

Heacham Junior School

College Drive, Heacham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE31 7EJ

Inspection dates

8 to 9 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new leadership team has taken decisive action to improve the quality of education in the school. Leaders at all levels are involved in creating the right curriculum for the pupils.
- Reading has been a high focus in this academic year and, consequently, pupils are now making good progress. They are excited about reading and enjoy using the well-appointed library.
- Pupils attain in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Pupils make strong progress in writing. However, in the past, progress has not been as strong in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' well-being is central and the staff have strong, positive relationships with those in their care. The forest school provision is a crucial asset in this; pupils develop strong teamwork, resourcefulness and resilience, with activities closely linked to the core curriculum.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to experience activities beyond the school site. They take part in joint events with the infant and high schools, and perform at venues locally and further afield, which gives pupils confidence and performance skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well integrated in the classroom and receive good-quality support to help them have access to the same learning as their peers.
- The multi-academy trust (MAT) has reformed the local governing body (LGB), which is now shared between the school and its feeder infant school. Governors are clear about the school's priorities, and they provide a strong level of challenge and support to leaders.
- The teaching of mathematics has had a recent emphasis on number fluency. Pupils are confident with basic calculation as a result of this focus. Teachers are beginning to encourage more reasoning and to develop pupils' ability to explain their thinking.
- Teachers link activities in all subjects, wherever possible, to the engaging topics they plan. Leaders are starting the process of planning how pupils will build on knowledge in each subject from year-to-year.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and, consequently, progress made by pupils by:
 - ensuring that pupils have greater opportunities to develop their understanding in mathematics by use of reasoning and explaining their ideas
 - developing the long-term curriculum planning so that it is clear how pupils will build on and apply their knowledge in each subject as they move through the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The MAT appointed the headteacher of the infant feeder school as executive head of both schools as of April 2018, alongside another small local primary school.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher, together with her deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, has taken a fresh look at the school's work. They have identified where change was needed to improve the progress that pupils were making. They have already embedded many new initiatives but are taking care to space out these new ways of working to ensure that staff are able to fully understand and embed them in their practice.
- Middle leaders have the opportunity to develop their own subjects and have begun the process of reviewing the overall curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. The school shares topics across all year groups and leaders are aware that as the curriculum map is developed, they need to check that pupils have opportunities to build on their learning, year-on-year.
- Leaders emphasise the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to learn about subjects such as history and geography through interesting topics. The Forest School curriculum is particularly effective in providing hands-on activities that are closely linked to the learning back in the classroom, and leaders have put a qualified teacher in place to lead this provision.
- With the appointment of a primary director to the MAT, there has been a greater emphasis on looking outside of the trust to develop expertise. Teachers work with colleagues in other schools and have many opportunities to share good practice, the consequence of which can be seen in the improved progress pupils are making.
- Senior leaders and the MAT primary director have worked with all teachers in the school to develop their teaching skills over the last year. They have individualised programmes of development and use team teaching and coaching where appropriate. Teaching staff engage in a wide range of continuous professional development beyond the school, with many on national senior professional qualification courses, which has made middle leaders far more confident in how to lead their subjects.
- Across the trust, new standardised tests are used to support teacher assessment, and leaders use this information well to check that more pupils make the progress that they should and plan actions to address gaps that become apparent.
- The special educational needs coordinators (SENCo) know the needs of pupils with SEND well. Parents are actively involved in the planning for their children. Leaders have moved away from using a system of teaching these pupils in groups outside the classroom to providing greater support in class. This is working well. The support provided by the teaching assistants in class is effective and pupils are making better progress.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well. As with the provision for pupils with SEND, the focus is on providing high-quality teaching straight away, and funding has enabled training to develop the skills of teaching staff. Provision of trained pastoral staff and group work for pupils with a trainee educational psychologist have supported pupils'

emotional and social development.

- The sport premium enables pupils to access many activities outside of the school. They have also had specialist coaching to develop staff confidence in teaching the physical education curriculum.

Governance of the school

- The governing body in its current form has existed for a year after the MAT took the opportunity to reorganise governance, which is now shared with the infant school. Governors have undertaken regular visits to the school and are clear about the improvements seen in that time, particularly to pupils' enjoyment of reading.
- Governors effectively challenge and support school leaders and are particularly clear on ensuring that the number of new initiatives does not cause excessive workload for teachers.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is of high priority in the school and all staff know the procedures well. Staff have regular safeguarding updates in meetings and by email. School leaders are tenacious in making sure that pupils and their families receive the support that they need. All appropriate checks on adults regularly in school have been undertaken. Both parents and pupils are confident that pupils are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good at present. It is clear from pupils' books that not all have had the quality of learning opportunities that they might have done all year, but leaders have supported teachers and recruited teachers to provide stronger provision.
- Reading is taught using a structured programme that teaches pupils how to interpret and summarise texts read. This is linked into a whole-school focus on enjoyment of literature – the library is at the centre of the school and all classrooms have books as key to displays. Consequently, pupils are now making strong progress in reading.
- Teachers model good examples of writing to their classes. Writing has been the area with the strongest progress in recent years and pupils continue to do well. Teachers are working with other schools to ensure that they know what the appropriate standard should be.
- Teachers emphasised number fluency in their lessons earlier in the year, which has led to pupils being highly confident with basic calculations. The focus has now moved to developing pupils' reasoning skills, and some teachers are successfully enabling pupils to explain their answers. There are clear plans to consolidate this work by introducing a consistent approach across the schools in the trust. Staff are enthusiastic about developing their use of practical equipment to support learning.
- The wider curriculum is based around engaging topics, such as 'Shackleton's Journey'.

