

Inspection of a good school: Heron Primary School

Heron Way, Abbeydale, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL4 4BN

Inspection dates: 22–23 October 2019

Outcome

Heron Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Heron Primary School is a welcoming school, where pupils love learning. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to be confident and successful learners. Staff bring learning to life in a fun and interesting way. Pupils are motivated to learn and want to do well. They understand the importance of the Heron 'drivers' so they keep trying and never give up.

Staff care deeply about pupils. They work hard to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties. Parents and carers are extremely grateful for this. Pupils are happy and feel safe. They trust adults to look after them.

Adults have high expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes and listen respectfully to adults. On the rare occasions when their behaviour is not good enough, pupils have the maturity and courage to say sorry. Most pupils say that poor behaviour and bullying are not an issue. Adults deal quickly with any problems.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the outdoor play and learning (OPAL) project at lunchtime. This gives them many opportunities to play, learn and mix well together. Adults and play rangers work together to keep everyone happy and well.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, including in early years. Leaders have carefully thought about each of these subjects and what they want pupils to know. Teaching in many subjects builds well on what pupils already know and can do. Leaders are in the process of revising the other subjects, so that these are more demanding.

The school provides a wealth of stimulating experiences that contribute to pupils' academic and broader development. For example, pupils visit museums and go on residential trips. They have opportunities to sing with Young Voices in Birmingham. Pupils

try curling and boccia. Ambassadors for Forest Green Rovers enjoy encouraging others to develop a love of football.

The school helps pupils to develop a love of reading. They have a wide variety of books to choose from. Pupils say they enjoy listening to stories, such as 'Street Child'. Pupils get off to a good start in reading because well-planned phonics teaching begins when they first start school. Pupils read from books that match the sounds that they are learning. They practise and apply what they have learned to become confident, fluent readers. Extra support for some pupils helps them to catch up. Older pupils enjoy reading and further their skills through interesting activities.

Teachers inspire pupils and encourage them to write for many reasons and purposes. For example, Year 3 pupils become engrossed in writing poems about life as a Roman soldier. Year 5 pupils concentrate hard to share their opinions and write letters to persuade Jim to leave the workhouse.

Pupils are well supported to develop their historical knowledge and skills. They love the 'wow days', which deepen their understanding. For example, during the inspection, there was a flurry of excitement when 'Jane the Baker' visited. Activities throughout the day helped Year 2 pupils understand how the Great Fire of London affected people in 1666. Year 6 pupils show maturity when discussing democracy in Ancient Greece.

Adults form caring relationships with children in early years. Children follow routines and behave well. They listen carefully to adults and mix well with others. Activities provided for children encourage them to explore and find things out for themselves. For example, they dig in the soil to find 'buried treasure'. They enjoy finding out how to balance on logs and jump from one to another.

Leaders' high expectations and established routines benefit all pupils. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and other leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get any help they need. This improves pupils' confidence. Pupils enjoy working in the Sunflower Room when they need to concentrate. Adults guide and encourage pupils, which helps them to persevere, even when learning is difficult.

Staff work closely with parents to emphasise the importance of regular attendance. As a result, most pupils attend school regularly. However, a few do not attend well enough, which disrupts their learning.

Governors are committed to the school's vision for providing different experiences and a range of learning for pupils. They visit the school to find out about the school's work. For example, they look at how well pupils with SEND are doing. Governors that I spoke to were able to describe some of the school's strengths. However, they do not know how well pupils do in the range of subjects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding and procedures for keeping pupils safe are thorough. Pupils are taught how to manage risks and stay safe. Staff receive regular updates to training and know how to refer any concerns. All concerns are logged and followed up. They are regularly reviewed to ensure that the school is making a difference.

The family support worker plays a significant role in supporting vulnerable families, and the impact of her work is powerful. Leaders work closely with external agencies to make sure that families receive the specialist support that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are in the early stages of embedding a more challenging and ambitious curriculum. Learning is well sequenced in most subjects. Leaders will need to ensure that teaching in all subjects enables pupils to develop the depth of knowledge and skills required to achieve well. Leaders, including governors, must further develop thorough and consistent checks of the curriculum to assure themselves of the effectiveness of the quality of education they provide.
- Although most pupils attend school well, some do not. Leaders and governors must continue their work to improve attendance for pupils who are frequently absent, so that pupils are able to take full advantage of the exciting experiences that the school offers.

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 school 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 in May 2012.

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 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	115749
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10058395
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anita Masters
Headteacher	Claire Brookes
Website	www.heronprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher was appointed in March 2018. She had previously held the role of assistant headteacher in the school for several years.
- The school operates a breakfast club. An external provider runs an after-school club.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below that of pupils nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the SENCo.
- I met with two governors. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- To check the quality of education, I focused mainly on reading, writing and history. I met with subject leaders, visited several lessons in key stages 1 and 2 and talked to

pupils about their learning. I also spoke to teachers about the school's approach to the curriculum.

- The school's safeguarding arrangements and records were reviewed. I met with the headteacher and family support worker, who are both safeguarding leaders. I reviewed the school's single central record and talked to pupils and adults about safety. I also met with the attendance officer.
- I observed pupils' behaviour at different times of the day, including at breakfast club, breaktime and lunchtime.
- I spoke to pupils, staff and parents to gather their views of the school. I reviewed 64 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 154 responses to the school's most recent questionnaire for parents. I also took account of 50 free-text comments from parents. I considered 25 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Catherine Beeks, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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