Inspection of a good school: The Flying High Academy

Somersall Street, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG19 6EW

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2022

Outcome

The Flying High Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Flying High Academy because they like to learn. They feel safe because they know that if they have any worries, they can tell an adult or pop a note in a box that the 'worry monster' sits on. Pupils know that adults will check the notes that are in the box under this soft toy and provide help for anyone who needs it.

Leaders expect pupils to behave well and to achieve highly. Pupils move around school sensibly. They are respectful of adults and each other. Pupils work hard in their lessons. The peaceful music that can be heard around the school corridors contributes to the calm and purposeful atmosphere that characterises this school.

Pupils say that bullying hardly ever happens at their school. They are confident that adults would deal with it if it did happen.

Leaders' vision is summarised by the motto: 'The world came to my school today'. 'World' stands for: wisdom; opportunities; reading; legacy; and diversity. Leaders are determined that pupils will have the knowledge and experiences that they need so that they can play a full part in the world in which they live, and leave a legacy for future generations.

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

At the start of this school year, leaders introduced a new approach to teaching phonics. Teaching pupils to read in this way is a top priority, starting as soon as pupils join the Reception class. Teachers put their training to good use as they consistently apply the new strategy. Leaders have been making sure that the books most pupils are given to read are at the right level for them. However, some books that pupils are given, particularly for pupils in Year 2, are not quite right for them. While the final arrangements are made so that all books are exactly matched to what pupils have learned, leaders have provided guidance for staff so that the books that are available are as closely matched to the sounds pupils know as they can be.

Mathematics is taught well. This includes in the early years. Leaders have created a clear plan that sets out exactly what pupils must learn and the steps that teachers must take to ensure that they do. Leaders provide teachers with guidance that helps them to plan a series of lessons so that pupils build up their understanding of mathematical concepts well. Teachers check frequently to make sure that pupils understand what they are learning and that they can recall what they have taught in the past. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned, using the correct mathematical vocabulary.

The leader responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has given teachers useful strategies so that they can adjust their teaching or provide the right equipment for pupils with SEND. These pupils learn and achieve well alongside their classmates.

Other subjects are typically planned in detail. In these subjects, teachers help pupils to remember what they have been taught. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the rhymes and songs that they learn. For example, they have been taught a song that helps them to remember the names of the seven continents.

Some subjects are not planned in as much detail. Where this is the case, leaders have set out broadly what pupils will learn in each year group. They have made sure that all the requirements of the national curriculum are taught. However, they have not finished setting out in detail the most important things that will be taught to pupils in every subject.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They listen carefully to their teacher. Pupils answer questions and follow the instructions they are given quickly and without any fuss. This helps lessons to proceed without any disruption or delay.

Pupils can take part in a wide range of activities outside of their lessons. They can attend after-school clubs. Among others, pupils can participate in sporting clubs, cookery, and choir. Pupils can attend residential visits or sing at community events. The Royal Ballet provides lessons for pupils and they can attend a 'live' performance. As part of leaders' determination for pupils to understand that they can leave a legacy, the poetry that Year 6 pupils wrote about the Second World War is available for everyone to read in the local public library. Also, the mosaic that Year 4 pupils created will be displayed for all to see.

Leaders are well supported by Flying High Trust. Governors know the school well. They provide both challenge and support to leaders. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. For example, they have made some adaptations to lesson planning so that it is more efficient for teachers to undertake.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide training for staff so that they are all able to keep a close eye on pupils' welfare. They check frequently that staff can remember their training and provide regular briefings so that this crucial aspect of their work is at the forefront of everyone's mind.

Leaders ensure that staff understand the issues that might affect the local area, such as knife crime.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are taught how to use the internet safely and about the dangers of taking drugs.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied. In some subjects, leaders have set out in detail exactly what pupils must learn and remember. This is not the case in every subject. In these subjects, teachers cannot plan pupils' next steps of learning precisely enough. Leaders must ensure that all subjects are fully planned.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching phonics. Staff have had training and it is being implemented well. Leaders have made sure that the books that most pupils are given to read match the sounds that they have been learning. When this happens, pupils read the books fluently and this improves their confidence. Some pupils are not given books that are quite right for them. In these instances, pupils do not read as confidently or fluently as they might. Leaders must ensure that all pupils are given books to read that are just right for them.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2016.

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

Unique reference number	140398
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10211624
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Robinson
Headteacher	Karen Jagger
Website	http://www.flyinghighacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 December 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school offers a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The Inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector did deep dives into reading, mathematics and geography. She met with leaders, examined curriculum plans, visited lessons and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher; acting deputy headteacher; the special educational needs coordinator; the curriculum leader; the child and family support worker; the early years leader; and the 'learning for life' leader.
- The inspector spoke with the leader of the unregistered provision by telephone.

- The inspector met with four representatives of the governing body. The inspector met with the chair of governors, who is also a trustee of Flying High Trust. She met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The inspector observed pupils at lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of the work it does, its plans for improvement and records relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- The views of parents, staff and pupils were considered through their related online surveys.

Inspection team

Di Mullan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector

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