

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Highfield Hall Primary School

Highfield Hall Primary School, Highfield Lane, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 8AZ

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of this school. The importance of including everyone permeates through all areas of the school's work. It is a nurturing place to learn. 'Happiness Heroes' are proud of their role in spreading good cheer.

Pupils understand the school's CARE values (compassion, aspirational, respectful, emotionally healthy). They do their best to live up to them and enjoy the rewards they receive when they succeed. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. On occasion, when pupils struggle with their behaviour, they are supported well. Relationships are respectful and positive. Pupils hold their teachers in high regard.

The school is ambitious for pupils to be kind and caring members of society. Pupils care for and support each other. They are encouraged to look out for their peers and they do this with pride.

The school strives for pupils to be the best they can be and achieve well. However, some areas of the curriculum are not implemented as well they could be. This means that not all pupils achieve as well as they should.

A wide range of experiences are available for pupils to enjoy. There are various clubs on offer, both at lunchtimes and after school, in which pupils can take part.

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

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They take time to explain concepts clearly and model learning behaviours for pupils. Staff make effective use of subject-specific

vocabulary in lessons. When this is done well, pupils then use the correct vocabulary to discuss their learning. For example, pupils speak positively about their learning in mathematics. They understand how fundamental skills, such as number bonds, place value and times tables, help them to complete more complex tasks. This starts in the early years where provision is strong.

The school is ambitious for all its pupils to develop a love of reading. Many pupils say that they enjoy listening to books read to them by staff. Pupils like discussing their favourite books and making recommendations to their peers. Staff carefully follow the agreed approach to teaching early reading and phonics. Books are well matched to pupils' knowledge to help them remember what they have been taught. However, staff expectations of pupils' fluency in some aspects of English are not consistently high. For example, sometimes, pupils' misconceptions of letter formation, spelling and grammar are not resolved. This hinders pupils improving their writing.

Sometimes, the curriculum is not implemented as effectively as the school intends. Staff do not always help pupils to connect important pieces of knowledge together. As a result, pupils tend to remember the task they completed rather than the intended learning. They struggle to recall what has been taught over time in sufficient detail. This includes pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values and other faiths and cultures.

Systems are in place to identify pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers adapt how they deliver the curriculum to support these pupils. This means that many pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers. Pupils with more complex SEND benefit from individualised curriculums that are matched to their needs. Staff are knowledgeable about the ways they can offer pupils with SEND additional help.

Children in the early years and nursery get off to a good start. It is an exciting place to learn. They are supported well to begin to learn to read and write, and to understand numbers. Children are encouraged to talk about and explain their ideas and thinking.

The school expects all pupils to attend school each day and many pupils do. Systems in place to improve attendance are making a positive impact.

Pupils are taught about how to be emotionally healthy. Nugget, the school's reading therapy dog, is appreciated by the pupils who sit with her to support their well-being. Pupils learn how to recognise their own and other's feelings. They get help understanding how to manage their emotions and do this well. This is a real strength of the work of the school.

Governors know the school well. They ensure that leaders keep them well informed and provide the school with appropriate support. Overall, the school's priorities for improvement are accurate. Its actions are targeted closely on the most important aspects that need to get better. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued, respected and supported.

Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its standards in most areas. However, the evidence suggests that the implementation of some areas of the curriculum may not be as effective as it was previously.

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's intentions for the curriculum are not fully realised. Pupils do not experience sufficient opportunities to rehearse learning and recall key knowledge. As a result, in some subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they should. The school needs to ensure that staff implement the curriculum effectively in all subjects, so that pupils learn well.
- Sometimes, the school does not ensure that staff's expectations of fundamental skills in some aspects of English are high enough. Pupils' misconceptions are not addressed well. At times, some pupils do not read and write with the necessary fluency to succeed. The school needs to ensure that staff have high expectations of pupils' fundamental skills, so that pupils are able to read and write fluently.

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 good 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2016.

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	112667
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10347359
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	391
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stuart Yeowart
Headteacher	Michael Bywaters
Website	www.highfieldhall.derbyshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a nursery provision that caters for three-year-olds.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative provisions.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, subject leaders, teachers, and leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector met with the with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with parents and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also spoke with groups of pupils and staff.
- 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 documents, including information available on the school's website.

Inspection team

Heidi Bastock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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