

Inspection of an outstanding school: Hillmorton Primary School

Watts Lane, Hillmorton, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 4PE

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 October 2023

Outcome

Hillmorton Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have continued to ensure an outstanding educational experience for all pupils. Pupils flourish and achieve extremely well academically, socially and personally. Pupils love to learn at this school. They participate eagerly in lessons and talk confidently about what they know and can do. They work really hard and rise to the challenges that their teachers provide. Pupils are rightly proud of their work. Leaders have very high expectations of pupils and want them to achieve the best that they can.

Pupils embrace the 'secrets of success' from the start. They talk about how they try new things, push themselves, concentrate and understand others. Pupils treat everyone with the utmost respect. They know that bullying is not tolerated. Differences are celebrated, and pupils go out of their way to include others. Behaviour is exemplary.

Leaders, staff and governors work together to help each child find their spark. Pupils relish the wealth of opportunities and carefully planned extra-curricular activities. They take their leadership responsibilities seriously. For example, reading buddies working with younger pupils demonstrate the utmost patience and kindness. Many parents and carers commented that the staff are 'fantastic' and 'go over and above' to ensure that each child thrives.

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

Leaders have further developed and enhanced the quality of education on offer. Throughout the school's expansion and the COVID-19 pandemic, they have worked tirelessly to embed a strong, shared vision. They ensure that a highly competent staff team is in place. Leaders and staff focus on providing an outstanding education and exemplary care.

Leaders extend and enrich the curriculum so that it is extremely ambitious. It is carefully sequenced and sets out exactly what pupils will learn and when they will learn it. Connections in, between and across subjects are meaningful and relevant. For example,

pupils confidently compare the Maya with other ancient societies that they have studied. From the moment pupils join the school, they deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding. Everything revolves around learning.

Leaders' absolute priority is ensuring that every child can read. Staff expertise in teaching reading is excellent. The reading curriculum is ambitious and well planned. Phonics teaching begins as soon as children start school. Children in Reception quickly learn their sounds, and highly skilled adults support them to keep up. Nothing is left to chance.

Exceptionally high-quality books are to be found everywhere. Reading is woven into every aspect of the curriculum. Older pupils talk passionately about 'getting lost in a book' and how they struggle to put a good book down. They look forward to 'ERIC' sessions, when 'Everyone Reads In Class'. Teachers skilfully choose books to stimulate discussion. Leaders ensure that books in school reflect the diversity of the school community and the world in which pupils live.

Pupils are encouraged to speak up and speak out. Staff support and encourage even the youngest children to answer in full sentences and use subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils put their point of view across respectfully and with great clarity. Speaking and listening skills are extremely well developed across the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive excellent support. Highly trained and skilled staff identify pupils early. Teachers adapt lessons to ensure that individual needs are met effectively. Any adjustment to the curriculum is carefully considered by leaders. Pupils with SEND access a broad curriculum and are fully included. They make strong progress.

Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They take a shared responsibility to ensure that every pupil thrives. The school is calm and orderly because routines are deeply embedded. For example, the youngest children line up sensibly and quietly as they walk to the school library. Lessons flow uninterrupted because pupils are so deeply immersed in their learning. Pupils take responsibility for their own actions.

Leaders and staff are aspirational for their pupils and work to broaden pupils' horizons. Purposeful experiences, such as visits to the Houses of Parliament, enhance the curriculum. Science is made real in the school's 'Phiz Lab', and arts week enables every pupil to work with an artist. Pupils develop high levels of independence through opportunities to organise charity events. Parents appreciate the way in which their children develop confidence and self-assurance.

Leaders invest in staff training to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to teach effectively. Staff value the opportunities for development. They are motivated to be the best they can be.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2017.

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	130887
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10290576
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	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Julia Kenny
Headteacher	Bryony Harrison
Website	www.hillmortonprimaryschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has continued to expand since the previous inspection in 2017. It has now doubled in size and is a larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2020.
- The school uses one alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, other senior leaders and a range of teaching and non-teaching staff. The inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing board and three governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector observed pupils in lessons and at breaktimes and met with different groups of pupils to discuss aspects of the school.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plan to improve the school, curriculum plans and the school website. Minutes of governor meetings and reports of external advisers were also checked.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspector considered 142 responses, including free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also took note of the 33 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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