

# Inspection of Helmingham Primary School and Nursery

School Road, Helmingham, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 6EX

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Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy attending this small, friendly school. They like that their school 'is like a big, happy family'. Pupils respond well to staff's high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils learn to follow routines from the very start in the early years. This sets the tone for pupils' good conduct. Pupils play safely and responsibly.

Pupils enjoy outdoor learning, practising archery, and exploring their woodland environment. Pupils are very happy at school. They focus on their learning. Pupils like that their work and personal achievements are recognised by adults. There are lots of opportunities to listen to stories and to learn to read. Many pupils develop and sustain a love of reading. However, pupils do not develop a secure understanding of important facts and concepts in some subjects.

Pupils feel safe. They know the difference between bullying and falling out. They very rarely experience bullying. If it does happen, leaders quickly put a stop to it.

Pupils like learning about different places and people. They are particularly enthusiastic about the trips they make to places such as Ipswich Museum. They look forward to their residential visit and meeting up with friends from their partner school.

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

Leaders are ambitious for what pupils can achieve. They have improved pupils' learning behaviours. Leaders have rightly prioritised the development of a new curriculum. They have provided training to improve teachers' subject knowledge. However, leaders have not checked closely enough on how well the curriculum is helping pupils learn important knowledge.

Leaders have introduced an appropriately challenging, broad and balanced curriculum. They have identified the important small blocks of knowledge that pupils will learn and the order in which they will learn these. In some subjects, staff are only just getting to grips with the essential knowledge that leaders want pupils to know. Leaders' planned curriculum is not being implemented as intended in every subject.

Teachers present information clearly and confidently. They start lessons by reviewing previous learning. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils revisit important learning across the school year. This results in gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils cannot easily recall and use important knowledge that underpins more complex ideas.

Leaders have made reading a priority. Pupils enjoy reading and value their well-stocked library. Teachers select interesting texts for pupils to study and to listen to for pleasure. These are often linked to topics pupils are studying.

Leaders have a new phonics programme. They have provided staff with training and guidance. Adults know which sounds to teach and when to teach them. Some staff are less well trained, however, meaning there are inconsistencies in how well early reading

is taught. This means that some pupils' progress in reading is patchy. Pupils take home appropriate books to practise the sounds they learn in class. Leaders' work to assess how well pupils are keeping up with the phonics programme is in the early stages of development.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as early as possible. Staff work closely with outside agencies and specialist providers to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support that they need. However, pupils with SEND experience the same inconsistencies in the delivery of the curriculum as other pupils.

Children settle quickly into the early years. They follow clear routines that help them work and play safely and purposefully. Children have many opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas and engage in role play. They are taught by caring and supportive staff. Leaders have identified the precise knowledge that children should learn by the end of the early years. Children are well prepared for learning in Year 1. This sound start is not built on as effectively as it should be.

Pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. They behave well in lessons and during social times. As a result, the school is calm, orderly and learning is rarely disrupted.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. Pupils learn how to look after themselves and how to maintain healthy relationships. Pupils learn about the importance of respecting people with different beliefs and lifestyles. Opportunities to take responsibility, including election to the 'Pupil Parliament', help pupils become active citizens.

Trustees and locality committee members are committed to the school and its pupils. They understand the school's strengths and have acted wisely to bring about improvements. Staff feel supported and involved in the changes that leaders are putting in place. They appreciate the support and training they receive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders know their local community well. They understand the challenges that their pupils face. Leaders make sure that staff receive appropriate training to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. When staff report concerns, leaders deal with them effectively. Leaders work well with external agencies. This means that families get the help they need at the right time.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum, assemblies and visiting speakers. This includes learning about online safety.

Trustees make regular checks and keep a careful oversight of safeguarding procedures.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not remembering or applying enough knowledge from the content they have been taught in a range of subjects. This means they are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be. Leaders should ensure that, in all subjects, teachers support pupils to learn important knowledge, content and concepts.
- Leaders do not know how well pupils are learning across the full range of subjects. Leaders cannot respond quickly enough to adapt the curriculum because they do not know when pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that they know how well pupils are learning across all subjects and ensure that this information is used to inform teachers' and subject leaders' planning.
- Leaders have prioritised improvements in different areas of the curriculum. However, in one subject, the planned curriculum is not being delivered as intended. As a result, pupils are missing out on important content. Leaders should ensure that pupils are gaining all the knowledge and understanding they need in every subject.
- Implementation of the early reading curriculum is inconsistent because not all staff are sufficiently trained. As a result, not all pupils learn to read with as much accuracy and fluency as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff delivering phonics are trained to the same high standard so that phonics teaching is consistently effective.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146961
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267768
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	31
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Dawn Carman-Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephanie Hawes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://helminghamprimaryschool.org.uk">helminghamprimaryschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Consortium Multi Academy Trust. The school became an academy in March 2019.
- There is an early morning childcare club once a week, run by school staff.
- The school provides nursery provision for three-year-old children.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## 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, members of the school's leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator and the pastoral leader. Inspectors also met with the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including development plans, governor visit reports and minutes of governor meetings.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors looked at the single central record of pre-employment checks. Inspectors spoke to leaders, school staff and pupils to review the school's records and arrangements for safeguarding.
- To gather and consider the views of parents, inspectors spoke to parents during sports day. Inspectors considered the 11 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including 10 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and the 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Nick Rudman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ryan Freeman

Ofsted Inspector

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