

Inspection of Heron Primary School

Heron Way, Abbeydale, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL4 4BN

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 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

What is it like to attend this school?

Heron Primary School is an inclusive, welcoming school. All staff in the school are ambitious for pupils to be successful learners. The Heron 'drivers' help the school focus its efforts on this aim.

Pupils appreciate that staff care about them. They are happy and feel safe. They trust adults to look after them. Most say that staff deal with any worries they have quickly.

The school has put a great deal of effort into supporting pupils' mental health and well-being in the wake of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. An extensive 'well-being' curriculum sets out how this will happen. These lessons help pupils to develop resilience, confidence and self-belief.

Expectations for pupils' behaviour are high. Staff in the school apply the rules consistently. Pupils understand and follow the behaviour code. As a result, they behave well and show respect for staff and each other. Pupils follow instructions without hesitation. Lessons flow without interruption. Pupils move around school safely and sensibly.

The outdoor play and learning project contributes much to pupils' good behaviour and well-being. It enables them to play, learn and mix well together. It gives them a chance to let off steam, challenge themselves and be active.

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

The school's curriculum builds pupils' knowledge about each subject securely. The process begins in Reception. As pupils move through the school, they meet and revisit important knowledge many times. This helps them to store the knowledge gradually into their long-term memory. As a result, they can recall and apply what they have learned over time with success.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well at Heron. Targets for pupils with SEND are clear and precise. This ensures that teachers know what their needs are. Teachers adapt lessons as needed to ensure that pupils with SEND are learning what they need to keep up with everyone else.

Pupils begin learning to read as soon as they start Reception. Most master the phonics code by the end of Year 1. Some need a little longer, but get there by the end of Year 2 or early in Year 3. As they move through Years 3 to 6, pupils learn to read and understand increasingly complex texts. As a result, most are competent, independent readers by the time they move on to secondary school. However, a few older pupils do not enjoy reading. They do not read unless they have no choice. Some lack confidence in reading and this is why they avoid it. As a result, these pupils are not reading enough to gain the fluency, understanding and confidence that they need.

The school places great emphasis on teaching pupils to use correct, subject-specific language. They identify exactly which words pupils need to learn and when. Learning the

correct vocabulary helps pupils to talk about their learning. This focus begins in Reception. For example, children can say that a circle containing six bean bags has 'fewer' than one containing eight.

Staff in Reception also use high-quality language when working alongside children during independent activities. However, teachers have not identified all the words they want children to learn. In particular, there is less precision about the words that children will be taught to help them ask questions, express their feelings or hold a conversation. Therefore, teachers cannot be completely sure that children are learning all the vocabulary that they need.

The school works hard to encourage and support pupils to attend school regularly. For most, this work is successful. The school keeps a close check on who is absent from school, when they are absent and why. Staff work closely with parents and carers to try to support them in bringing their children to school every day. However, the school knows that more needs to be done to reach some families. It has raised its expectations around attendance. It has speeded up the pace of action to engage with parents who do not bring their children to school often enough. This effort is paying off. Bit-by-bit, some of the poorest attenders are coming to school more regularly.

The governing body and staff in the school value the strong relationships they have forged with many parents and the wider community. They take parents' opinions seriously and act upon them. For example, a recent survey showed that parents wanted more extra-curricular clubs for their children. The school has increased the number available. Most parents appreciate such efforts and are supportive of what the school does for their children. However, the school is aware that there is more to do to convince a minority of parents that the school is doing well for their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some older do not enjoy reading and choose not to read outside lessons. Therefore, they do not practise reading enough to build confidence and a love of reading. The school should promote the value of reading to all pupils and ensure that a love of reading is part of the school's culture.
- A small number of pupils continue to be absent from school too often. When they are absent, the school cannot ensure that they are learning the curriculum. The school needs to ensure that it implements its renewed expectations and policies robustly and that persistent absence reduces as a result.
- The school has not identified all the specific vocabulary that children need to know to support their personal, social and emotional development in the early years. Therefore,

some children might not learn to express themselves clearly or interact socially. The school needs to ensure that all children are taught the specific vocabulary they need to be able to express themselves clearly, interact socially and that they can apply this to communicate effectively.

- The school's work to engage with parents openly so that they know it takes their views seriously has had mixed success. Consequently, some parents do not believe that the school is working in the best interests of their children. The school should continue its work to build positive relationships with all parents.

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	115749
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10344523
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anita Masters
Headteacher	Claire Brookes
Website	www.heronprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been no relevant changes since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

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). 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.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, geography and computing. For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate pupils' behaviour and attitudes and provision for personal development, inspectors: observed pupils in class, as they moved around the school and at breaktimes; spoke informally to pupils in lessons and at breaktimes, met with four groups of pupils; held discussions with teachers and teaching assistants and scrutinised documentation relating to attendance, behaviour and the provision of clubs, trips and other activities.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before and after school and took account of the written comments in the Ofsted Parent View survey. Inspectors considered the information in the online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Sandy Hayes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lorna Buchanan	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Evans	Ofsted Inspector

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