

Inspection of a good school: Higham Ferrers Nursery and Infant School

Wharf Road, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 8BQ

Inspection dates:

25–26 February 2020

Outcome

Higham Ferrers Nursery and Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like to come to this happy school each morning. Attendance is high. Staff model the school's values, and are caring, respectful and friendly. Pupils feel safe and secure here. They told me how everyone is kind to each other and say bullying hardly ever happens. Staff sort any problems out immediately, in a fair way. Pupils told me how they can speak to staff if they ever get worried or upset.

Pupils are also keen to attend because lessons are challenging and interesting. Children in the early years go to West Farm Lodge, and to the jungle on a safari bus. Pupils in Year 1 visit the National Space Centre to find out about Tim Peake. Pupils receive a good, well-rounded education at Higham Ferrers. Teachers teach them phonics in fun ways so that they are keen to show how well they can read. They learn that, for example, if $3+5=8$, so must $5+3$. Staff want the best for every pupil.

Pupils are expected to be well behaved in lessons and around the school, and they are. They complete the 'Rainbow of Confidence' each morning and learn to be thankful for every day.

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

The headteacher leads this school well. She is well respected and ensures that it runs smoothly and efficiently. It is a calm educational setting. She and her colleagues want pupils to achieve their potential. She makes sure that teachers plan and deliver lessons well so that pupils can learn. Pupils leave well prepared for their next school.

The headteacher's high standards and caring approach are upheld by her staff. Adults work together in the same way, so that pupils feel secure. The staff enjoy their work and say that leaders are mindful of their workload.

The school is very inclusive. All children are welcomed in. The needs of vulnerable pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well met. Adults

give them good support and resources to help them learn. Parents of these pupils express their strong support for staff's work in helping their children.

Leaders see it as essential that pupils have the literacy and numeracy skills they need. The school has received four consecutive Basic Skills Quality Marks for its work. In reading, teachers know which phonic sounds pupils do not know yet. Those pupils who need to catch up with their reading get prompt help. Leaders noted that not as many children as they wanted to were learning to read well by the end of the early years. They have now improved their teaching so that progress is much stronger. Staff teach pupils phonics in a step-by-step way. Children in the Reception Year learning the 'ee' sound can read 'teeth' because staff have already taught them 't' and 'th'. There were not enough books for weaker readers in this year group to build up their confidence, so staff have recently bought lots more. Children are ready to use these, and are very excited. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 already receive books that are well matched to the sounds they know. Pupils told me how much they enjoy the daily story sessions. They read lots at home to earn points to become 'reading royalty'. They want to win so they can read with Fred the Frog.

Pupils also make good progress across other subjects. I saw children in the Reception Year during a mathematics lesson, and one of them explained, 'I know that one more than 13 is 14.' They could work out different way of making 14. In art and design, teachers kindle pupils' creativity and imagination. I observed pupils in Year 1 improve their sketching until they could produce intricate drawings of spinning tops. Pupils can describe the different work of Van Gogh, Seurat and Matthew Cusick. In science, they learn about habitats and how to place different species of animals in groups.

Staff expect all pupils to pay attention, follow instructions and do their best. Because pupils do so, lessons are not disrupted. Even the youngest children do not become distracted. Pupils are kind to each other, polite and respectful. Staff teach them the school's values and pupils learn to explain what they mean. Pupils play an active part in the school. They raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital and completed the 'Keep Fit Circuit' with a Paralympian. They have met the governing body to discuss building a 'Zen den' in the playground. Those pupils who are learning sign language show their skills with particular pride.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders see it as highly important to do all they can to keep pupils safe. They ensure that staff are well trained in safeguarding. Everyone understands their responsibility to always record, report and act on any concern. Leaders keep detailed records and take appropriate action, including referral to external agencies when required.

Leaders ensure that parents are given good information to help keep their children safe online. The school website gives a wealth of detail about the risks of mobile apps, and about issues such as 'catfishing'.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Though the new curriculum in the Reception Year is ensuring that children are making stronger progress, some children have not had access to sufficient reading books that are precisely matched to their ability. This has meant that not all will have achieved as highly as they could have done by the time they begin Year 1. Leaders have purchased new books for these children. Leaders should ensure that these have the impact they intend, and that books are consistently well matched to the needs of all children in the Reception Year.

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 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 13 September 2010.

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 the school and 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

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| Unique reference number | 121899 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 10110138 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 277 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Simon White |
| Headteacher | Linda Ward |
| Website | www.highamferrers-inf.northants.sch.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 23 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

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

Information about this inspection

- In order to judge whether the school continues to be good, I focused the inspection on specific subjects of the curriculum. I did deep dives in reading, mathematics, and art and design. 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. I heard children read books. I looked at other subjects of the curriculum in less depth.
- 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, met with parents at the start of the school day and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- In order to judge 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, and to find out if they understood the importance of their responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns without delay and if they knew the procedure for doing this. I checked samples of safeguarding records, spoke with parents about their child's safety at the school and read responses from Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Roary Pownall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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