

Inspection of Halton Community Combined School

Tring Road, Halton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 5PN

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a friendly and happy community where difference is celebrated. Pupils love coming here. If pupils join the school mid-year, they are welcomed and helped to make friends quickly. Pupils enjoy the buddy system where older children partner with younger children. They benefit from these positive relationships across year groups as well as strong bonds with their classmates.

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They enthusiastically share their learning with visitors and talk confidently about their work. The school has high academic expectations, which pupils strive hard to meet. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well during their time at this school thanks to the excellent support they receive.

The school grounds are used well for pupils' broader development. Pupils eagerly participate in outdoor activities to design and make shelters, grow food and build their own herb beds. They develop strong characters through the many leadership roles in the school, such as eco-warriors, subject ambassadors and school council to name only a few. Pupils become enterprising young people who understand the power of their own voices and the need to listen to others.

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

The school ensures that pupils experience a curriculum that prepares them for their next stage of education. Learning begins very strongly in the early years, where adults support children to be curious and independent. Children thrive in this vibrant environment. Staff are highly skilled at developing children's communication and language through meaningful interactions. Where children struggle with emotions, staff expertly help them identify how they feel. This means children become confident, focused learners very quickly.

The curriculum in the core subjects is designed well and develops pupils' knowledge securely over time. However, in some other subjects, the curriculum needs refining so that it identifies the precise knowledge that pupils need to know and when. This will ensure that pupils' knowledge builds in a way that helps them remember more and connect what they know to new learning.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. They teach new knowledge confidently, with clear explanations. Staff check how well pupils understand new learning and re-explain things well when pupils struggle. Activities are mostly well chosen so that pupils can apply their new learning and practise using new knowledge. Where appropriate, staff adapt teaching to meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEND.

Pupils become confident readers quickly. The school prioritises early reading and builds opportunities to read across the curriculum. Pupils read often and enjoy a wide range of literature. They achieve well in reading and across the curriculum,

although the school has rightly identified that pupils could achieve more highly in some subjects. Consequently, the school is rightly building greater challenge into lessons to ensure that pupils develop a deeper understanding in these subjects.

In some subjects, assessments provide detailed information about the knowledge that pupils know. This means staff identify gaps in knowledge accurately and address these quickly. However, there is not yet a consistent approach to assessment across all subjects, which means staff do not always have the information that they need about what pupils can or cannot do. The school is already developing a consistent approach to assessment to ensure that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are filled.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and socially. High expectations are promoted through the school's values, such as perseverance, respect, courage and honesty. They are reinforced in assemblies and weekly celebrations of pupils who demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning or produce exceptional work. Pupils enjoy learning and opportunities to extend what they know.

Pupils' personal development is prioritised here. There is a wide range of enriching experiences, some of which are part of the '25 things to do before you leave Halton'. Pupils learn about the different faiths and cultures. They experience music, food and dance, which broadens their understanding of the world. Pupils benefit from the numerous extra-curricular clubs that develop their interests and talents. Events like the Christmas play provide pupils with the chance to work together and celebrate their various talents with each other.

The school is reflective and passionate about improvement. It has created a culture where staff can confidently use teaching approaches that get the best from pupils. Staff value the respect and care that leaders show them. Where the school identifies areas for improvement, they put in place effective changes. Leaders and those responsible for governance ensure that there is a clear oversight over these areas, which helps drive improvements further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not yet identified the precise knowledge it intends pupils to learn. This means that pupils do not always connect knowledge or ideas together as securely as they could. The school needs to identify the knowledge it intends all pupils to learn and help them to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas.

- Assessment is not yet fully developed across all subjects. As a result, in these areas staff are less able to pinpoint the next steps that are needed to move pupils on swiftly and successfully. The school should continue to develop assessment across the curriculum so that pupils are supported to secure their learning over time.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	110391
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10287843
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lindsay Ablitt
Headteacher	Colin Horsfield
Website	www.halton.bucks.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 February 2011

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since Easter 2020.
- The school provides and manages its own before- and after-school childcare provision.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to subject leaders and

teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector had meetings with senior school leaders and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views on the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text responses, and communications passed to them. The lead inspector also spoke with parents on the morning of the second day of the inspection.
- The inspectors met with a range of pupils to learn their views about the school. They also took into account the responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Ally Aldridge-Gibbons, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Claire Britnell	Ofsted Inspector

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