

Inspection of a good school: Headlands Primary School

Bushland Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 2NS

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 February 2024

Outcome

Headlands Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Darren Smith. This school is part of Northampton Primary 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, Julia Kedwards, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Marscheider.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of Headlands Primary school. The importance of inclusivity permeates through all areas of the school. It is a happy and nurturing place to learn.

Pupils understand the school's DARE values (determination, achievement, respect and enjoyment). They do their best to live up to them and enjoy the rewards they receive when they succeed. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. On occasion, when pupils struggle with their behaviour, they are supported well. Relationships are respectful and positive. Pupils hold their teachers in high regard.

Pupils say they feel safe at school. They know they can go to any adult in school if they have a concern or worry. They are confident that staff will listen and help them.

Pupils have various opportunities to lead. They take these roles seriously and are proud of them. For example, play leaders enjoy leading games during break times, while others act as DARE ambassadors or are members of the school parliament.

A wide range of experiences are available for pupils to enjoy. There are various clubs on offer, both at lunchtimes and after school, in which pupils can take part. Basketball and choir are current favourites.

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

The school provides pupils with a good quality of education. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. It is well thought out and carefully planned. The local area is

incorporated well to support learning. For instance, pupils learn about 'The Great Fire of Northampton' and about the boot and shoe industry.

The curriculum is organised carefully to help pupils know and remember more. Teachers help pupils recall the prior knowledge they need to learn new things. For example, pupils in Year 4 use their knowledge of rectangles to help them calculate the perimeter. Pupils enjoy sharing the knowledge they have learned in the wider curriculum. However, they are less clear about the subject-specialist knowledge they need to be a good scientist, or a historian, for example.

There is a keen focus on developing pupils' vocabulary right from the start. For example, children in the early years learn new vocabulary to compare weights and then use words, such as 'lighter', 'heavier' and 'balanced' accurately when exploring scales.

Reading is very important at Headlands Primary. The school's reading mascot, 'Biblio', encourages pupils to read. Pupils who read often earn golden tickets. They are keen to win the opportunity for Biblio to visit their class. Pupils enjoy using the school library and discussing their favourite books. They have also had the opportunity to publish their own books, such as poetry anthologies.

There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff have high expectations and are well trained. Pupils settle well into the routines of learning phonics and are keen to join in. Staff pay close attention to how well pupils know their sounds. They support pupils who begin to struggle straight away. The books given to pupils to help them learn to read are well matched to the sounds they know.

The school has a clear understanding of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers ensure that these pupils can access the full curriculum in school. Staff make effective use of resources to identify these pupils' needs quickly and provide them with suitable support.

The school promotes pupils' personal development effectively. Pupils have a clear understanding of equalities and the protected characteristics. They enjoy real life experiences when learning about fundamental British values.

There are plenty of opportunities to widen pupils' experiences beyond the curriculum. Celebrating the arts is a key feature. This begins in the nursery. Pupils enjoy working with various artists and completing projects with the National Gallery. This work is displayed throughout the school. Pupils enjoy showing it off to visitors and their families.

The school has worked tirelessly to improve pupils' attendance. However, too many pupils do not attend frequently enough. These pupils miss out on vital learning and do not achieve as well as they could.

Governors and members of the trust often visit the school. They ensure that leaders keep them well informed. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued by senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum outlines precisely what pupils need to learn and when. However, the teaching of some of the disciplinary knowledge in the wider curriculum is not always clear to pupils. The school should ensure that this is taught explicitly to support pupils' progress.
- Despite the school's efforts, too many pupils are often absent from school. These pupils miss out on vital learning and do not achieve as well as they could. The school should continue to work with families to improve the attendance of these pupils.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2014.

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	138954
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10313284
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	461
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Marscheider
CEO of the trust	Julia Kedwards
Headteacher	Darren Smith
Website	www.headlands.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has provision for three-year-olds.
- The school has an enhanced resource provision that caters for pupils with speech, language and communication needs, pupils who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and pupils with severe learning difficulties.
- The school uses the services of two registered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders.

- The inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and two other trust representatives. She also met with two members of the local governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with parents and took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also spoke with groups of pupils and staff.
- The inspector met with leaders to discuss safeguarding. She met with staff to discuss their understanding of the safeguarding risks and reviewed the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. The inspector considered documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's single central register and the system for undertaking checks on new staff.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including information available on the school's website.

Inspection team

Heidi Bastock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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