

# Inspection of Hillstone Primary School

Hillstone Road, Shard End, Birmingham, West Midlands B34 7PY

---

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

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?**

Pupils at Hillstone are lively and friendly. They are happy at school. They confidently share their opinions and ideas with visitors and each other. Pupils behave well, especially in the classroom. Learning is not disturbed by poor behaviour. Leaders deal with bullying effectively. Pupils understand and trust the anti-bullying system. This helps them to feel safe.

Leaders are successful in their aim to 'inspire, care, educate'. They have high expectations for pupils in all areas of school life. Pupils work hard and want to do well. As a result, pupils are successful in their learning.

Leaders provide an extensive range of wider opportunities that includes trips, sports events and performances. From Year 2, pupils can go on residential trips every year. A high proportion of pupils attend clubs such as 'yoga bugs', football, and judo. Throughout the year all pupils have the chance to represent their house team in a variety of sporting events to win house points. Pupils visit farms, grow produce and sell this at their own farmers' market. These opportunities teach pupils to be confident when facing new experiences and support their personal development well.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to achieve well. Teachers use checks on what pupils know effectively in subjects like reading and mathematics. However, leaders are still developing how teachers should check on pupils' learning in some subjects. This means that they do not have a clear picture of how well pupils are achieving in these subjects.

Teachers use a range of techniques to help pupils remember their learning. They make the learning come to life. For example, during a geography fieldwork trip to the river Cole pupils measured the flow and depth of the river. This helped them to understand more about rivers. Pupils work alongside professional actors to learn about Shakespeare's plays. In the early years, leaders and teachers ensure that there are many activities for children to effectively develop their language in the classroom. However, children have few meaningful opportunities to practise and develop their language when learning outside.

Leaders ensure that they identify the needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. They provide training and arrange for experts to work alongside staff. Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure that these pupils can access the same curriculum as their peers. The support that pupils with SEND receive helps them to achieve well.

Reading is a priority and pupils at Hillstone are successful and enthusiastic readers. The early reading curriculum sets out clearly what pupils will learn. Staff receive training to enable them to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Pupils practise their reading regularly with books that match the sounds that they know. Pupils who find reading more difficult receive support that helps them to catch up.

Pupils' wider development is a significant strength of the school. Parents, carers and pupils recognise that this is the case. Leaders ensure that all pupils have high quality opportunities to be involved with the arts. The school works closely with many organisations including Birmingham Royal Ballet, Birmingham Rep and the Ikon Gallery. Pupils learn with professional artists, actors and musicians so they can aspire to develop themselves and their talents. The school is proud of its many sporting achievements. Pupils regularly represent the school in competitions against other schools. Pupils take on positions of responsibility such as prefects, sports councillors and school councillors. Older pupils help to serve breakfast to the pupils in breakfast club. However some pupils are not benefiting from these opportunities, or learning enough, because they do not attend school regularly.

Leaders have ensured that learning about diversity is embedded in the curriculum. This means pupils understand what it means to be different from others. Pupils know that there is no reason to be unkind because someone is different. Pupils learn to use the 'Hillstone life skills' to deal with difficulties they might face. They talk about how these skills help them to be more resilient.

There have been recent changes to the way the board of trustees is organised. Trustees have confidence in school leaders but not all trustees have the expertise to challenge leaders and check that the decisions they make are effective.

Staff are confident that leaders consider their well-being when making decisions. They are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know pupils well and are vigilant about keeping them safe. All staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. They know how to spot and report concerns. Leaders ensure concerns are logged promptly and dealt with thoroughly. Leaders work well with outside agencies to protect pupils when the need arises. Leaders ensure that appropriate checks take place before adults start to work at the school.

Pupils feel safe in school. The curriculum teaches them how to stay safe, including online. Pupils know how to report concerns and are confident there is always a trusted adult they can talk to.

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

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

- Teachers do not provide children in the early years with enough meaningful opportunities to develop their language in the outdoor environment. This means that children do not develop their language skills as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that children have a wide range of effective ways to develop their language in the outdoor learning spaces.
- New trustees have not received training to enable them to fully hold leaders to account for the school's performance. This means that they are unable to fully challenge leaders about how well the school is performing. The trust board should ensure that all trustees receive training and support to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- Leaders have not established effective assessment systems in some subjects. As a result they do not have a clear picture of how well pupils are achieving in these subjects. Leaders need to develop effective assessment systems in all subjects.
- Some pupils miss too much school. These pupils are not learning as much as they should. Leaders should continue to work closely with families to ensure that they understand the importance of regular attendance.

## 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](#)' 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>	141270
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242087
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	440
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Kevin McCabe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jason King
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hillstone.org.uk">www.hillstone.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders make use of a registered alternative provider.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met representatives of the board of trustees.

- Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for the early years, disadvantaged pupils, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and physical education (PE). For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the designated leader for safeguarding to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of staff and took account of views shared through the staff survey.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with groups of pupils both formally and during less structured parts of the day.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspectors spoke informally with parents on arrival to school.

### **Inspection team**

Corinne Biddell, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Bates

Ofsted Inspector

Vanessa Payne

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022