

Inspection of Hucknall Flying High Academy

Shepherd Street, Hucknall, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG15 6WU

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Karl Clowery. This school is part of Flying High Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Chris Wheatley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Neil Robinson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils truly blossom at Hucknall Flying High Academy. The ambitious curriculum is intertwined with an exceptional personal development offer. This helps pupils to reach their true potential. The school's mantra, 'be kind, work hard and fly high' is consistently evident in the way pupils conduct themselves. Pupils feel safe and happy here.

Pupils know every day at this school counts. They apply themselves and commit firmly to learning from their expert teachers. Staff remind pupils that they are capable of excellence. This gives pupils an incredibly positive and determined mindset. This combination of expert teaching and character development ensures that all pupils achieve as best as they possibly can.

Staff develop pupils to be bastions of the school and their local community. The work of pupils goes beyond the school gates. They have raised awareness of poor water quality in local rivers and campaigned against vandalism. Their voice has led to road improvements, making the whole community a safer and better place.

Parents and carers really value the distinct high-quality experience each pupil receives. Although school leaders and staff know the quality that the school provides, nothing is left to chance. There is a determination to make refinements and continuously improve.

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

The curriculum at Hucknall Flying High Academy is expertly designed. It is underpinned by academic rigour. The school has carefully thought about the most important knowledge pupils must learn and the skills that pupils should develop. The curriculum's breadth and depth ensure that pupils work towards ambitious end points.

The interconnectedness of this exceptional curriculum means that pupils apply knowledge from one subject domain to another. For example, when pupils study the Mayan civilisation, they use their understanding of place location in geography. They use this to understand that what was known as part of Mesoamerica is now classed as North America. The curriculum is precisely ordered and connected through what are known as 'drivers' and 'enhancers'. These support pupils to learn deeply.

Teachers have a detailed and common understanding of the curriculum. Every teacher has expert subject knowledge. They demonstrate high levels of skill through the effective methods they use to teach. Teachers know how to adapt teaching to precisely meet the needs of all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Teachers use effective and consistent formative assessment to ensure that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are addressed swiftly. The specific approaches to teaching the curriculum are rooted in research. This helps pupils achieve highly.

The school carefully plans many rich experiences for pupils. For example, pupils speak to the authors of the books they have read, the artist that they have studied and other professionals, such as scientist and musicians. These events are more commonly known in the school as 'adult connections', and they make learning more memorable.

Children start to learn to read as soon as they start in the early years. All pupils read every day in 'rise and shine' sessions and during protected reading time. Adults are experts in teaching early reading. The youngest children benefit from sustained reading of books that match the sounds they know. Pupils become fluent readers quickly, and this gives them a flying start to accessing the rich wider curriculum. All pupils, including the most disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, achieve exceptionally well in national tests. There are ample spaces to read and get lost in books, such as the 'Harry Potter Library'. Pupils develop a love for reading.

Children in Nursery and Reception classes also benefit from a curriculum that gives them the precise building blocks for the next stage of learning. Interactions between children and adults are of the highest quality. Adults expertly draw children's attention to meticulously planned activities to help them develop knowledge in all areas of learning. The youngest children use words such as 'abstract', 'habitat' and 'rotate' with accuracy. Children develop a rich vocabulary, which sets them up for future academic learning.

The personal development offer goes beyond what is expected. Pupils gain a firm grasp of what it means to be British. They have a secure understanding of the protected characteristics, different faiths and cultures. As a result, pupils celebrate commonalities and value difference. Pupils develop as resilient and independent learners through the rich set of experiences they undertake. There are ample opportunities to put pupils' talents and interests to the test by competing with other schools in the trust. Pupils are proud to be the reigning champions of the trust's debate championship.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Teachers develop pupils' learning behaviours through consistently applied routines and rules. Pupils know that they can get things wrong, but there will always be an opportunity to reflect and make better choices next time. This ethos ensures that pupils become better with each mistake.

Trustees, executive leaders and governors leave nothing to chance at this school. They understand their statutory duties. They know they have realised their ambitious vision for this school, yet still they challenge school leaders to push the pupils to 'fly even higher'. Staff are proud to work here. They know the support and training they receive is of unequivocal quality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	147075
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10298530
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Robinson
CEO	Chris Wheatley
Headteacher	Karl Clowery
Website	www.hucknallfha.co.uk

Information about this school

- Hucknall Flying High Academy is a free school that opened in September 2019.
- The school operates a breakfast provision before the start of the school day and also an after-school provision.
- The school has a nursery provision for two- to three-year-olds.
- The school is part of Flying High Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and a range of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of primary education, members of the board of trustees and governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors 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 lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors also looked at the curriculum and pupils' books in several other subjects. They also visited English, modern foreign languages, religious education, science, and design and technology lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. The inspectors spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspectors met with groups of staff and pupils and considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ceri Hathaway

Ofsted Inspector

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