

Inspection of Hightown Primary School

Tunstall Road, Thornhill, Southampton, Hampshire SO19 6AA

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The principal of this school is Hayley Clark. This school is part of the Inspire Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Claire Lowe, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tim Sunderland.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Hightown. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Staff know pupils and their families well. Children in the early years settle into school life happily and quickly.

Pupils strive to show the school's 'INSPIRE' values, such as innovation and excellence, in their approach to work and behaviour. They love collecting 'INSPIRE' points by demonstrating these values in school. Most work hard and show positive behaviours. Pupils who need additional help to behave receive carefully considered pastoral support. This helps them understand their emotions well.

Pupils have access to a wide range of educational experiences. They love attending clubs such as basketball, athletics and choir. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy learning how to play the trumpet. Pupils are proud to take on responsibilities, such as for the pupil leadership team. They are busy planning how to reduce the school's carbon footprint.

Current pupils are learning well in most subjects and know what they need to do to learn and remember more. Although the school has high expectations, pupils' published outcomes, in some aspects of achievement, are not yet as high as they could be. In part, this is due to a legacy of underachievement, the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and weaker curriculum thinking in the past.

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

Over the past few years, the school has reviewed the curriculum in most subjects. This is having a positive impact on current pupils, who are learning more, doing more and remembering more in most subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help that they need to learn the same curriculum as their peers. The school identifies these pupils' needs carefully and swiftly.

The curriculum is newer in some subjects than others. Subject leaders understand how well teachers deliver their curriculum areas. Staff's subject expertise varies, however, in a few subjects. The school is making carefully considered improvements in the delivery of the curriculum, through high-quality coaching of staff. This enables teachers to deliver the curriculum in most subjects effectively. This is, however, work in progress.

Pupils study a broad and engaging curriculum. Children in the Reception Year make a strong start. The early years curriculum supports children to develop their understanding in all areas of learning well. In key stages 1 and 2, it is mainly clear what pupils will learn, and when, so that they build their knowledge over time. In the stronger subjects, the school has broken down this knowledge into small chunks. Typically, in these subjects, teachers check that pupils have grasped new learning before moving on to something new.

However, this is not the case in a small number of foundation subjects. In history and geography, for example, the school has identified what pupils should learn but the content is very wide. Teachers do not know what knowledge is the most important for them to check that pupils remember. In these subjects, pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Learning to read is a priority. In the early years, children enjoy a wide range of activities based on core books and fairy stories. Staff teach the school's phonics programme well. They receive regular training and ongoing coaching that helps them deliver phonics lessons expertly. Staff spot pupils who are not quite keeping up and provide precise extra help. Older pupils who are at the earlier stage of reading also benefit from effective phonics lessons and bespoke support.

Pupils behave well. The school has recently introduced a new behaviour policy. This has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour in lessons and the playground. Most children attend school regularly. There are many successful strategies in place to work with families to improve attendance. Pupils' attendance is improving rapidly. However, there still remain too many who persistently miss school. This hinders them from reaching their potential.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to support pupils' wider development. The curriculum supports pupils very well in knowing how to keep themselves safe. For example, recent pupil workshops have supported pupils to know more about the dangers of vaping and the safe use of social media.

Trustees, including the interim executive board, regularly check that systems are working as intended, including safeguarding. There is an unremitting focus on providing support and challenge to continue to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Trustees are knowledgeable about the key priorities for further development. The school has, quite rightly, made many changes in recent years. Pupils' learning has improved. On the whole, staff appreciate the way that leaders are considerate of their workload through these changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, the school has not identified with enough precision what teachers need to teach. Teachers do not know what to check up on and ensure that pupils can recall. Consequently, pupils' knowledge in these subjects is not as deep or secure as it could be. The school should ensure

that teachers know the most important knowledge that pupils should learn and remember in all subjects.

- Some of the curriculum is quite new. This means that, occasionally, the school's intentions for the curriculum are not implemented consistently well. This hinders how well some pupils learn. The school should continue to support teachers to develop the knowledge they need to best teach the curricular aims so that pupils achieve consistently well in all areas of the curriculum.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they miss too much of their education, which prevents them from achieving as well as they should. The school should continue to work with families, and analyse all attendance information, to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.

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 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	139947
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10288038
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tim Sunderland
CEO of the trust	Claire Lowe
Principal	Hayley Clark
Website	www.hps.ilpartnership.org
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection, and had a period of time with no headteacher. The principal and vice-principal joined the school in September 2021.
- The school is part of the Inspire Learning Partnership multi-academy trust.
- For the last 18 months, there has been an interim executive board in place. Trustees are currently forming an academy council whose members will have some aspects of governance delegated to them.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.

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 held meetings with school senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the Inspire Learning Partnership, who is also a trustee. She also met with a further trustee and the director of primary education. Both the trustees she met are members of the interim executive board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. 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. An inspector heard pupils read to adults from the school.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils.
- 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.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school and school improvement plan.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the day. They spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour in school. Inspectors considered how the school is supporting pupils' personal development.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys. They took account of the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, parents' free-text comments. An inspector also spoke with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Justin Bartlett

Ofsted Inspector

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