

Inspection of a good school: Featherstone Girnhill Infant School

Hardwick Road, Featherstone, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF7 5JB

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

Outcome

Featherstone Girnhill Infant School continues to be a good school.

The executive headteacher of the school is Sally Henshall. This school is part of the Inspire Partnership Multi-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, Matthew Knox, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John North. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school provides a warm and welcoming learning environment for its pupils. Leaders create a strong culture within the school through its values of respect, responsibility, recognition and resilience. Pupils know how these values help them become better learners. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and caring.

Pupils enjoy spending time with each other in the playground and classrooms. They help each other learn to read and discuss their new learning together. Pupils typically behave with kindness, respect and an eagerness for learning. Children in the early years develop strong learning behaviours quickly. They become increasingly independent and confident. Pupils throughout the school build securely on these firm foundations. They are confident that any unkind behaviour will be dealt with by the adults in the school.

The school has high expectations for all pupils in school, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school motto of 'Every child matters, Every moment counts' means that everyone is focused on pupils learning the key knowledge securely. As a result, pupils achieve well across a broad range of subjects.

Pupils enjoy the curriculum trips that are arranged for them. For example, they told the inspector about the history visit to Pontefract Castle. This helped pupils make links to their learning in the classroom and deepen their understanding of the key knowledge.

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

The school and the trust have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum from the beginning of the early years to the end of Year 2. They have thoroughly considered the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. Lessons are well structured for every subject and have a focus on oracy. Each lesson starts with a review of previous learning and revisiting key vocabulary. This helps pupils rehearse their language skills and talk confidently about their learning.

The additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. Staff are highly skilled at supporting these pupils and adapt their curriculum delivery effectively to meet pupils' individual needs. Pupils with SEND successfully apply what they know and can do.

Leaders have made sure that reading is a priority. All staff receive regular training in phonics and deliver the reading programme consistently and with confidence. Pupils who have fallen behind in their phonics catch up quickly. Pupils at the early stage of reading read suitable books to practise their phonics and routinely use their phonics strategies to decode unknown words. Staff promote a love of reading. For example, staff read daily with pupils and encourage pupils to read a range of texts.

The teaching of mathematics, early reading and wider subjects is largely consistent throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this to help pupils develop new ideas and new vocabulary. Assessment is used effectively in all subjects and adults use this to close any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school is now looking at improving its writing curriculum. School leaders have already identified this as a priority. However, there is very little opportunity for pupils to demonstrate their writing skills in the wider curriculum. This means pupils do not develop their writing skills well through other subjects, such as history and geography.

Children in the early years cooperate well together. Children show high levels of concentration and interest in their activities, both inside and outside. Staff across early years plan interesting learning activities that develop children's communication skills and independence effectively.

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. Whether pupils are learning Makaton 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.

The trust and governing body support and check on the work of the school well. Leaders at all levels are aware of what the school needs to improve. They are reflective and clear in their drive for improvement. Staff enjoy working in a close-knit team and know their workload and well-being are always considered by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Expectations for developing writing in a few foundation subjects are not yet embedded. Leaders have already identified this as a next step. As a result, pupils do not improve their writing skills quickly in these subjects. The school needs to make sure pupils develop and advance their writing across the wider 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 May 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	144573
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10323094
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John North
CEO of the trust	Matthew Knox
Headteacher	Sally Henshall (Executive Headteacher)
Website	https://girnhill.ipmat.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Inspire Partnership Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of the 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 assistant headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector held discussions with the trustees, the chief executive officer and the deputy chief executive officer. The inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and

mathematics. The inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject leaders and teachers.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects: science, geography and religious education.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, pupils and staff.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons at different times of the day. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, as well as information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Rebecca Clayton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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