

Inspection of High Firs Primary School

Court Crescent, Swanley, Kent BR8 8NR

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 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?

Leaders have ensured that pupils experience a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum. From early years upwards, pupils are fully engaged in their learning. The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement from early years onwards. Staff provide timely support when needed to enable pupils to keep up. This helps pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), usually to achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils show consistent respect and kindness towards each other. Behaviour in lessons is calm and orderly, which enables pupils to focus on their learning. Pupils know that if there are incidents of bullying, an adult will deal with these. This results in pupils feeling happy and safe. Adults know pupils as individuals, which helps them to offer appropriate pastoral support when needed. As a result, relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

All pupils engage in forest school activities while at school, which helps them to develop a love for, and appreciation of nature. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities away from the classroom that help them become well-rounded and enthusiastic learners. These include a diverse range of clubs and trips.

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

The school has been on an improvement journey over the last couple of years, which is having a positive impact on pupils' education. Leaders have transformed the curriculum to ensure that the school is ambitious for all pupils. They have designed a curriculum that starts in early years and gradually builds pupils' learning in small steps as it progresses through the school. These changes are having a positive impact on achievement, which means that more pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education.

Most teachers check pupils' understanding from lesson to lesson. This helps them to know what pupils have learned and remembered. However, some staff, in some subjects, do not consistently help pupils to connect new learning with what they have studied previously. This means that some new learning is not securely committed to pupils' long-term memory. The school has identified this as an area to be refined.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with SEND. There are clear procedures in place to identify pupils with additional needs, which start from the moment children enter the school in Reception. The school knows pupils and their barriers to learning well, and staff are skilled at adapting their teaching. This ensures that each pupil makes secure progress across the curriculum.

The teaching of reading is effective. Children in Reception start to learn phonics as soon as they are in school. All staff have been trained and are experts in early reading, delivering phonics lessons consistently well. The school ensures that pupils

who struggle with early reading are given helpful support to enable them to keep up. This is effective and helps all pupils to become confident and fluent readers. All this work has helped to create a love of reading that is evident around the school. The school ensures that pupils have access to a diverse range of high-quality texts, and they are routinely immersed in stories and books.

Pupils behave extremely well in lessons. This is because teachers have established clear routines and expectations. Pupils across the school work hard and focus on their learning. At playtimes and while moving around the school, pupils show positive behaviour.

Pupils' personal development is well considered. They benefit from a range of extra-curricular clubs and opportunities. These include cycling proficiency, learning to play a musical instrument and interesting trips. These opportunities help to develop pupils' interests and talents. The school encourages pupils to take on leadership opportunities as they move through the school. Pupils are excited to talk about how their leadership positively impacts on the school community. This includes the sports leaders who arrange competitions.

Governors know the school very well and are well placed to fulfil their statutory duties. They make effective use of feedback from staff to inform decision-making to improve the school further without impacting on staff workload. Leaders support the well-being of all staff. This has included making changes to the feedback and marking policy, which supports pupils' learning and helps staff workload. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel supported by school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, some staff do not precisely check that pupils can recall in the long term the content that they have been taught. This means that pupils' learning is sometimes variable. The school should ensure that all staff carefully check pupils' understanding of previous learning and help them to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas. The school should also ensure that subject leaders maintain a close oversight of how well pupils are learning in their subject.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	118541
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10268940
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Geary
Headteacher	Andrew Kilbride
Website	www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and some senior leaders have started in their roles and some have remained in post.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing committee and a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading aloud.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents provided by the school. These included the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, the pupil premium statement and minutes from governing body meetings.
- Inspectors observed behaviour at breaktimes and in lessons.
- The views of parents and carers, staff and pupils were considered through Ofsted's online surveys and conversations during the inspection. On the first day of the inspection, an inspector met with parents in person.

Inspection team

Michael Eggleton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemary Keen	Ofsted Inspector

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