

Inspection of a good school: Highlees Primary School

Ashton Road, Westwood, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE3 7ER

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 June 2024

Outcome

Highlees Primary School continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Melissa Albert. This school is part of The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Hugh Greenway, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tim Coulson. There is also an executive principal, Sue Lane, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Highlees Primary School. They are proud to be part of the school. Pupils have caring and respectful relationships and welcome new pupils who join the school.

Pupils behave well and trust adults to help them with any problems they might have. They enjoy their well-organised playtimes, where they play with pupils from across the school and take part in many different activities. Pupils know how to stay safe, including when online.

The curriculum has recently been redeveloped to raise pupils' ambitions and the expectations of them. The ways in which the pupils learn, for instance, through drama, help them to develop the spoken word, to remember vocabulary and understand difficult concepts. Pupils share the school's high aspirations and expectations. They say, 'We can achieve well because teachers believe we can.' Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils have responsibilities, including as members of the school council, 'bistro buddies' and as 'wellbeing in schools' ambassadors. Pupils enjoy a variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities, including chess club, forest club and football. Pupils would benefit further from wider experiences that would help them connect their classroom learning to the wider world.

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

The school has designed a well-considered and organised curriculum, which provides opportunities for pupils to revisit their learning. This begins from the early years, where children develop their curiosity and interest in learning. Pupils make links and remember what they have learned before.

In some subjects, the ways teachers check on what pupils know is being reviewed. This is because leaders have identified that they do not have the detailed information they need that tells them how well the curriculum is meeting the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils have gaps in what they know and remember in some areas of the curriculum.

Teachers have strategies in place to ensure pupils rehearse and learn new vocabulary that they can use in their own writing. From early years, pupils benefit from carefully structured learning activities that help them to consolidate their learning through language. This focus supports many pupils, including particularly those who speak English as an additional language.

From early years, the school has developed a phonics programme to raise the priority of learning to read. All teachers are well trained and follow the agreed approach consistently well.

Teachers carefully identify what pupils know. They provide effective support for those pupils who find reading difficult. The books that pupils read closely match the sounds that they know. This means that pupils practise what they already know and attempt

unfamiliar words with confidence. Pupils use their reading skills across the curriculum and enjoy the books and stories that teachers read to and with them. As a result, pupils are developing a love of reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support they need. Staff are well trained to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Where pupils need a more individual approach to the curriculum, staff ensure pupils are well supported so they access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

The school prioritises pupils' social, emotional and welfare needs from the moment pupils start school. Most pupils try hard with their learning. They behave respectfully towards their peers and teachers. Pupils understand rewards and sanctions. This is in part because there are effective systems in place. For instance, the school has worked hard to develop breaktime provision. A higher number of activities at breaktimes has resulted in a lower number of incidents.

There is a wide range of clubs on offer, which many pupils take part in. However, opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences are not included in the planning of the curriculum. This reduces the chance for pupils to apply what they learn in the classroom to real life contexts. While parents are generally positive about the school's work, they would like more experiences for pupils to explore the local and wider community.

Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for themselves and others and take on various leadership roles. This helps develop their character and sense of belonging within the school community.

Leaders, including those from the trust, are supportive of teachers' workload and well-being. Staff are proud to work at the school and trustees are proud of the school's work. Staff benefit from the many opportunities for training.

Trust leaders' regular monitoring enables them to support and challenge leaders effectively. Trustees understand and capably carry out their statutory responsibilities effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not always have the information they need about gaps in pupils' knowledge. When this happens, pupils' progress is slowed because teachers do not identify what pupils know and remember. The school should continue their plans to develop assessment, particularly in the wider curriculum subjects so that they are clear on where there are gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders should then support

teachers to effectively use assessment so they can plan teaching that takes account of what they know and what they need to learn.

- Too few pupils have benefitted from wider enrichment experiences that enhance the curriculum. As a result, opportunities for broadening pupils' cultural experiences and bringing the learned curriculum to life are not frequent. The school should ensure pupils' enrichment includes experiences that would deepen learning in line with the planned 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 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 12–13 June 2018.

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	139930
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10318621
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	390
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tim Coulson
CEO	Hugh Greenway
Executive Principal	Sue Lane
Principal	Melissa Albert
Website	https://www.eyrescroft.peterborough.sch.uk/page/?title=Highlees+Home&pid=6
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Highlees Primary School has been part of the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust since September 2013.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- 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 met with the principal and leaders responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and strategic improvement.
- The inspector met with representatives from the board of trust, including the chief executive officer.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and science. For each deep dive, the inspector visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- The inspector reviewed curriculum documentation and work in personal, social, health and economic education.
- The inspector met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's records of behaviour and attendance and spoke with several groups of pupils to understand their experience of school.
- The inspector met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on suspensions.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Sonia Innes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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