

Inspection of an outstanding school: Hacton Primary School

Chepstow Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6AU

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 October 2021

Outcome

Hacton Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to Hacton Primary School. Teachers make lessons enjoyable and interesting so that pupils enjoy learning new things. Pupils learn exceptionally well. Their attitudes to school and to learning are first-rate. They listen attentively to their teachers and work hard to do their very best. Pupils said that their teachers always help them to do well. Teachers explain things carefully to them and go over work again if pupils do not understand something. This careful attention to helping pupils ensures that they remember more and learn more as they move through the school.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Routines are clear and are used consistently by all staff. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them. The routines are fair, used pragmatically and applied with a strong sense of mutual respect. As a result, silly behaviour rarely gets in the way of learning. A calm, purposeful and compassionate atmosphere fills the school.

Pupils feel safe in school. They treat others with kindness and respect, readily helping those in need. For example, school ambassadors help those who feel sad or worried. Pupils said that bullying is unusual but they know that staff would deal with it quickly if it were to happen.

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

Leaders have continued to improve the school's performance throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Their focus on pupils' education and helping them achieve excellence is unmistakable. For example, the curriculum is meticulously planned and organised. Leaders and staff take great care to pinpoint exactly what they want pupils to learn and by when. This includes children in the Nursery and Reception classes. The early years curriculum is based firmly on helping children develop their personal, social and physical skills as well as learning phonics and numbers.

All staff put a great deal of thought into their plans and the order in which they teach each unit of work. Carefully selected resources support pupils' learning effectively. For example, the 'pupil passport' and 'knowledge booklets' set out teachers' expectations and the facts and concepts they want pupils to learn. This means that pupils experience an inspiring curriculum, designed specifically to meet their needs.

Early reading is taught effectively. In the Nursery and Reception years, children are introduced to reading and writing early so that they get a strong start. In Reception and Year 1, staff use a structured synthetic phonics scheme to teach pupils the sounds that letters represent and how to put these together to make words. Pupils read books that are carefully matched to the sounds they are learning. All this is done effectively so that by the end of Year 1 almost every pupil achieves well and is a confident reader. For the small number of pupils who still need support, well-directed extra help in Year 2 ensures that they also become fluent readers.

Leaders' and governors' investment in developing an inspiring and aspirational curriculum is paying off. Teachers' subject knowledge is bolstered effectively by a clear programme of training that is centred around the curriculum. For example, in music, leaders provide ongoing support and training to ensure that the well-thought-out curriculum is put into practice effectively. In science, the carefully structured programme ensures that pupils learn the important scientific ideas one after another. Teachers help pupils to remember their learning, often by giving them quick tasks to check what pupils understand. For example, work in Year 5 on forces included a retrieval quiz to see how much pupils had remembered. As a result, pupils build their knowledge logically over time and achieve highly.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides lots of opportunities for pupils' wider learning. Reading continues to be a priority as pupils move up the school. For example, the school's 'boarding pass' sets out different experiences and reading recommendations for the year. Leaders' plans identify broader learning and experiences that go beyond the national curriculum. Pupils learn in depth about the world around them. The upshot of this is that pupils' learning is significantly broadened, ensuring that they are ready for secondary school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including the pupils in the resourced provision, learn very successfully. This is because leaders ensure that there is a highly trained team of teachers and teaching assistants to support pupils' needs. As a result, all pupils, including those who attend the resourced provision, become fluent readers and confident learners.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safety and well-being of pupils are high on leaders' list of priorities. The new system for teachers to report any concerns they may have is effective. Leaders have strong links with external agencies. These factors mean that leaders are able to act quickly to give pupils the support they need.

Staff are well trained and understand the latest guidance about keeping pupils safe. Leaders, too, are trained to an appropriately high level, including in the procedures for recruiting new staff.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They talked knowledgeably about the precautions they should take when visiting internet sites. They also understand about stranger danger and road safety.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Hacton Primary School, to be outstanding in November 2015.

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.

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

Unique reference number	146136
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10199468
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	570
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mr D Harries
Headteacher	Mrs E Leslie
Website	www.hacton.havering.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Since September 2018, Hacton Primary School has been part of the Empower Learning Academy Trust.
- Hacton Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Hacton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for 15 pupils with SEND. The provision caters for pupils with hearing impairments.
- The school does not currently make use of 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 the school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils, governors and the chief executive officer of the Empower Learning Academy Trust.

- Meetings were held with leaders and staff to discuss safeguarding arrangements. The inspector scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks on adults working in the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and music. In each of these subjects, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils about their work and met with some teaching staff to talk about their approach to the curriculum.
- The inspector considered 64 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey. He also considered 29 responses to the staff survey.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss their views about different aspects of their school, including safeguarding. The inspector considered 180 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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