

Inspection of a good school: Highfield Hall Primary School

Highfield Lane, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 8AZ

Inspection dates:

20–21 November 2019

Outcome

Highfield Hall Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and welcoming school. The school's core values of respect and compassion are at the heart of everything it does.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. They say that their teachers look after them, listen to them and help them to learn. Pupils behave well and are kind to each other. They move around school sensibly, greet others politely and show their good manners. They say that bullying is very rare. If it does happen, they know staff will deal with it straight away.

Leaders want all pupils to achieve well. They ensure that teachers plan lessons that are exciting and engaging in most subjects. Pupils work hard and do their best. They enjoy learning, working well either individually or as part of a group. Pupils new to the school settle in quickly.

Pupils want to play a part in making their school a good place to learn. They enjoy being given responsibilities, for example being house captains or school councillors. Pupils enjoy the rich range of academic and other activities that leaders plan for them.

Parents speak highly of the school, with comments such as: 'The school has a fantastic family feel and an inclusive approach.'

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

The school is well led by the recently appointed headteacher and his team. Governors know the school well and check that it is continuing to provide a good education.

Leaders and staff have made changes to the curriculum. They are clear what they want pupils to know, do and understand at specific points in their education. Learning is planned logically so that children know more and remember more. However, in some subjects, these changes are recent. Leaders have not had the opportunity to check that the curriculum is as good as they want it to be in every subject.

Teachers use assessment information sensibly. This means that they can meet pupils' specific needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from precise teaching. They are well supported in class. Leaders also keep a close eye on how well disadvantaged pupils are doing. They make sure that all staff provide well for these pupils.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. They enjoy a wide range of exciting indoor and outdoor learning activities. Staff have high expectations. They plan activities that build on what children already know. Developing the early skills in reading and mathematics are a priority. Children learn about numbers and the sounds that letters make. They do this in a fun, enjoyable and effective way. Leaders prioritise reading and mathematics for all pupils. Staff are well trained to deliver phonics sessions as soon as children start school. Pupils who may find early reading difficult are provided with extra support. As a result of this, the vast majority of pupils have good phonics skills by the end of Year 1.

Teachers ensure that pupils of all ages develop a deep enjoyment of reading. By Year 6, they enjoy high-quality stories such as 'Tom's Midnight Garden'. Pupils told me they love to read and be read to. The school has a good range of high-quality reading books for pupils to choose from.

The approach to the teaching of mathematics is just as effective. Teachers are skilled in teaching this subject, and give pupils challenging work. Pupils achieve well. They become fluent mathematicians who can explain their reasoning. Staff give good support to any pupil who needs to catch up. Leaders recognise that learning is not purely academic. The physical education (PE) curriculum is particularly well delivered. Pupils enjoy their PE lessons and the health benefits they bring. They take part in lots of sporting and artistic opportunities.

Leaders are keen to support pupils' personal development. Pupils have ample opportunities to take responsibilities, such as being school prefects and monitors or through visiting a local care home. There are a range of exciting clubs such as dance and samba sport. Staff have had training to deliver a new scheme to teach pupils mindfulness.

Pupils behave well. They are caring to each other and take part in occasions such as 'Anti-Bullying and Kindness Week'. They cooperate in class and work hard. Lessons flow well and are not interrupted by poor behaviour. Attendance is good.

Staff enjoy working at this school. They value the training they have had and the clarity of vision the new headteacher is providing. They say that he is mindful of their workload when introducing any changes he makes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Systems for staff to report concerns are clear and understood by all staff. Those

responsible for safeguarding are quick to follow up on any concerns. Staff training is regular, which allows them to keep up to date with current guidance.

Relationships are a strength of the school. Staff can quickly spot changes in pupils' behaviour and pick up on any concerns or worries. Pupils are provided with the skills and knowledge they need to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. Staff recruited to work in school are checked to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subject leaders have yet had the opportunity to monitor, in detail, the subject they are responsible for. Although they have a good overall understanding of the quality of the curriculum, they are not yet able to pinpoint, with precision, specific strengths and note any weaknesses. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders are provided with the time to do this so that they are able to make any necessary adjustments to the 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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 8–9 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	112667
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10110153
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	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nigel Down
Headteacher	Dr Mike Bywaters
Website	www.highfieldhall.derbyshire.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8–9 March 2016

Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes to the school since its last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- In order to judge whether the quality of education continues to be good, I focused the inspection on specific subjects of the curriculum. I did deep dives in reading, mathematics and physical education. This involved meeting with senior and subject leaders, scrutinising curriculum planning, and visiting lessons where pupils were learning these subjects. I met pupils from the lessons and looked at their work in these and in other subjects. I met with teachers about the curriculum they were delivering.
- In addition, I met with representatives of the governing body and the coordinator for pupils with SEND. I read a wide variety of school documents, including the school development plan. I took note of the responses to Ofsted Parent View and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.
- In order to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, I read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and interviewed the designated lead for safeguarding. I also spoke with staff to check details of their safeguarding knowledge and training, that they understood the importance of their responsibility to report any safeguarding

concerns without delay, and if they knew the procedure to do this. I checked samples of safeguarding records and read the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ged Philbin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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