

Inspection of Highwood Copse Primary School

Highwood Copse Way, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 9BS

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 October 2023

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

The principal of this school is Serraphina Robinson. This school is part of The Thames Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Richard Kearsey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jon Reekie.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this ambitious school. They build strong relationships and feel happy and safe. Children in the early years quickly make friends and learn the school's routines. They develop confidence and make secure progress through the curriculum. Staff want all pupils to reach the highest standards. Lessons are engaging. The school prioritises implementing the curriculum effectively, which helps all pupils to achieve well. Staff create a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school reflects the school's high expectations. Pupils are rightly proud of their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy helping each other by, for example, sharing playground resources or setting out equipment for each other before lessons.

Pupils learn about and demonstrate the school's values of hope, love, peace, joy, trust, respect and integrity. They enjoy celebrating these together in assemblies. Pupils are respectful towards each other and staff. They can describe healthy relationships and know about leading physically and mentally healthy lives. One pupil echoed the views of many, saying, 'Everybody is welcome at our school.' This is reflected in the friendly way that pupils work and play together. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

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

The school has a clear focus on helping all pupils to achieve the highest standards. This is fully realised in the early years. The curriculum in other year groups equips pupils with the essential knowledge and skills they need to achieve strongly overall. Staff adapt the curriculum well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In Reception, support for these pupils is highly effective.

Staff have secure subject knowledge. Subject-specialist teachers support learning across the curriculum effectively. Staff teach using motivational, purposeful approaches. Pupils are highly articulate. They discuss ideas together in balanced ways. Pupils are keen to contribute to lessons. In most subjects, such as mathematics and phonics, teachers check pupils' errors and misconceptions carefully, modifying subsequent teaching appropriately. However, in some subjects, the school is still refining how teachers check what pupils have learned so that there are no gaps in pupils' learning.

Exceptional phonics teaching unlocks reading for all pupils. Highly skilled staff support any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. They make sure that these pupils catch up with their peers. As a result, pupils learn to read quickly and fluently. Pupils read books that are matched to the sounds they are learning. They extend their reading well through the carefully chosen texts available to them. This helps pupils to develop a love of reading.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is exemplary. Pupils learn about democracy in the early years by understanding rules and decision making. Pupils across the school discuss and vote on issues that affect life at school, such as the use of play boxes and equipment in the playground. Pupils link these discussions to such concepts as how people can be responsible for others. These experiences help pupils to feel part of their school and wider community in positive ways.

Disadvantaged pupils benefit consistently well from extra-curricular opportunities such as playing sports and developing artistic knowledge and skills. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils talk excitedly about the activities organised for them, such as trips to the farm and to London to visit the Natural History Museum. There is a programme of rich experiences that is planned in a systematic and coherent way.

In the early years, children are very settled. They respond well to the adults around them and join in with rhymes and songs and have thoughtful conversations. Children talk about their learning with confidence and enthusiasm. They demonstrate high levels of curiosity and take pride in their achievements.

The school engages well with parents. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. There is a shared commitment for all to work together effectively. One parent said, 'Staff are great role models and really care. Children are treated as individuals and are given the tools to achieve their very best.' Trustees share an ambitious vision for the school. They ensure that strategic decisions taken by leaders at the school have a positive impact on all pupils. Leaders support and engage effectively with almost all staff regarding workload and well-being. Staff are very proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the wider curriculum, pupils have some gaps in their knowledge. As a result, pupils are not always able to make links in their learning and achieve as highly as they could. The school should develop assessment processes further in efficient and effective ways.

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	141882
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10296515
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jon Reekie
Principal	Serraphina Robinson
Website	www.highwoodcopse.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Thames Learning Trust. This is a multi-academy trust of six primary, infant and secondary schools.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

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.
- The 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 senior leaders, staff, pupils and representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair. The lead inspector also spoke with the chief executive officer and the director of education.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and computing. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff questionnaire, as well as the views of pupils that were gathered throughout the inspection.
- 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.

Inspection team

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Breckenridge

Ofsted Inspector

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