

Inspection of a good school: Hardwick Primary School

Steward Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 2PW

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 February 2024

Outcome

Hardwick Primary School continues to be a good school.

The head of school is Zara Cowling. The school is part of All Saints Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Melanie Barrow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Hargrave. There is also an executive headteacher, Claire Flatman, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that sits at the heart of its local community. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to their school. They learn about differences and the importance of respect and tolerance. This helps pupils to develop respectful relationships with adults and each other. Pupils show compassion towards each other. They know this is a school where they learn to, 'accept ourselves and accept each other'.

Pupils behave well throughout the school day. They understand the new approaches to managing behaviour. Staff are consistent in the way they encourage pupils to behave. This helps pupils to know what staff expect of them. Typically, pupils work hard in lessons to achieve teachers' high ambitions. The playground is an enjoyable place for pupils of different ages to play together. For many pupils, playing games on the multi-use games area, with sports coaches is a highlight of the school.

Digital leaders, school councillors and librarians are proud of their roles as leaders. These roles help to teach pupils the importance of being responsible. Pupils are enthusiastic to represent their school. They are proud to perform on stage or compete at sporting events. These include netball, girls' football tournaments and swimming galas.

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

The school has designed a well-sequenced curriculum. Leaders have broken important content down into smaller steps. This helps pupils secure their knowledge over time. For example, children in Reception complete activities to develop coordination and core strength. Over time, pupils learn more complex knowledge. By Year 6, they successfully

take part in sports such as volleyball. They have secured the knowledge they need to do so.

Staff have secure subject knowledge. Overall, staff present information clearly. Staff ask thoughtful questions to check pupils' understanding of content and language. This helps staff to address pupils' misconceptions. Staff knowledgeably support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is because they receive helpful training from the trust. Careful adaptations to the curriculum, such as breaking learning down into manageable chunks, helps pupils, including pupils with SEND, to learn well.

Staff introduce children in Reception to books, stories and rhymes from the moment they start school. This helps to instil a love of reading that stays with pupils as they grow older. The new library is a place that pupils simply love to be in. They enjoy choosing exciting books to read. This expands their knowledge of literature. Staff are well-trained in teaching early reading. They use careful and precise checks on learning to match reading books to the sounds pupils know. This helps pupils to develop their fluency and confidence. Staff provide effective help with reading should pupils require it.

In some instances, pupils do not fully secure their understanding of important writing techniques. When this happens, pupils do not consistently apply what they have learned in English lessons when they write independently. This means, sometimes, pupils' writing can be brief and not as detailed as the school expects. The school has rightly identified that it needed to improve the teaching of writing across all subjects. This work has begun. More pupils are beginning to apply their writing knowledge when they write independently. Pupils' writing is becoming more detailed and includes important grammar and language techniques. However, the school knows there is still more work to do.

Pupils are positive about the wider opportunities on offer. Learning musical instruments, or attending the chess club, for example, help to develop pupils' talents and interests. Visitors and trips out help to enhance the classroom learning. The Year 4 and Year 6 residential trips provide pupils with memorable moments alongside developing both their confidence and resilience.

The trust has clear systems in place to check on pupils' outcomes, such as whether they attend school regularly. Most pupils do attend well. This helps leaders, including those responsible for governance, to understand where the school might need to make improvements. Staff receive targeted training to help develop their subject knowledge. It also helps staff to manage their own workload and well-being. A few new subject leaders are still getting to grips with checking whether pupils have learned the school's curriculum. As a result, in some subjects, leaders do not have as full a picture of how well pupils are faring.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new approaches to teaching writing are recently established. Occasionally, pupils do not consistently apply what they learn in English lessons into their independent writing. Sometimes, pupils' writing is brief and not as detailed as the school expects. The school should ensure staff have the expertise and guidance they need to effectively teach the new approaches to writing.
- There have been some changes to subject leadership. In some subjects, monitoring is in its infancy. This means there are some areas where the school is only recently getting to grips with where leaders may need additional training and support. The school should ensure all subject leaders have the ongoing training and guidance they need to evaluate how well pupils are securing their understanding of important content and knowledge.

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 predecessor school, Hardwick Primary School, to be good in June 2013.

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	148509
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10295133
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Hargrave
CEO of the trust	Melanie Barrow
Headteacher	Claire Flatman (Executive headteacher) Zara Cowling (Head of school)
Website	www.hardwickprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Hardwick Primary School converted to become an academy in April 2021. When its predecessor school, Hardwick Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The executive headteacher took up the post in April 2023.
- The head of school took up the post in September 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, chief executive officer and director of education for the trust, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, staff and members of the local governing board.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. He also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.
- Evidence of pupils' writing in English, science, history and geography was also considered.
- 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.
- A range of documents were considered, including: behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of local governing board and trustee meetings, school development plans, records of visits from the trust and school policies.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through their responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. He also took account of responses to both the Ofsted pupil and staff surveys.

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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