

Inspection of New Horizons Primary School

Portchester Road, North End, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO2 7JB

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning in this safe, caring and happy school. The starfish logo reminds everyone that 'each day they should strive to make a positive difference'. Pupils appreciate how adults help them to learn and try out new things. Leaders and staff expect pupils to behave well, concentrate in lessons and try their hardest. On the whole, pupils rise to these high expectations.

The youngest children get off to a flying start. They learn rules and routines, how to manage their emotions, and how to work and play together cooperatively. Leaders plan a range of trips and clubs, supporting pupils to widen their learning experiences.

Pastoral care is a strength and ensures that pupils' physical and mental well-being is a priority. Pupils are learning to trust staff and talk to them about their worries or problems. When bullying does occur, leaders deal with this effectively. There is a sharp focus on developing the knowledge and skills that pupils need to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Leaders understand that, for some pupils, school attendance needs to improve. Leaders' mantra of 'learning to read, to read to learn' is embedding across the whole school, and more children are now secure with phonics.

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

The members of the new leadership team are resolute and united in their ambition to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. They have already made improvements to some key aspects of the school following a period of change. Pupils now benefit from a consistently strong approach to the delivery of the curriculum.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is challenging and caters for the needs of all pupils at the school. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The curriculum is well sequenced and broken down into the small steps that build towards the important knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn. Teachers explain things well. They focus on building pupils' vocabulary across all subjects, making links when appropriate. Teachers make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have access to the full curriculum offer. Leaders identify pupils' additional needs early and work closely with other professionals to provide adaptations and extra support when necessary.

The early years learning environment, both inside and outside, is vibrant and inviting. It is a place where children thrive, with purposeful activity and positive relationships. Staff work relentlessly to secure children's language and communication skills.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Teachers begin this work as soon as children join the school. Staff quickly create a love of stories and books that continues through the school. However, some staff lack the expertise to teach phonics consistently well to the minority of pupils who struggle to learn to read. Adults frequently listen to pupils read, but sometimes the books chosen are not well matched to the sounds that pupils know and can read.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is mostly polite and sensible. The four 'learning heroes' are helping pupils to persevere and overcome challenges. Occasionally, staff do not always insist on the best possible learning behaviour. Leaders ensure that pupils with the most complex social and emotional needs receive the support needed to be successful. While overall school attendance remains strong, there are a small group of pupils who are missing too much time at school. Consequently, they risk falling behind with their learning. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND or pupils who are vulnerable.

Leaders ensure pupils' personal development is promoted well. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including when online. They know the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. Pupils enjoy a range of trips. Highlights include the residential trip to the Isle of Wight and visits to Spinnaker Tower and Paultons Park. These experiences were linked to curriculum learning about forces in science. Pupils understand the importance of positive relationships and how these form. They learn to be active, respectful citizens through their litter project and beach-cleaning work, which has helped to earn the school a recognised eco award.

Those responsible for governance care deeply about their school and their community. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors assure themselves that leaders take appropriate action to secure continuous school improvement. All staff are proud to be part of this school and enjoy working here. Teachers benefit from the professional development opportunities that leaders provide. School leaders consider staff well-being and workload when introducing any new initiative.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have secured a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained to recognise signs of harm in children. They report any concerns promptly, and leaders follow these up meticulously. Leaders and staff get to know their pupils and families very well. Leaders work effectively with other professionals to reduce risks to vulnerable pupils. They are persistent in securing the help pupils need quickly. Leaders worked swiftly to address minor weaknesses found in the recording of some information. Leaders ensure that checks on adults appointed to work in the school are thorough and monitored effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read are not catching up as quickly as they could. As a result, they struggle to decode new words using their knowledge of phonics. Leaders must ensure that these pupils receive enough regular additional support from staff who are experts in using the new phonics programme.
- A small group of pupils, including some of the most vulnerable, are not attending school as often as they should. These pupils miss out on important learning and are at risk of falling behind their peers. Leaders must implement the trust's attendance policy with rigour and continue to work closely with parents and the local authority.

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	141530
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10268021
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	555
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gerard Newman
Headteacher	Anna Webb (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.newhorizonsprimaryschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 December 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In September 2020, Meredith Infant School closed and joined with Isambard Junior School as part of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust. The name of the combined school was changed to New Horizons Primary School.
- The head of school joined the school in September 2022 and was appointed to the head of school role in November 2022. The executive headteacher started in May 2023. All other senior leaders are new to their posts this academic year. Some are new to the school, and some were internally promoted.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school currently uses one registered 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 held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and chair of the board of trustees. He also met representatives from the school's local and regional governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, computing and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, looked at a sample of pupils' work and, where possible, visited a sample of lessons. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a member of staff.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents, including the school's record of recruitment checks. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead as well as the trust-wide and regional safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and staff. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' written comments. An inspector also spoke to groups of parents on the morning of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views throughout the day, including during lesson visits and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Alan Derry, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Parker	His Majesty's Inspector
Scott Reece	His Majesty's Inspector

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