate concerns when needed. Leaders carry out the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils.

Leaders provide a curriculum that teaches pupils to understand age-appropriate risks, including personal safety and how to be safe online. Pupils know that adults will listen to them if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum is not fully embedded. As a result, pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not gain the planned knowledge they need to achieve as well as they could across these subjects. Leaders need to complete the process of embedding the planned curriculum effectively in all subjects.

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	137102
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10229016
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Craig Pumfrey
Headteacher	Elizabeth Coldrick
Website	www.highnam.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 September 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Primary QuEST Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school does not use 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 first 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other school staff and three members of the local governing body. The lead inspector spoke with the chief executive officer. A phone call was held with the director of education from the Diocese of Gloucester.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with

subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors sampled pupils' work across a range of subjects, including history and geography.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult. Story time was visited in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including the safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and local governors about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- The lead inspector considered key documentation, including development plans and governors' minutes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. The lead inspector met with the headteacher to discuss and scrutinise how they respond to behaviour incidents, and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text replies, and responses to the staff and pupil surveys. An inspector spoke with parents at the end of the school day. Other correspondence that inspectors received was also considered.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Evans

Ofsted Inspector

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