

Inspection of a good school: Great Hockham Primary School and Nursery

Watton Road, Great Hockham, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1PB

Inspection date:

23 November 2021

Outcome

Great Hockham Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite and proud of their school. They make it a welcoming and friendly place. Pupils enjoy learning. They speak enthusiastically and confidently with visitors about their work. Most pupils behave well in lessons. They get on well together at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils are clear about the importance of the school's aim for them to be 'ready, respectful and safe'. They can explain how they are taught to stay safe in different situations and to respect individual differences.

In the early years, children enjoy their learning. They develop confidence in early reading skills and settle quickly into established routines. Older pupils told inspectors that they particularly like having time to read independently. They especially 'love' the stories their teachers read with them at the end of the school day.

Pupils value opportunities to act as role models for their peers, for example as ambassadors and subject champions. After-school clubs in sports and activities, such as book and woodland clubs, are well attended and appreciated. Pupils and children in the nursery are supported effectively to progress on to the different stages of their education.

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

The school is a warm and inclusive community. Together with the trust, leaders have continued to improve the quality of education, raising aspirations about what pupils can achieve. Across subjects, including in English, mathematics and science, leaders have taken a deeper look at what children should know from when they first arrive in the early years, and how this develops as pupils get older. Leaders have checked that subject content is taught in the right order and revisited to help pupils remember more over time. Staff focus on ensuring that pupils gain a broad vocabulary. In the early years, for example, children used mathematical vocabulary accurately as they spoke about the properties of shapes.

In subjects such as history and design and technology, while curriculum plans have been revised, curriculum leads are still working to ensure that the intended curriculum is delivered consistently well in all classes. Leaders' checks on pupils' learning are not as well established yet in these areas as in other subjects.

In the early years, children get off to a good start with reading. They settle quickly into routines that get them matching letters to sounds with confidence. Staff are consistent in following a common approach to introducing new sounds, so children achieve well. Books are carefully matched to the sounds they are taught. This helps children to build new knowledge on strong foundations when they move on to new learning.

Promoting pupils' love of reading throughout the school is a high priority. The library has been restocked with more relevant and interesting books. Pupils enjoy the daily opportunities for quiet reading. The stories teachers read with them at the end of the day are appreciated. Leaders ensure that parents have access to guidance to help them with their child's reading at home

Staff check regularly to see if pupils have grasped what they should already know. Interventions are in place for a few older pupils who struggle with spelling. Strategies include a back-to-basics approach to phonics using age-appropriate resources to address any learning missed or lost.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEND) access the same curriculum as others. Targeted training from the trust, as well as the special educational needs coordinator, helps class teachers to adapt learning to support pupils effectively.

Pupils typically behave well and attend school regularly. Expectations of how they should behave are clear and displayed in every classroom. Pupils know there is an adult they can turn to if they have a problem, including by posting a message in the 'time to talk' boxes around school.

Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop personally as well as academically. The activities available through after-school and 'pop-up' lunchtime clubs, include dancing, choir, sport, woodland club, board games and sewing. Sessions are popular and well attended. Some pupils take on roles acting as 'buddies' to support children as they move up from nursery into Reception. Others go through an application process to be selected as an 'ambassador', for example in reading or mathematics, to 'spread the love' of the subject.

The personal development curriculum is designed to support pupils to be 'ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils are taught an age-appropriate understanding of the importance of positive mental health, well-being, staying safe and forming healthy relationships. Respect for individual differences is widely promoted across the school.

Staff are proud to work at the school and say that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload. They appreciate the wide range of professional development available through the trust, including training to improve their subject knowledge and curriculum planning.

All the parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, said they would recommend the school to others. Governors work closely with the trust to monitor the quality of education. They are clear about their responsibilities in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding is well promoted across the school. The trust and school leaders ensure that a wide range of up-to-date safeguarding training is routinely in place for staff. Consequently, staff are vigilant and know what to do if a pupil may be vulnerable to harm. Referrals to external agencies are prompt when required and followed up meticulously. Pupils are taught how to stay safe and to be respectful to each other. Governors understand their responsibilities and play their part in keeping pupils safe. Leaders are rigorous in ensuring that all the necessary checks are made when appointing adults to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While the curriculum is designed to build strong foundations from the early years to the end of Year 6, in some subjects beyond English, mathematics and science, the implementation of leaders' intent is at a relatively early stage, including in implementing revised assessment processes. This means that some pupils find it hard to remember the detail of what they have previously learned. Leaders should ensure that all staff who lead subjects have the training they need to evaluate, precisely, the effectiveness of curriculum delivery in their areas of responsibility, including assessment of pupils' learning, so that pupils can achieve well.

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 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 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 Great Hockham Primary School to be good in November 2013.

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	145209
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10213307
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	107
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Rout
Headteacher	Natasha Hall
Website	www.hockham.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Great Hockham Primary School and Nursery is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school converted to become an academy in 2017, when it joined the Sapientia Education Trust.
- The current headteacher was appointed in January 2019.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. There are currently no pupils with an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and other school staff. They also spoke with senior leaders from the trust.

- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with the chief executive of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and design and technology. They met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons jointly with leaders, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils and heard some of them read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and some pupils' work in history.
- A range of school records were checked, including safeguarding records and information related to pupils' behaviour and attendance. The lead inspector reviewed the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on new staff.
- An inspector spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school on the morning of the inspection. They also took account of 24 free-text comments from parents and 25 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View.
- The 15 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Hann

Ofsted Inspector

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