

# Inspection of a good school: Highwoods Community Primary School

Tynedale Square, Highwoods, Colchester, Essex CO4 9SN

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 June 2024

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Paul Disley, who is also the chief executive officer (CEO) of this single-academy trust. Other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Timothy Barraclough.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love being part of Highwoods Community Primary School. The school is a warm, welcoming and inclusive community. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school to learn and be with their friends.

Pupils look after each other, including the youngest children in Reception. Staff take any issues seriously. Any incidents are dealt with effectively, so they do not reoccur. This means pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils get along well together and respect each other's differences. Pupils focus intently in lessons.

Pupils' learning is strong in all curriculum areas, and their achievements in national assessments are well above average. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading and understand it is a gateway to the rest of the curriculum. They relish visiting the school's libraries or applying to become reading ambassadors. Pupils talk excitedly about the wide range of different books they have read, including dual-language books and stories from different cultures. Reading is at the heart of school life.

A number of experiences complement the school's excellent curriculum. Trips to the British Museum, for example, help pupils remember what they have learned. Pupils talk with excitement about the places they have been, for example a film studio, or visiting the town hall to learn about democracy.

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

An ambitious, intelligently designed curriculum is securely in place. It starts from the moment children enter Reception. Children in the early years access engaging and purposeful learning that skilfully prepares them for Year 1. Pupils become confident learners with wide ranging knowledge and skills.

The school has identified, and logically ordered, the key knowledge for pupils to know. Teachers continually remind pupils what they have learned. A rigorous programme of memory training and recapping on previous lessons is in place. This helps pupils remember their learning and make connections between subjects. For instance, in art, pupils link their knowledge to history and geography. This helped them confidently explain how the artist Hokusai used printmaking in nineteenth century Japan.

Leaders support teachers to improve their subject knowledge. Teachers know their pupils and subjects very well. Consequently, teachers adapt well-chosen learning activities to get the best out of pupils. For example, in mathematics teachers provide work which enables pupils to think hard and apply their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Teachers' checks during lessons help them quickly spot gaps in pupils' understanding. Teachers proficiently adjust lessons to stop pupils falling behind.

Reading is prioritised so that when children start in Reception, they quickly learn their letters and sounds. Well-chosen books, carefully matched to pupils' reading knowledge, enable pupils to become confident, fluent readers. Well trained adults ensure that pupils who struggle with reading catch up quickly. A wide range of books and texts enrich the curriculum. Staff share their own enthusiasm for reading with pupils.

The school's work to support all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength. Careful changes are made to lessons or the curriculum to enable pupils with SEND to achieve well. This includes children in the early years. Pupils with complex needs are further supported with specific interventions, which address their needs well. In every year group and subject, consistent, high-quality delivery of the curriculum helps pupils achieve well so they are ready for their next stage of education.

The school's very high expectations of behaviour are shown through pupils' positive actions in lessons and around the school. Pupils behave exceptionally well, attend regularly and have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils take pride in producing high quality, beautifully presented writing. Pupils are resilient learners, and do not give up if they find something, like a complex mathematics problem, challenging. If pupils have any worries, there are many people to listen and help. Pupils are very well looked after.

The school caters extremely well for pupils' personal development. Leaders have carefully planned an exemplary range of additional opportunities. All pupils, regardless of background, can take part in clubs, trips and other activities. Pupils are proud of their leadership roles and talk about their duty to 'help and support others'. There is an

extensive outdoor learning programme, designed carefully to meet the needs of the community. Pupils and families value the high-quality pastoral support they receive.

The leadership team, led by the headteacher, drives the ambition for the school. Leaders, governors, trustees and staff work closely together, and pupils are at the centre of the school's work. Governors offer high-quality challenge and support. The school has fostered positive relationships with parents. Parents are highly appreciative of the school's work. Staff are positive that leaders do all they can to help them balance work, training and family life.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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 March 2015.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139462
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345362
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	427
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Timothy Barraclough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Disley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.highwoodsprimary.com">www.highwoodsprimary.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any off-site providers of alternative education.

## 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. 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 sampled pupils' writing in English and in the wider curriculum.
- The inspector held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher who is also the CEO, two deputy headteachers, the English as an additional language teacher, the school business manager and a play therapist.

- The inspector met with five governors who are also trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- 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 took account of a range of school information, including development plans, policies, minutes of meetings of the governing body and the trust, and reports from external advisers.
- The inspector took account of pupils' views by holding discussions with groups of them.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector also considered responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Nick Rudman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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