

Inspection of a good school: Highcliffe Primary School and Community Centre

Highcliffe Primary School and Community Centre, Greengate Lane, Birstall, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 3DL

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 October 2022

Outcome

Highcliffe Primary School and Community Centre continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high ambition for every pupil who attends the school. They have identified the personal qualities they want pupils to develop. These are based on 6Rs: reciprocity, respect, responsibility, resilience, resourcefulness and reflection. Pupils know what these words mean and work hard to show these characteristics in their work and play. Pupils share leaders' vision that they can be successful in whatever they choose to be. Pupils know that working hard and doing well will help them to achieve their 'big dreams'.

Pupils are happy at school. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and based on mutual respect. Pupils say that one of the best things about their school is the teachers. Adults are role models for pupils. In turn, pupils treat each other with respect and are polite to one another. They are a credit to the school.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Leaders explore every possible avenue to make sure that pupils who struggle to manage in the busy school environment get the support they need. Pupils are clear about what bullying is. They know that it can take a number of different forms. They are confident to report it and say that their teachers will make it stop.

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

Leaders have designed an effective curriculum that meets the needs of pupils. Curriculum plans identify the 'sticky knowledge' that pupils need to know and remember. Leaders make sure that this knowledge builds gradually over time. For example, in mathematics teachers skilfully guide pupils step by step towards the intended outcomes. As pupils gain confidence, they move from practising new learning to solving mathematical problems. Pupils are also provided with challenge and 'dive deeply' into mathematical concepts. In a very small number of subjects curriculum plans do not set out the small steps of learning that pupils need to gain to achieve the overall intended aim.

Teachers make regular checks that pupils remember prior learning. Retrieval practice is a key part of lessons. Teachers also use assessment well, including in the foundation subjects. Pupils complete 'blue paper' assessments. Teachers use this work to identify where pupils may have misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge. They plan future lessons to address this.

Staff understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide strong support for these pupils. Leaders work well with external agencies to make sure that pupils with SEND can participate as fully as possible in school life. Almost all parents of pupils with SEND are positive about the support their children are given. One parent commented: 'My child's SEND needs are dealt with in an extraordinarily positive way'.

At the heart of the curriculum is reading. Leaders have introduced a new programme to teach phonics. This has got off to a good start. Pupils learn phonics right from the start of school. Pupils in the early years use their phonic knowledge to read and write simple words. Pupils read books that are matched to the sounds that pupils know. However, leaders have not precisely identified the best ways that adults can support pupils as they read to an adult. One-to-one reading sessions lack consistency, and learning opportunities are missed by some adults.

Leaders have designed a well-thought-out personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. This curriculum lays out from the early years to Year 6 how pupils are prepared to become positive and successful citizens. Pupils learn about how to have positive relationships, how to stay healthy and the importance of respecting that everyone is different, in an age-appropriate way. Leaders plan a calendar of events to celebrate diversity. Pupils wear yellow to school to mark mental health awareness day. They also participate in inter-faith week and autism awareness days. Pupils have a chance to become involved in social justice projects and raise money for charities through the 'Lionheart character award'. Trips and visitors bring the curriculum alive. Year 4 pupils developed a deeper understanding of the events of the Battle of Bosworth on a recent trip to the Bosworth battlefield.

The trust provides effective support for the school. Almost all staff feel well supported by the trust and leaders, including with workload. Governors use their well-developed understanding of the school's priorities to hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are committed to keeping pupils safe. Staff receive safeguarding training. Leaders make regular checks to assure themselves that all staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff report concerns promptly. Leaders' response to any concern raised is swift and appropriate. They work closely with external agencies to make sure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate support.

Pupils use the worry boxes in each class to let an adult in school know that they have a problem. Pupils are confident that their worries will be taken seriously.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have written curriculum plans for all subjects. A very small number of these plans do not set out precisely the steps of learning that pupils need to make to reach the overall aims. As a result, teachers identify these for themselves as they plan lessons. This could lead to inconsistencies. Leaders need to ensure that these small steps are explicit in all curriculum plans.
- Some adults who read with pupils do not provide effective support. They do not maximise learning opportunities. Not all staff revise pupils' phonic knowledge or develop their inference skills in a meaningful way. Leaders should ensure that expectations of how staff support pupils as they read are consistently successful in enabling pupils to read with improved fluency and comprehension.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 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](#)' 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	140725
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10227856
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne Lamb
Headteacher	Jennifer Piper-Gale
Website	www.highcliffeacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 – 22 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Lionheart Educational Trust.
- There have been a number of changes to the school's leadership, including governance, since the previous inspection.
- The current head of school is acting up in the temporary absence of the substantive head of school.
- The school operates wraparound care before and after school that is managed by the governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 held meetings with the senior leadership team. She also met with members of the governing body, including the co-chairs and vice-chair of governors

and one trustee. She held a separate meeting with the chief executive officer of the trust.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited and looked at a sample of pupils' work. Pupils were also heard reading to a familiar adult.
- A meeting was held with designated safeguarding leaders to discuss the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe. The inspector reviewed a range of documents relating to safeguarding and spoke to staff about how they keep pupils safe. The inspector also spoke to pupils about how safe they feel in school.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, around the school and during lunchtime.
- The inspector reviewed further documentation including: curriculum plans, behaviour and attendance records and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Responses to Ofsted's online parent, staff and pupil surveys were considered. The inspector also spoke to parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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