In most year groups, teachers give pupils opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills through well-sequenced activities. The whole school works on a topic at a time. There is not yet a plan for how pupils will build on their knowledge over time and have opportunities to revisit and apply their skills, but leaders are aware of the need to develop this.

- Leaders have introduced a new system of feedback to pupils, which has reduced teachers' workload and is highly motivating for the pupils because they receive instant feedback on where they are doing well.
- The most able pupils are now beginning to be challenged appropriately through teachers using open-ended questions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- A particular strength of the school's work is the forest school provision. All pupils have access to this at least fortnightly. There is a high emphasis on developing teamwork, resilience and solving problems. Pupils are encouraged to take controlled risks, such as building their own zip wire, climbing trees and building fires. Parents are clear about the positive effect these sessions have on their children's confidence.
- In this area, there live wild chickens and ducks. Pupils treat them with respect and staff encourage them to take time to discuss and understand the cycle of life. For example, a group talked about how one of the chickens had died unexpectedly and how they felt about this.
- Pupils at Heacham Junior are happy. They enjoy celebrating each other's successes, for example listening carefully to a performance by the choir. Pupils also sang together in assembly with genuine enjoyment.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities beyond the coastal community in which they live, visiting places linked to topic work and performing in venues in larger towns.
- A new scheme for teaching personal, social and health education in the classrooms is being trialled by some classes and there are plans to roll this out across other parts of the school. This is helping to raise the profile of this subject in classrooms to add to that delivered through the forest school provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils work hard in their lessons. They try hard in all activities they are given.
- During the course of the inspection, no poor behaviour was seen. Leaders are streamlining their systems to record more clearly the outcomes of any behaviours that do not meet their expectations. The records seen show that historic issues have been dealt with appropriately.
- Pupils are clear that they are safe in school. They enjoy playing in the extremely large

and well-resourced school grounds. When they are called inside, they come in promptly and get on with their work.

- Attendance is in line with national averages.
- There has been a substantial reduction over the last year in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. This is a result of clear systems to follow up on absence that are followed through carefully.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was broadly in line with national averages and has risen substantially since 2016. However, progress of pupils in the past from their end of key stage 1 assessments in reading and mathematics has not been good enough.
- Recent changes to the curriculum and improvements in teaching quality have resulted in increased progress rates across the school from virtually all pupils. The school's own data suggests that pupils are now making good progress, although there is potential for this to improve more. Pupils' workbooks also demonstrate this progress.
- Pupils' work has become neater over the last year and teachers encourage them to have pride in the way they present their work.
- The school is full of displays demonstrating work, and individual pupils choose work that each of them are personally proud of.
- Pupils with SEND now make good progress. It is clear that individuals with particular needs are well supported and provision enables them to develop wider emotional and social skills where needed.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Years 5 and 6 have no gap in attainment between them and the rest of the cohort. Younger pupils are now also making progress to close this gap.

School details

Unique reference number	142842
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10088696

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Roger Livesey
Headteacher	Louise Jackson
Telephone number	01485 571 013
Website	www.heachamjunior.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@heachamjunior.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average junior school.
- The percentage of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The school is part of the West Norfolk Academies Trust, which it joined in 2016.
- The school shares an executive headteacher and executive deputy headteacher with Heacham Infant School and Snettisham Primary School.
- The local governing body is shared with Heacham Infant School.
- The trustees have an overview of central budgeting, senior staff and policies, but most other responsibilities are delegated to the local governing body.
- The school holds the gold School Games Mark.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in every class. Most of these observations were undertaken alongside members of the senior leadership team.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by the inspection team.
- The inspection team met with representatives from the LGB and the MAT. They met with senior leaders, middle leaders and recently trained teachers.
- A group of pupils met with an inspector. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at playtimes.
- The inspection team scrutinised the school's website and a range of documents, including assessment information and the school's self-evaluation.
- Pupils read to inspectors and talked about their reading preferences.
- The 23 responses made by parents to Parent View were considered. The inspection team also spoke to some parents before and after school.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Shân Oswald

Ofsted Inspector

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