

Inspection of Heyford Park School

74 Camp Road, Heyford Park, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX25 5HD

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school for the primary phase is Robert Marchant and the head of school for the secondary phase is Andrew Binnington. This school is part of Eynsham Partnership Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, David Brown, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Julian Soanes. There are also two executive headteachers, Craig Thomas and Sarah Nickelson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are respectful and friendly. They engage in school enthusiastically. From the moment children join Nursery, staff nurture their curiosity and creativity. In Reception, children learn the principles of being 'ready, respectful and safe'. This teaches them to cooperate and think about others' needs. These values permeate the school. Pupils of all ages play safely and happily together at breaktime. Older pupils relish the opportunity to nurture younger pupils. Many aspire to be on the active student council. They are rightly proud of the contribution they make to their school.

Staff know pupils as individuals and want the very best for them. Younger children settle into the school very quickly. One pupil, typical of many, said, 'Teachers get to know you well; they do really care about you.' The school is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to the high expectations that all staff share. The purposeful and calm atmosphere in lessons is conducive to high-quality learning.

The school's values of integrity, service and excellence are clearly evident. Pupils demonstrate high levels of tolerance and mutual support. They appreciate diversity and the inclusive nature of their school.

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

The school has constructed an ambitious and broad curriculum that is designed to stretch and challenge all pupils. The needs of pupils with SEND are accurately identified. This enables staff to adapt the curriculum and to support these pupils effectively. In core subjects, a carefully sequenced curriculum ensures that knowledge and skills build over time progressively. However, in some subjects, teachers do not always make the most of opportunities to revisit and recap knowledge and skills learned previously. This means pupils do not always learn as well as they could.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. In Reception, leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum. Small steps in learning help children to learn more and remember more over time. Staff take every opportunity to promote mathematical fluency and confidence. The learning environment inside is vibrant and inviting. Staff keep a close eye on how well children learn, and use this information to plan next steps in their teaching.

The teaching of early reading is a priority. Expert staff teach phonics in a consistent way. Staff ensure that they correctly identify when children make mistakes and that they help to correct errors swiftly. Books carefully match the sounds pupils know. This helps them to practise and to gain confidence quickly. One pupil told inspectors, 'Teachers help you learn in different ways to stick 'it' in your head.' Leaders are at an early stage of fostering a love of reading throughout the school. The support for weaker readers in the secondary phase needs further sharpening.

Pupils behave well throughout the school day. They respond positively to the high expectations staff have of them. There are a small number of pupils who occasionally exhibit more challenging behaviour. Staff deal calmly and effectively with these pupils. In lessons, the atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Pupils work collaboratively. In the primary phase, pupils use the 'debug' system to learn to cooperate kindly. Attendance has improved. The school roll is growing. Skilled staff provide strong pastoral support to all pupils.

A renewed focus on the wider personal development of pupils is evident. A thoughtfully constructed personal, social and health education curriculum extends from the early years throughout the school to the secondary phase. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding deepens through the carefully planned curriculum. Opportunities to organise and participate in charity events teach pupils humility and valuable skills. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including online. A focus on physical and mental health pervades the school. There are a range of clubs that pupils participate in to develop their skills and talents. Leaders ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in trips and visits beyond the curriculum.

A carefully constructed programme of careers information, education, advice and guidance equips pupils with detailed knowledge of possible next steps in education, training or employment. A well-planned careers fair stimulates pupils' interest in a wide range of career and educational opportunities.

The school's decisive action to improve has been pivotal. The school benefits from strong collaboration with partner schools in the trust at all levels of leadership. The local governing body's experienced members provide robust challenge to the school. Staff are positive about the improvements made recently. They embrace the renewed rigour. Staff value the thoughtfully planned professional development, particularly when it enables primary and secondary colleagues to collaborate.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not check that pupils have remembered key vocabulary, knowledge and skills before teaching new concepts. Consequently, some pupils develop gaps in their understanding and struggle to remember new ideas. The school needs to ensure that all teachers check for and address misconceptions routinely to ensure that all pupils remember their learning and achieve even more.

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	148353
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10288105
Type of school	All-through
School category	Sponsored academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	584
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julian Soanes
CEO of the trust	David Brown
Headteacher	Craig Thomas (Executive Headteacher) Sarah Nickelson (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.heyfordparkschool.org/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Heyford Park School converted to become an academy in November 2020 and joined the Eynsham Partnership Academy Trust at the same time.
- When its predecessor school, Heyford Park Free School, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2019, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- After the last inspection, there have been some changes in leadership. The previous headteacher left the school and a new head of school and executive headteacher have been appointed for both the primary and secondary phases.
- A new chair of the local governing body was also appointed in July 2021.
- The school is based on two sites, with an on-site nursery.
- The school operates its own before- and after-school club.
- The school does not currently admit students into the sixth form.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and

engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited a wide range of subjects on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to curriculum leaders in science and design and technology.
- Inspectors talked to a wide range of pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also spoke with the chair of trustees, the chair of governors and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including free-text responses. They also took account of the responses to the staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

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