

# Inspection of Heron Cross Primary School

Grove Road, Heron Cross, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4LJ

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Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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## What is it like to attend this school?

There is a special feel to Heron Cross Primary School. Beautiful displays not only decorate the entire school, but reinforce pupils' knowledge. Learning in many subjects often begins with first-hand experience. Educational visits, for example, allow pupils to see historical sites and animals up close. Teachers support the curriculum with high-quality books and texts. They ensure that pupils study every subject in the national curriculum.

Everyone knows the importance of the school's golden rules for behaviour, and all play their part in upholding them. Staff teach pupils to have a deep respect for each other. As a result, pupils behave well and feel happy and safe. They are polite to adults. Bullying is extremely rare, and staff are quick to resolve any disagreements. Pupils take a pride in their work. Their handwriting and presentation are real strengths.

Leaders have developed effective curriculum plans. Teachers use these plans well. The COVID-19 pandemic has set back the learning for younger pupils in particular. However, teachers have adjusted their teaching to make sure that work builds upon what pupils know and can already do.

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

In each subject, leaders have planned how learning can build up pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Teachers follow these plans effectively. For example, pupils deepen their knowledge of history while studying different time periods. Teachers explain ideas clearly, and check whether pupils understand.

Teachers adapt learning effectively for pupils of differing abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well. Starting in the Nursery Year, leaders identify their individual needs. Staff make good use of guidance on how best to meet these needs.

Teachers engage pupils' interest very effectively. They often do so through practical activities, such as drama or the use of helpful equipment in mathematics. Pupils' engagement helps them to concentrate, and to remember more. Their high level of interest means that lessons run without disruption. Pupils use teachers' feedback well because they are keen to improve their work.

Many children start in the early years with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. Phonics activities in Nursery give children a good start to their early reading. From then on, pupils follow a structured programme that introduces them to sounds and letters. Staff have been well trained, and use the correct terms. They check that pupils understand, and that they can pronounce sounds correctly. Pupils learn early on how to form letters carefully. Leaders stress the importance of reading, and make sure that pupils read to an adult several times a week. There is effective support for pupils who fall behind.

In the early years, children learn mathematics, both through numeracy lessons and through other everyday activities. This prepares them well for key stage 1. Staff support all pupils effectively in class. Some pupils receive extra help in the subject outside lessons. This could be better organised.

The headteacher has provided clear guidance for subject leads. They are effective at providing guidance for their colleagues, and checking on how subjects are taught. They are able to identify areas for improvement, such as the better use of assessment. Subject leads are keen to iron out any inconsistencies in how teachers are implementing their plans.

Leaders establish clear expectations for pupils' attitudes and behaviour from the outset. Pupils develop respect for those from different cultures, both in the school and in the community. They learn, for example, about the American civil rights movement and those who came to Britain on the 'Windrush'. There is a coherent programme to support pupils' mental and physical well-being. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities. During the inspection, half of Year 6 pupils were rehearsing 'The Wizard of Oz' after school. Pupils consider themselves well prepared for secondary school.

Staff are ambitious for all pupils, and treat everyone fairly. Leaders use the pupil premium grant effectively. For example, it pays to help disadvantaged pupils with their learning, and to enable them to go on school trips. Leaders check on the impact of the spending, but have not recorded how this shapes their future plans.

Leaders have ensured that staff at all levels are well trained. Staff use guidance from other organisations, such as Artsmark or the Historical Association, to improve their practice. Staff acknowledge that leaders' effective curriculum planning has reduced their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding, so that they are vigilant and aware of particular risks. They take the right steps to involve other agencies that work with children. The school keeps the necessary records. Leaders make the right checks on the staff who join the school. Governors provide effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils have a conspicuous respect for each other, and full confidence in the staff to resolve any difficulties. They feel overwhelmingly safe in school.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some inconsistencies remain in the implementation of the curriculum. Subject leaders know, for example, that sharper assessment will enable teachers to match work even more closely to pupils' prior knowledge and skills. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders continue to monitor how effectively subjects are being taught. This will enable them, in due course, to use their expertise and enthusiasm to further refine the teaching of the curriculum
- The additional support for those pupils who have fallen behind in mathematics is inconsistent. There is much to be done to help some pupils to recover from the impact of the lockdowns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders should put in place a more coherent support strategy in mathematics to enable these pupils to catch up quickly.
- Leaders have not recorded how their evaluations of the pupil premium grant expenditure inform ensuing plans. They should ensure that the expenditure of the grant in subsequent years is fully informed by, and founded on, secure evaluations and evidence.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124003
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10213026
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	374
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Emma Price
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dorrie Shenton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.heroncross.stoke.sch.uk">www.heroncross.stoke.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The chair and another three members of the local governing board met with the lead inspector. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a previous adviser to the school.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff. They also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of governing body meetings, and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspection took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. An inspector met with parents in the playground at the start of the second day of the inspection. Inspectors also considered responses to the surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and history. In these subjects, inspectors considered the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils and teachers to discuss learning in these subjects. On the second day of the inspection, an inspector looked at curriculum plans in other subjects and spoke to pupils about writing, religious education and science.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 reading.

### **Inspection team**

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Devinder Riat	Ofsted Inspector
Collette Mather	Ofsted Inspector

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