

Inspection of Hallmoor School

50 Scholars Gate, Kitts Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 0DL

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Paul Donkersloot. This school is part of Forward Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon Dilkes, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kate Canty.

What is it like to attend this school?

These are very exciting times at Hallmoor School. Inspirational leaders, caring staff and an exciting curriculum are driving improvements. Communication and independence are priorities. This is a community focused on helping young people find their voices and their place in modern-day Birmingham.

Relationships are kind, caring and supportive. Pupils were excited to welcome the inspectors into school and to wish them a great day. They told inspectors that 'everyone is welcome at Hallmoor'. Staff act quickly to support when pupils need help to remain calm, regulated or focused. Consequently, behaviour is calm across lessons and at other times.

Pupils are happy and content. This is because the school treats pupils with kindness and care. Autism, sensory processing, language, communication and other varying needs could make learning harder for pupils at Hallmoor. However, staff, parents and carers work together to overcome any barriers caused by those needs. Pupils are valued as individuals, and this inspires learning.

An impressive range of subject options and school clubs enrich pupils' hobbies and ambitions. The choir is one of many strengths. Here, pupils find their voice, sing tunefully and sign clearly.

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

Since the last inspection, several changes have occurred to the leadership team at Hallmoor. The current leadership team has added enthusiasm, drive and excitement to the school. Supported by an attentive local academy council and multi-academy trust, the team has driven improvements.

Across all subjects, staff have high expectations for what skills and knowledge pupils will learn and how. The school's curriculum pathway model ensures that pupils work alongside those with similar needs and are taught by staff with specialised skills in meeting those needs. Written sequences of lessons are well-planned to build knowledge and skills over time.

Recently, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils with autism. The school has acted quickly and adapted its work to meet these needs. Classroom environments are precisely adapted, and staff are well trained to support pupils' understanding and access to learning. Workstations and pop-up sensory tents support pupils' ability to self-regulate and focus on learning.

Staff work together in task groups to develop sequences of lessons and provide subject training for colleagues. Most subject leaders are skilled and experienced in monitoring the curriculum and making changes when needed. However, some subject leaders have not yet had the chance to review how their curriculum is

implemented. This means they do not always know what needs to change or which staff need further training.

Class teams work hard in lessons to ensure that pupils learn the necessary knowledge. Students could confidently tell inspectors about what they had learned in retail, cooking, or employability lessons. Staff act quickly when some pupils might have forgotten things from the past in order to reinforce that learning.

Communication is rightly a priority. Speech and language therapists support staff in identifying what is needed for each pupil to give them the tools to communicate. Pupils were confident to use communication devices to talk to inspectors about their school, who helps them and even to tell jokes. However, in some cases, staff do not consistently implement the school's agreed communication strategies. This makes it harder for some pupils to understand or communicate.

Staff are well trained to help pupils learn to read. They work hard to develop a love of reading in all pupils. Staff have access to a wealth of books that they share with pupils. The way in which phonics is taught is mostly consistent but, at times, some staff miss opportunities to model sounds or display resources as clearly as they might.

This is a calm and purposeful environment. Staff work hard to understand when pupils might need help or support. The school's work with occupational therapists is impressive in supporting sensory processing needs, emotions and feelings. This helps pupils to regulate their emotions and feelings and stay calm and focused in lessons.

Pupils are confident, happy and have real strength of character. Lessons help pupils develop those skills needed for the world around them. Work experience for older pupils provides opportunities to work in the school's snack shop or operate the school's help desk. During the inspection, the school had its own winter fair, where staff and pupils worked together to raise money and the profile of the school in the local community.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, some pupils have not attended school as much as they should have in the past. However, leaders, staff, and the members of the family support team are working hard to address this. Consequently, attendance is improving quickly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, curriculum leaders have not yet had sufficient opportunities to monitor the impact of their new curriculums. This means they are not yet able to know what changes might need to be made to the curriculum or what additional training might be needed for some staff. The school needs to ensure that all subject leaders have the opportunity to review the curriculum's implementation in their subjects so they can evaluate what changes might need to take place.
- In some classes, staff do not consistently implement the school's agreed communication strategies. This means that in some cases, pupils' progress with speech, language and communication needs is limited due to difficulties in understanding the information presented to them by class teams. The school needs to ensure that all staff consistently implement the preferred and agreed communication systems for each child so the pupils can understand and respond to what they are learning in class.
- In some classes, all staff members do not consistently implement the reading curriculum. This limits how quickly pupils learn to read and understand what they have read. The school should ensure that staff have the necessary training and resources to teach reading in ways that quickly give pupils the reading skills and fluency they are capable of attaining.

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; 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	144336
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10290636
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	275
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	66
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kate Canty
Headteacher	Paul Donkersloot
Website	www.hallmoor.fet.ac
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, several changes have occurred to the leadership team at Hallmoor. A new headteacher took up the post in April 2022.
- Three new assistant headteachers were appointed to lead the sixth form, pastoral matters and the curriculum. Two were appointed in September 2020, and one in January 2023.
- The school does not currently use any form of 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.
- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: communication, reading, mathematics, science and personal, social, health and economic education. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, members of the local academy council and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector also spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- An inspector met with the school council to talk about their role and how they have been involved in developments at the school.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Morgan	His Majesty's Inspector

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