

# Inspection of Hermitage Primary School

Hermitage Drive, Holmes Chapel, Crewe, Cheshire CW4 7NP

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Helen Ross. This school is part of the Hermitage Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Brian Donlon. The headteacher, Helen Ross, is also the chief executive officer.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Hermitage Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud of their school. They are happy and relish social times with their friends and learning alongside them in lessons. Pupils embrace the wide range of experiences on offer to them. These include playing in musical ensembles with world-renowned orchestras and taking part in residential trips that take them beyond their local community.

Pupils make sure that they uphold the school's rules by being ready, respectful and safe. Children in the early years settle quickly at school and develop confidence. Older pupils are keen to make full use of their talents and interests. For example, they enjoy taking part in the school's 'bridge the gap' initiative, where they recite poetry to local residents.

Pupils learn to care for others, either as buddies or through their fundraising for different charities. They make a highly tangible contribution to their school and wider community.

Pupils live up to the school's high expectations and achieve well. When needed, the school provides additional support for pupils to enable them to access all aspects of school life. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils who learn in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) are well supported to be ready to learn.

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

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. It has carefully designed subject curriculums to ensure that pupils' learning builds logically from the Reception Year to Year 6. In most subjects, teachers understand precisely what pupils need to know. They design learning activities that successfully emphasise this knowledge.

Teachers are swift to address any misconceptions that pupils might have. The school has given meticulous thought to when and how pupils should revisit their learning. This helps pupils to remember the important knowledge that they have learned over time. Pupils, including those with SEND, build a rich body of knowledge in these subjects. They delight in sharing what they have learned with visitors.

In one or two subjects, and in some areas of learning in the early years, the school has not broken down the most important content in the curriculum to the same extent. This means that some teachers are unsure of the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and revisit. Consequently, these teachers' checks on what pupils have learned are not as effective as they should be. Some pupils do not fully embed the important vocabulary or concepts that they need for later learning as a result.

Reading is a strength of the school. Staff are suitably trained to deliver the school's phonics programme and do so consistently well. Children start to learn how to use

phonics to read words as soon as they begin in the Reception Year. Staff quickly identify any pupils who find reading more difficult and ensure that they receive effective support to catch up. This means that pupils learn to read confidently and fluently in readiness for key stage 2. Older pupils who continue to require extra help to catch up with their reading also benefit from effective support.

The school quickly and accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff support these pupils well in lessons. When necessary, pupils with SEND also benefit from support for their emotional or social needs. This is particularly true for pupils in the specially resourced provision.

The school's efforts to engage with parents and carers ensure that many parents are highly satisfied with the support that their children receive. However, some of the parents who shared their views were less content with aspects of the school's work. This is particularly so for some parents of pupils with SEND.

The foundations for pupils' impeccable behaviour are firmly laid in the early years. Children listen, take turns and follow well-established routines. Pupils across other year groups behave exceptionally well. They are highly attentive in lessons and respond well to staff. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places to learn.

The school places a strong focus on pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy their weekly 'healthy Hermitage' day where they learn how to keep themselves mentally and physically well. They know that their opinions matter and that they can play an active role in further improving the school. For example, the school council has made changes to the rewards system to make sure that it is fairer. Pupils' learning across the curriculum prepares them well for later life.

Those responsible for leadership and governance understand their roles and statutory duties well. The school supports and develops staff effectively. Staff, including those who are at the early stage of their careers, said that they feel valued in their roles. They appreciate the positive steps that the school has taken to reduce their workload, such as by reviewing approaches to feeding back on pupils' work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In one or two subjects, and in some areas of learning in early years, the school has not identified the most important content that pupils should learn to support their future learning. This means that some pupils do not recall and build on prior learning as well as they could. The school should ensure that, in these few remaining subjects, teachers are clear about the key knowledge, skills and

vocabulary that pupils need to know and remember in readiness for the next stage.

- Occasionally, the school does not communicate as effectively as it could with some parents, including some parents of pupils with SEND. This means that these parents do not feel fully informed about how the school is meeting their child's individual needs. The school should refine how it engages with parents of pupils with SEND, so that they work in unison to support these pupils.

## 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); [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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140724
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242372
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Brian Donlon
<b>Headteacher and CEO</b>	Helen Ross
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hermitage.cheshire.sch.uk">www.hermitage.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school converted to become an academy school in April 2014. When the predecessor school, Hermitage Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Since becoming an academy, a new headteacher and chair of the governing body have been appointed.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club.
- The school has a specially resourced provision. All pupils placed at this provision have an education and health care plan. Pupils' primary need is autism. The specially resourced provision has places for seven pupils from Reception age to Year 6. At the time of the inspection, places were allocated to five pupils.

## 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 that the school 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.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in school. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- An inspector spoke with trustees, including the chair of the trust.
- An inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- An inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- An inspector visited the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils to consider.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they picked their children up from school. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

## Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ros Munro

Ofsted Inspector

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