

Inspection of a good school: Halfway Nursery Infant School

Station Road, Halfway, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S20 3GU

Inspection dates:

30 April and 1 May 2024

Outcome

Halfway Nursery Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Halfway Nursery Infant School. They trust the adults in school to take care of them. Relationships between staff and pupils across the school are caring and respectful. Pupils are safe in this nurturing environment.

The school has high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils achieve well. Teachers engage pupils' interest in the curriculum. Right from the early years, children are friendly and chatty. They are enthusiastic about school and enjoy talking about their learning. Pupils enjoy attending clubs, including ballet and coding.

Pupils behave well. They meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. From the start of Nursery, children know and follow the golden rules. Pupils value the rewards that they receive, including 'star of the day' and 'learner of the week'. They wear their completed sticker badges with pride. Pupils are motivated in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are considerate of the needs of others. They are kind, caring and treat everyone with respect. Pupils are clear that everybody is welcome at their school. They recognise difference and talk about why it is important to treat everyone equally. One pupil said, 'Everyone is special – how we look is what makes us special.'

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

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully redesigned the curriculum to ensure it is ambitious for all pupils. The aim of the curriculum is to give all pupils, including those with SEND, the knowledge and skills needed to access the next stage of their education. The changes to the curriculum are beginning to have a positive impact. Staff welcome these changes. Subject leaders value the time and resources they receive to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Senior leaders support them well to manage their workload. However, these changes are at an early stage of development. The school recognises that the curriculum needs to be embedded further to ensure that pupils moving through the school continue to receive a high-quality education.

The school has clearly identified the important knowledge that pupils will learn, starting from Nursery. Vocabulary is a priority area. Teachers make sure that pupils practise their knowledge before moving on to new learning. The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Staff act on advice from other professionals and make effective adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum. This helps pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers and achieve well. Ongoing training and development ensure that teachers are developing the subject knowledge that they need to teach the curriculum consistently well.

The school has successfully introduced a new phonics scheme. As a result, the teaching of reading has greatly improved. Staff have been well trained to teach the programme consistently. They identify pupils who need additional support quickly. Pupils receive daily support to practise reading. Books are well matched to pupils' knowledge. Pupils read accurately using the sounds that they know. As a result of the improvements, more pupils are better placed to achieve the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1. Pupils love reading. They look forward to hearing teachers read to them at the end of every day. Additional reading events, including the 'secret story teller', ignite pupils' interest in reading from an early age.

The school recognises the importance of laying strong foundations in the early years. Children in the early years get off to a strong start. New starters settle quickly into the well-established routines. Children are safe and comfortable in the highly stimulating environment. There is a sharp focus on children's language development and early mathematics. Children are independent. They are resilient and persevere with challenging activities. For example, one child showed determination when digging for worms for other children to explore.

The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attendance. Leaders analyse and track absence thoroughly. They have put in place a range of strategies to address the high number of pupils who are persistently absent. This has been successful. Attendance has improved greatly. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school's offer to broaden their development. They benefit from regular opportunities to take part in sporting events with the local family of schools. Educational visits broaden pupils' knowledge of the local area. Pupils know how to stay safe online and where to seek help if they need it.

Governors understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have ensured that the recent changes to leadership have been managed well. Staff and parents and carers comment on the 'family feel' of this school. Staff are very much part of a caring team and are proud and happy to work here. They are valued and listened to. When changes are made, they are made with the best interests of pupils in mind.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has recently made appropriate and significant changes to improve the curriculum. However, these changes are not fully embedded across the school. Therefore, it is too early to see fully the impact of these changes. The school should continue to provide training and development for staff to ensure that the curriculum continues to be implemented consistently and that all pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

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	107038
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10322935
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catherine Taylor Best
Headteacher	Debbie Shepherd (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.halfwaynurseryinfantschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been appointed to the school since the last inspection. She is also the headteacher at Halfway Junior School.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club run by the school on site.
- The school has a Nursery for three- and four-year-old children.

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 the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.

- The inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and science. 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 heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, at playtime and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; met with the designated safeguarding leads; 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils. They also considered the views of parents and carers using Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector also talked to parents in the school playground.

Inspection team

Nicola Beaumont, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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