

Inspection of a school judged Outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Heights Primary School

129 Upper Woodcote Road, Reading RG4 7LB

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

Outcome

The Heights Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Hayley Harrison. This school is part of Bellevue Place Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mark Greatrex, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Claire Delaney.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this exceptional school. The school has high aspirations for all pupils from the moment that they arrive. It puts pupils' learning at the centre of everything it does. As a result, pupils become confident, articulate and passionate learners. This enables them to learn very well across the full curriculum. The school is particularly ambitious for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils' behaviour in and beyond the classroom is exemplary. Pupils said that everyone treats each other with the same respect. Older pupils are exceptional role models, displaying respect, kindness and positivity. They form strong relationships with their younger peers, helping them to live up to these high standards of behaviour.

The school encourages pupils to have a voice and share their opinions. Pupils are excited to discover new information. They appreciate the many worthwhile learning opportunities that the school provides. They enjoy visits to theatres and museums and participating in residential trips, for example.

Pupils feel welcome and safe at the school. The vast majority of parents and carers are effusive in their praise for the school. They recognise the hard work and care staff put into making the children's school days as productive as possible.

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

The school has extremely high expectations for pupils' achievement. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, rise to this challenge. The school has put a lot of thought into shaping a curriculum that meets pupils' learning needs and interests. The careful construction of the curriculum means that pupils continually build on their prior learning. The curriculum sets out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to learn, starting from the early years. Pupils thrive and achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum. This is consistently reflected in pupils' high outcomes at the end of key stage 2.

Teaching of reading is a top priority. Pupils throughout the school are immersed in high quality books. Teachers are well trained and deliver the phonics programme expertly with high levels of consistency. Pupils read books that are carefully matched to the sounds they already know. Staff act quickly to support pupils who struggle with reading. This enables them to read fluently and accurately. Nearly all pupils achieve highly in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.

Staff have very strong subject-specific knowledge and expertise in how to teach the curriculum effectively. Staff are always keen to learn and adapt their methods in the interests of their pupils. Staff regularly check that pupils have the prior knowledge they need before beginning new learning. They check that pupils remember and understand any new information. This means staff can address misunderstandings as soon as they arise.

Staff are well trained to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are united in their view that additional needs should not put a glass ceiling on any pupil's learning. They make effective adaptations that allow these pupils to learn in line with their peers. This includes the use of carefully managed additional pastoral support for pupils who need it. This whole package of support enables pupils with SEND to achieve very well.

From the start of the early years, routines are well established. Pupils across the school behave extremely well and demonstrate a clear love of learning. Pupils are resilient and motivated learners and are polite to staff and each other. Staff deal with any unkindness or discriminatory behaviour swiftly. Pupils' rates of attendance are strong. Staff act quickly on any identified concerns and offer support to those who need it.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. The school has ensured that this is at the heart of its work. Pupils learn about important topics, such as equality, diversity and tolerance. They can participate in a varied selection of extra-curricular activities, including dance, archaeology and sports. These activities all help to develop pupils' interests, confidence and resilience. The school considers the needs and interests of disadvantaged pupils carefully so they can take full advantage of these opportunities.

Staff feel valued. They are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the opportunities that they have to develop the curriculum. Staff speak highly of how the school prioritises their well-being and workload, including when planning new initiatives. The trust fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Trustees and governors hold leaders to account for the quality of education at the school and consider staff welfare. They provide extensive support to develop all aspects of the school's work even further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in May 2017.

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	139972
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10268010
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Delaney
CEO of the trust	Mark Greatrex
Headteacher	Hayley Harrison
Website	www.theheightsprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Heights Primary School is part of the Bellevue Place Education Trust. The school joined the trust in December 2023.
- The headteacher started in September 2024.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders within the school. They also met with the chair and members of both the board of trustees and the local governing board, as well as educational representatives from the trust.
- 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 reviewed a range of the school's documentation including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing board meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspector considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View and also spoke with parents on the second day of the inspection.
- The views of staff were gathered through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection, as well as through Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including through the classroom visits, group discussions as well as at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Chris Parker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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