

Inspection of a good school: Topcliffe Primary School

Hawkinge Drive, Castle Vale, Birmingham, West Midlands B35 6BS

Inspection dates:

15–16 October 2019

Outcome

Topcliffe Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are happy, safe and friendly. The school's values of healthy, aspirational, respectful, resilient and independent (HARRI) underpin all that the school does. These values help pupils to make informed choices about their actions.

Pupils behave well in class and during playtime and lunchtime. They play with consideration for others and they are taught to use good manners in the dining hall and elsewhere. Pupils who find it more difficult to always behave well are helped to improve their conduct. The number of instances of inappropriate behaviour have reduced and exclusions are rare.

There are very few cases of bullying in the school. Pupils know that staff would help them sort out any problems that may arise. Pupils are also confident enough to challenge unkindness if they see it.

Pupils study in a positive learning environment. Teachers have high aspirations for every child. They use effective resources and carefully selected teaching methods to deliver the good-quality curriculum. As a result, pupils make excellent progress in many subjects and achieve exceptionally well in mathematics and reading.

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

This is an inclusive school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils do very well. Many pupils achieve highly.

The school's resource provision offers pupils with SEND an outstanding quality of education. Staff have high aspirations of all pupils who attend classes within the provision. Teachers use carefully selected resources and teaching strategies that help pupils with SEND to excel.

Many children join the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are below those that are typical of children of their age. Staff work well with children and their families to help the children to know more and remember more. Classrooms and outdoor areas are used well to help children to learn.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Leaders and staff prioritise the teaching of early reading, and pupils take many opportunities to read in school. There is a sharp focus on making sure that younger children, and those who have fallen behind, quickly gain the knowledge and skills that they need to become confident readers.

Pupils read carefully chosen books that link closely to their phonics knowledge and staff read stories to pupils every day. Story time excites and interests all groups of pupils. It also introduces pupils to new words.

Pupils recite nursery rhymes with staff at the start of each day and vote for the book teachers will read to them at the end of the day. At times, younger pupils and their parents return to school in the early evening for a bedtime story. Parents also attend other reading activities in school with their children. Leaders and staff work very well with parents and the wider community.

The mathematics curriculum is designed to be ambitious for all groups of pupils. It helps pupils remember what they have been taught and use this knowledge when they are working on new mathematical problems. Over time, pupils have achieved well in mathematics.

The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is of a high quality. Staff introduce pupils to new ideas, knowledge and experiences to prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils take part in a range of outdoor experiences, sporting activities and trips and visits. These activities enhance the quality of education that the school provides.

The school provides a good-quality education, built around an ambitious curriculum. All subject areas have clear and ambitious plans, particularly in English and mathematics. However, other subjects are not implemented as well as English and mathematics. Pupils' work across the curriculum is not consistently of the highest quality.

The school's curriculum is good, but it is still developing in some areas. In most foundation subjects, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. However, it is not yet embedded securely. Leaders have correctly identified this as a key area for development.

The school is well led and managed and leaders use their accurate understanding of the quality of education that they provide to continue to improve the school. Effective support and challenge from the trust have helped leaders to focus on their priorities.

Staff morale is high. Teachers and teaching assistants feel well supported to do their job well. Staff see a purpose in all that leaders ask them to do. They believe that leaders are aware of their workload and considerate of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. Staff are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern. Staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, including those that are pertinent to the local area. They know how to recognise signs that a pupil may be at risk.

Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to help to protect pupils. Incidents are dealt with swiftly and clear procedures are followed closely. Pupils feel safe and they learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils are taught about online safety, healthy relationships, stranger danger and road safety.

Staff and visitors are checked appropriately. Record-keeping is thorough, and information is securely stored. The school's single central record meets requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is good in all subject areas and it is very strong in English and mathematics. Leaders should take further action to firmly embed the curriculum in other subject areas so that it matches the impact of the established reading and mathematics curriculum. This will lead to pupils' work being consistently of the highest standard in all subject areas.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Topcliffe Primary School, to be good on 13–14 June 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 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're 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	143091
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10099807
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pete Anstey
Headteacher	Lynsey Hedley
Website	www.topcliffe.academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy on 1 December 2016. It is part of the Washwood Heath Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. Pupils with autism spectrum disorder and pupils with speech and language difficulties attend classes in the school. They attend some lessons with pupils from the main school. All pupils who attend the specially resourced provision have education, health and care plans.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, school leaders, two members of the school's advisory body and the chief executive officer (CEO) and the deputy CEO of the trust. Meetings covered a wide range of areas, including the quality of education and the school's arrangements for safeguarding.
- The inspector looked in detail at reading, mathematics and design and technology. The inspector visited lessons with leaders and met with pupils, teachers and curriculum leaders. He listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered 25 responses to the staff survey and read five comments made by parents on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

- The lead inspector met with the deputy headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead, and two other members of the safeguarding team. He also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. The lead inspector looked at the school's single central record and documentation relating to safeguarding, including the school's processes for recruiting staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's evaluation of its effectiveness and the school's plan for improvement. The inspector also scrutinised the school's website.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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