

# Inspection of a good school: Howley Grange Primary School

Howley Grange Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 0HS

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Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

## Outcome

Howley Grange Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to a community where everyone is valued and treated equally. The school's values of 'achieve, believe and care' inspire pupils and are evident in how pupils behave. Parents are grateful for the way in which the Howley Grange team makes them, and their children, feel welcome.

Pupils listen carefully in lessons and behave well around school. They respect each other and the adults they work with. Appropriate support is in place for the small number of pupils who sometimes find it difficult to manage their behaviour. There is a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. Leaders' records show that bullying is rare, and, if it happens, adults deal with it swiftly. At breaktimes, pupils play together well, and no one is left out. Pupils feel safe in school.

Leaders and staff make sure that pupils achieve well academically by the time they leave the school. Through clubs and other experiences, pupils develop a range of interests. For example, pupils learn to cook, sing and grow vegetables in the school allotment, and they learn about nature in the forest school area. Pupils like taking part in sporting and community events. These events help to develop pupils' confidence.

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

Leaders and staff have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. For each subject, they have identified the small steps in learning. In Reception, children have opportunities to learn through play, to explore and be creative. On occasion, opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to deepen their learning are missed.

Teachers present information with clarity. They use different strategies to help pupils remember key knowledge and vocabulary. Assessment is effective across the curriculum, and teachers use assessment information well. They check pupils' understanding and identify gaps in learning. Pupils enjoy learning and respond well to praise and rewards

from adults. Adults address any occasional disruption in lessons quickly. This minimises its impact on learning.

Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils to read well. Pupils learn to use their knowledge of phonics to become fluent readers. Those who need extra help with their phonics catch up quickly. This is because they get the support they need. Pupils enjoy listening to stories. They speak with enthusiasm about the texts they read in lessons. However, some pupils do not know many authors, books, stories or poems.

Leaders have taken effective action to strengthen the mathematics curriculum. It is well designed and identifies the knowledge that pupils need to learn. In early years, for example, children develop a strong understanding of odd and even numbers during 'marvellous maths' sessions. Further up the school, older pupils complete complex mathematical calculations with confidence. Teachers make effective use of 'flashback' activities to help pupils remember their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) enjoy the same experiences as their peers. Leaders work with teachers to identify pupils' needs. A small number of pupils receive a personalised curriculum to help them develop their knowledge. In most subjects, teachers adapt activities to help pupils with SEND achieve well. Sometimes, the activities for pupils are too complex, and this hinders their learning.

The curriculum for personal development is well planned. Pupils learn about friendships, healthy relationships and mental health. Pupils enjoy taking on leadership responsibilities. These include school councillors, English ambassadors and digital leaders. Pupils take part in a range of inter-school netball and football competitions.

Howley Grange School benefits from the inspirational and values-driven leadership of the headteacher. She has instilled a culture where everyone works together for the pupils. Governors use their expertise well to provide appropriate support and challenge. There is a strong sense of camaraderie among governors, leaders and staff. Together, they ensure that workload is manageable.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders and governors make sure that systems for checking the suitability of staff to work with children are thorough. Staff appreciate the regular safeguarding updates and quizzes. These help them to stay up to date.

Staff are vigilant. They quickly identify and report concerns. Leaders work well with external agencies to offer families additional support, where needed.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to stay safe. For example, they learn about water safety, healthy relationships, e-safety and how to stay mentally healthy. Pupils know what to do if they have any worries.

## What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is well planned. There is now scope for leaders and teachers to focus on how pupils learn. Sometimes, pupils do not extend their knowledge and understanding as much as they could. This is because, in a few subjects, there are missed opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers implement the curriculum in ways that help pupils to learn in even greater depth.
- Some pupils do not read a wide range of texts. This prevents them from developing their knowledge of a broad range of authors, texts and genres. Leaders should encourage pupils to read more widely.
- Sometimes, the activities that staff plan for pupils with SEND are not closely matched to pupils' needs. This hinders how well some pupils learn new information. Leaders should make sure that staff are supported to develop a range of strategies and resources to help all pupils with SEND learn consistently well.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2013.

## 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>	103814
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268898
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	424
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Spencer Wigley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Lewis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.howleygrange.co.uk">www.howleygrange.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received following the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders. She also spoke with the special educational needs coordinator and a range of staff.
- The inspector met with governors and spoke with a representative from the local authority and the school improvement adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed some pupils reading. She also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. She reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector spoke with parents during the inspection and considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. She also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

## **Inspection team**

Usha Devi, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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