

Inspection of Diamond Hall Infant Academy

Well Street, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR4 6JF

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
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

The headteacher of the school is Laura Park. This school is part of the Diamond Hall Infant Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alex Brown.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know they attend a school where they are well cared for. Everyone is welcome at this school. The school works with parents and carers to meet pupils' needs. The approach of 'I do, we do, you do' ensures that everyone works together to help the pupils achieve the very best that they can. Pupils and staff are cheerful. Pupils are welcoming. They are polite to adults and to one another.

Staff know pupils very well. This helps pupils to feel safe and ready to learn. The school sets high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is reflected in the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to have a positive attitude towards their work. They show this in their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported very well to access the curriculum. These pupils are included in all aspects of school life.

Pupils behave well in lessons and listen carefully to staff. They are keen to receive the positive praise given by staff in recognition of their positive behaviour. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

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

The school has established a broad and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is well sequenced. It builds knowledge, skills and vocabulary in a logical and progressive way from the early years upwards. Pupils get the foundational knowledge and understanding they need.

The school prioritises reading. Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start in the early years. All staff are trained in the delivery of phonics. This is taught well and with consistency. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they are learning. Staff make accurate checks on pupils' learning and are aware of any gaps in their reading knowledge. They provide additional support for pupils who need it. On occasions, some pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to practise their sounds. This can slow down their journey to become fluent readers. The school lending library is helping pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils enjoy hearing their teachers read to them and listen in anticipation of what will happen next.

The quality of phonics teaching and pupils' achievements are not fully reflected in published outcomes. This is partly as increasing numbers of pupils arrive at school in the early stages of acquiring English. These pupils require additional time to secure their phonics knowledge. Over time, these pupils progress well from their starting points.

The school identifies and meets pupils' needs very well. Teachers are skilled at adapting the teaching of the curriculum. Wherever possible, pupils with additional needs access the same curriculum as their peers. This includes pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. For children with more significant needs, the school provides a bespoke provision, where they receive more tailored support.

Pupils are supported to remember their learning across all curriculum areas. There are lots of opportunities to recap their learning through 'memory joggers'. Teachers check that pupils are secure in their understanding before they move on. Some pupils, however, find it difficult to talk to others about their learning and explain their thinking clearly. The school has recently further developed its oracy curriculum to help pupils with this.

Pupils understand their school rules, 'be ready, be respectful, be safe', and follow these well. This begins in the early years, where clear routines and a focus on developing positive relationships ensure that children behave well. The school has worked hard to improve attendance through working with families and other services. This has helped some pupils to attend school more often.

Pupils' wider development is at the forefront of the school's curriculum. The school offers a range of clubs, including sport and music. Pupils also benefit from a range of well-planned experiences, such as visits to the beach and to museums. These activities broaden pupils' experience. Pupils learn about relationships, equality and diversity. They say that everyone is treated equally. Pupils have a good understanding of a range of faiths and cultures. Difference is celebrated. Pupils learn about physical and mental health. The school works with parents on this through its 'well-being Wednesday' challenges.

There are opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility through being on the school council, an eco-warrior or an anti-bullying buddy. In these roles, pupils get opportunities to make changes in their school. British values are taught well, and links are made to their school values.

At Diamond Hall Infant Academy there is a strong sense of team spirit with the pupils at the heart. Leaders have a consistent and ambitious vision that pupils will achieve the best they can. Trustees perform their statutory duties well. The school engages well with parents. Careful consideration is given to staff workload and well-being. Staff feel valued and supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, some pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to practise and learn new sounds. This prevents them from catching up in their reading as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that the phonics programme is implemented in ways that give all pupils the help and opportunities to practise the sounds that they need to improve their fluency.

- The recently revised oracy curriculum is not yet fully implemented. Some pupils do not have the spoken language skills to explain their thinking or to talk about the learning they have remembered. The school should ensure that plans to develop oracy are implemented effectively to enable pupils to better articulate their thoughts.

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	139849
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10346500
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	375
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alex Brown
Headteacher	Laura Park
Website	www.diamondhallinfantacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above national averages.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above national averages.
- The school has nursery provision for two-year-olds.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has appointed a new headteacher since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders. They met with representatives from the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. As part of the deep dives, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including board of trustees' minutes, the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online staff questionnaire. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nichola Irving, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector
Jim Hindess	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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025