

Inspection of a good school: Highfields Primary School

Beeches Road, Rowley Regis, West Midlands B65 0DA

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

Outcome

Highfields Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a highly inclusive, happy school. At the centre of everything is pupils' learning and development and the whole child. Staff are passionate about providing the best for pupils. Parents, carers and their children know and appreciate this. A phrase that several used to describe the staff was, 'They genuinely care about the children and go above and beyond.'

Pupils' positive behaviours and attitudes shine through in class, in the playground and around school. Staff expect high standards of behaviour. Staff support pupils through conversations rather than sanctions if behaviour falls below these expectations. Pupils recognise and value this approach. As a result, pupils are kind, calm and feel safe. They understand equality and acceptance and consider their school to be just like 'one big family'.

Aspirations are high for pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are relentless in encouraging pupils to do their best. They have high expectations of what pupils can learn, and this shows in how well pupils do. Pupils are excited by and engaged in their learning. As the school motto states, the pupils here are given the 'roots to grow and wings to fly'.

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

In all subjects, the school has put in place a curriculum that builds systematically over time. The school has been careful to select the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils most need to know. Pupils become confident in using subject-specific vocabulary to talk about their learning.

Staff are expert at explaining concepts. They ask questions that elicit deeper thinking. They routinely revisit previous content at the beginning of lessons so that pupils can make links with what they have learned before. Pupils are remembering what they learn. Revisited key learning also cements pupils' abilities to carry out procedures such as solving multiplication problems in mathematics or perfecting balances in physical education (PE).

The school has in place a systematic way to teach early reading. The staff who deliver the daily phonics sessions are highly trained to do so, and they understand the approach deeply. Throughout lessons, they keep a close eye on pupils so that they know which sounds pupils know or do not know. This enables them to give extra help when it is needed. A love of reading is baked into Highfields. Pupils love to read and to be read to. They are supported well by parents who regularly listen to them at home. This all results in pupils becoming confident, independent readers who develop their own literary tastes and opinions. The school ensures that the books that pupils become familiar with are of high quality and represent the diversity in modern Britain and beyond.

Levels of absence have been high in recent years. A significant number of pupils have missed more than 10% of their school time. The school, supported by the local authority, has changed the ways in which absence is monitored and analysed. This has had a positive impact on attendance this year but there are still too many pupils, including a number who are disadvantaged, who are missing too much school.

The inclusive culture of the school is evident in how it supports pupils with SEND. Staff are skilled and knowledgeable about the needs that pupils have. They routinely put in place additional support for them. There is an ambition that all pupils follow the same, broad curriculum but teachers make adaptations to learning where necessary. The school has effective systems of monitoring how well those with SEND are doing. Staff regularly review the provision for those with SEND to ensure that it is working well.

The curriculum extends well beyond the academic and the classroom. Pupils benefit from an extensive array of opportunities that are aimed at supporting their wider development. There are clubs to join, leadership roles to fill and many trips to go on, including two residential trips. Whether pupils are learning sign-language or helping younger pupils with their reading, they throw themselves into tasks with enthusiasm and delight. They become confident, articulate individuals who are keen to offer their views and opinions. The school curriculum has been successful in providing pupils with a mature understanding of respect and equality. Pupils are well prepared for their next school and for later life.

Governors and school leaders at all levels share a dedication to the pupils and the school community. They listen to the views of pupils, staff and parents. They seek and act swiftly on external advice. There is a genuine and positive culture of continual improvement and growth at Highfields Primary School.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The attendance of some groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is not as high as it should be, despite improvement this year. This means they miss lessons and fall behind. The school should further implement strategies to work with parents of pupils who attend poorly so that these pupils have good attendance and take full advantage of the school's curriculum offer.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2019.

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	103946
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10336855
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Joanne Flowers
Headteacher	Sarah Garratt
Website	www.highfields.sandwell.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school nursery has closed.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs before-school care.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first inspection of this school since the introduction of the Education Inspection Framework in September 2019.
- 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 have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.

- 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.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders and pupils about some other subjects.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to members of school staff.
- The inspector held a meeting with members of the board of governors.
- The inspector spoke with a school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at breaktimes.
- The inspector spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. He also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's website.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024