

Inspection of Hallam Fields, Birstall

Long Meadow Way, Birstall, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 3LL

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and inclusive school. Pupils behave well. They are courteous and polite. They know that everyone should be treated equally. As one pupil said, 'Diversity is important to us.'

Pupils value the school's six Rs. They learn about the importance of respect, responsibility, resilience, resourcefulness, reflection and reciprocity over time. They know how these help them to make a positive contribution to life in modern Britain.

Pupils enjoy working towards the Lionheart Award. Weekly lessons help pupils to develop 'character strengths' and to explore the school's six Rs in depth.

Pupils say that there is no bullying. Leaders' records support this. However, there are robust procedures in place to deal with any that might occur. Pupils know what to do if they experience or witness any bullying.

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. The school has a nurturing ethos in which all pupils are valued and looked after.

There are some weaknesses in the school's curriculum. These result in pupils not learning the curriculum as well as they should. In some subjects, pupils do not remember what they have learned over time. Reading is not taught soon enough when children start in the Reception class.

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

The curriculum is inconsistently planned and sequenced. In some subjects, including mathematics, the curriculum makes clear what pupils should know and remember at each point of their education. Content is revisited periodically. As a result, pupils remember what they have learned. However, in too many subjects the curriculum is not clear nor sequenced well enough. In some subjects, the things that pupils are expected to learn are not precise and it is not clear what pupils should know and remember. In some subjects, pupils are expected to develop skills without sufficient thought being given to the knowledge that they need to be able to master these. Other parts of the curriculum are at an early stage of implementation.

In some subjects, teachers select the content that they will teach each term. This means that leaders cannot be sure that the curriculum content is being taught in the best order.

Pupils are not taught to read soon enough. Pupils are not taught to recognise letters and the sounds that they make as soon as they start in the Reception class. This means that some pupils do not read as well, nor as soon, as they could. However, when the teaching of phonics starts, it is effective. Children learn the sounds that

they should. Older pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils read more challenging texts as they progress through the school. They read widely and often. They have an impressive knowledge of a range of authors. Teachers read to pupils regularly. Pupils enjoy this and listen attentively.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. Staff are united in their ambition for these pupils to do well. Adults are skilled at identifying the help that pupils need. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) knows the pupils well. Staff make regular checks that pupils are doing as well as they should. Extra help is put in place quickly where it is needed.

The curriculum in the early years is well sequenced. Leaders know what pupils are expected to achieve across all areas of learning each term. The activities that teachers plan help pupils to learn the curriculum. Lessons systematically build on what children know and can do. Adults in the setting help pupils to improve their communication and language well.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They have created a united staff team. Leaders have ensured that pupils' personal development is catered for well. However, leaders have not yet made sure that the curriculum provides a good quality of education. They have not ensured that staff have a common understanding of what constitutes good progress. Similarly, leaders have not ensured that pupils are taught to read from the earliest opportunity.

Governors are supportive of the school. They recognise the positive contribution that the school makes to pupils' personal development. However, they do not hold leaders to account robustly enough. They do not check on changes that are made to the curriculum with enough vigour.

The multi-academy trust ensures that the school does not work in isolation. It provides opportunities for leaders, teachers and support staff to work with colleagues from other schools. The trust makes regular checks on the quality of education at the school. However, it has not addressed quickly enough the weaknesses that exist in the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the safeguarding of pupils is a high priority. They have ensured that staff are well trained to identify and support pupils who may be at risk. The procedures for reporting concerns are well understood by all staff. Where needs are identified, support is timely. Leaders work effectively with other external agencies.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They know how to manage online risks. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern about their safety. They know that

they can get help by using their class worry box. They are confident that staff will help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school's curriculum does not set out clearly enough what pupils are expected to know and remember. As a result, pupils do not learn and remember curriculum content as systematically as they should. Leaders should ensure that the school's curriculum makes clear the precise things that pupils are expected to know and remember at each stage of their education across all subjects.
- In some subjects, some teachers select the content that they wish to teach each term. This means that leaders cannot be sure that content is taught in the best order. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is taught consistently in a well-sequenced order across all subjects.
- Some of the school's curriculum, and therefore teaching, is focused on skills. Insufficient consideration has been given to the underpinning knowledge that pupils need to acquire to develop these skills. As a result, pupils are not as well equipped to master skills as well as they could be. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum, and teaching, provides pupils with the prerequisite knowledge they need to be able to master the skills that are being taught.
- Reception-age pupils are not taught to read soon enough. This means that pupils do not begin to read as fluently as they should during their first year in school. Leaders should ensure that pupils are taught systematic, synthetic phonics from the very beginning of the Reception Year.

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

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| Unique reference number | 144749 |
| Local authority | Leicestershire |
| Inspection number | 10212019 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy free school |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 140 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Anne Lamb |
| Headteacher | Chelsea Williams |
| Website | https://www.hallamfields.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- This was the school's first inspection since opening in September 2017.
- The school has admitted a Reception class each year since opening. The school currently caters for pupils from Reception age to Year 4.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the head of school, the executive headteacher, curriculum leaders, the SENCo and the early years leader.
- Inspectors did deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and music. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened

to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils. An inspector also looked at curriculum documents for science, computing and design technology. He spoke with a group of pupils about science.

- The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also met with the chief executive officer and a trustee of Lionheart Educational Trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 48 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and 39 written comments from parents. They also considered the six responses to Ofsted's staff survey and a letter from a parent. An inspector spoke informally to parents outside the school.
- Inspectors met with safeguarding leaders and reviewed school documents relating to safeguarding and attendance.

Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Craig

Ofsted Inspector

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