Inspection of Heronshaw School

Lichfield Down, Walnut Tree, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK7 7PG

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Ofsted has not previously inspected Heronshaw School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff know each pupil well and put them at the heart of everything they do. Leaders have high expectations for all. The school motto of 'Inspire, Grow, Achieve' is woven seamlessly into every aspect of school life. Pupils' strong academic achievement goes hand-in-hand with the wealth of personal skills and qualities that staff support pupils to nurture and develop.

Right from the start, staff establish clear routines and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They learn about, can explain and can demonstrate the seven school values. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. They move around the school in a calm and orderly way and play well together during social times. Pupils are happy and feel safe. Bullying is extremely rare and never tolerated. Pupils know that staff are there to help and that they can share their concerns and worries with them.

There are extensive opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning, gain independence and take responsibility. Leaders ensure that as many pupils as possible take part in a wide range of clubs, activities and experiences. Pupils relish leadership roles such as safeguarding ambassadors, librarians and school councillors, all of which make a positive contribution to school life.

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

Leaders have ensured that pupils follow a broad and rich curriculum which is carefully sequenced. They are ambitious about what they want all pupils to know, remember and be able to do at the end of each year. In subjects such as mathematics and science, leaders have put much thought into setting out how this knowledge builds step by step for each unit of learning. Leaders have shared a clear understanding of how pupils learn well. Staff check on pupils' previous learning before moving them on to new things in lessons. Teachers also plan opportunities at other times to remind pupils of the subject knowledge they have learned in the past. This is helping to secure the most important knowledge into pupils' long-term memory.

Children in Reception begin to learn phonics following a systematic and structured teaching approach. They continue to build their knowledge through key stage 1, learning and recognising increasingly complex sounds. On the whole, teaching is consistent, pupils understand the routines and respond well. Leaders recognise that pupils who are struggling to learn to read need more frequent opportunities to work with expert staff and to read books matched more consistently to the sounds that they know. Leaders have carefully selected the high-quality books they want teachers to share with pupils. These books expose pupils to an extensive range of authors, text types and vocabulary as well as celebrate the diverse community.

Pupils throughout the school behave exceptionally well. They know that their teachers have high ambitions for them, which encourages them to always try their

very best. Pupils listen carefully in lessons, which teachers adapt skilfully to include everyone, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). On the rare occasion pupils are not on task, staff encourage and guide them to success. Leaders' records for pupils with SEND do not always reflect the high-quality class-based provision they receive or demonstrate that parents' and pupils' views are fully taken into account.

Leaders' work to develop pupils' character and provide meaningful spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences is exemplary. They ensure that pupils regularly have opportunities to learn from visitors and experiences beyond the classroom. Pupils use their democratic voice to influence change in school. From their first weeks in school, pupils learn to understand that we are all different and that makes us unique. Pupils help school staff to create inclusive classrooms and shared environments, where everyone is valued.

Trust leaders and those responsible for governance are equally as ambitious for pupils' academic and social success. They visit the school regularly and provide well considered support and challenge. Staff are very proud to work at this school, and they appreciate the support they receive to improve professionally and maintain their well-being. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and do all they can to manage this effectively.

Although overall school attendance is high and school leaders work hard to improve individual pupil attendance, some pupils, including some of the most vulnerable, remain persistently absent. These pupils miss out on important learning and are at risk of falling behind their peers. Trust leaders' strategic oversight of the provision for pupils with SEND is not as strong as other areas, such as safeguarding. As a result, not all pupils, including some of the most vulnerable, achieve exceptionally well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. There are clear systems in place to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. All staff are well trained in these systems and follow them carefully. Leaders act swiftly to ensure that families in need of additional help access this as soon as possible. Leaders regularly review their work with individual pupils to ensure that everything possible is being done to keep them safe, escalating their concerns when necessary. Those responsible for governance are meticulous in how they oversee safeguarding, including the safer recruitment of new staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In subjects such as geography, the teaching of the component knowledge that builds to curriculum end points is not yet consistent. This means that some pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not achieve as well as leaders intend. Leaders should continue with their curriculum-design process and assure themselves that curriculum implementation is consistent across all classes.
- Leaders' and trustees' oversight in some aspects of provision, such as for pupils with SEND, are not as forensic as they should be. This means that actions to improve the school are not always as finely tuned as they could be. Those responsible for governance should assure themselves that policy and the resulting practice align and help all pupils, including the most vulnerable, reach the high ambitions of leaders.

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	146462
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10240569
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marilyn Hubbard, MBE
Headteacher	Jamie Ainscow
Website	www.heronshawschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 September 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Heronshaw School converted to become an academy on 1 January 2019, joining the Inspiring Futures Through Learning Multi-Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, Heronshaw School, was inspected by Ofsted in February 2016, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- In September 2021, Ofsted carried out an ungraded (section 8) inspection. This did not change the school's overall judgement of outstanding. However, the evidence gathered suggested that the inspection grade might not have been as high if a full inspection had been carried out at the time. Therefore, this inspection was a full (section 5) inspection.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, and representatives from the school's local governing body and the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The lead inspector also heard pupils read.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's record of recruitment checks. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and staff. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted's survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' written comments. An inspector also spoke to groups of parents on the morning of the second day of inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views throughout the day, including during lesson visits and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Alan Derry, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Woodbridge	His Majesty's Inspector

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