

Highbury Primary School

URN: 144191 | Inspected: 18 November 2025

Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils generally achieve well. Most make sound progress through the curriculum. This includes pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, who achieve well by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make impressive progress from their starting points because the school meets their needs effectively. Pupils achieve well in reading and in most aspects of writing and mathematics. However, some pupils need to improve their handwriting. Some pupils do not know basic multiplication facts well enough by the end of Year 4. Across the curriculum, pupils generally remember their learning and achieve positive outcomes. They use subject-specific vocabulary to explain their ideas clearly. For example, older pupils can explain their knowledge about volcanoes with confidence. However, occasionally, pupils' understanding of the curriculum is not as deep as it could be. For example, some pupils struggle to recall any detailed knowledge about history topics, such as the Tudors or the Victorians.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. It is sensibly sequenced and ensures that pupils learn the important knowledge and skills they need to be successful over time. On the whole, teachers have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum well. Mostly, staff explain new concepts clearly and explore pupils' understanding effectively. This includes making regular checks on pupils' learning and addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge before introducing new content. Staff use their knowledge of individual pupils' needs to make adaptations to the teaching where necessary. In the main, pupils learn the planned curriculum successfully, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils. However, on occasion, some tasks do not enable pupils to demonstrate what they know and can do as well as they could. Learning basic skills in English and mathematics is a priority. Pupils enjoy reading. Through listening to stories and sharing ideas about books, pupils learn new vocabulary and develop an understanding of how language works. Early reading is taught effectively. This means that most pupils develop age-appropriate confidence and fluency. Pupils' work shows that some pupils struggle with their handwriting and do not form letters and numbers correctly. Recent work to improve handwriting is showing success among older pupils. The impact is less evident for younger pupils.

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Early years

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that children receive an effective start to their education in the early years. They ensure that the provision is safe and resourced well. Staff seek to identify any additional needs children have quickly so that they can put appropriate support in place swiftly. Children in the early years benefit well from high-quality care and positive relationships. A carefully structured curriculum identifies the important knowledge that children must learn to be ready for Year 1. Staff use ongoing checks of what children know and can do skilfully to make sure that children build their understanding appropriately over time. These checks inform the high-quality interactions that help children to make secure progress and achieve well. Leaders prioritise developing children's language and communication skills. Key vocabulary is threaded through the curriculum. Staff ensure that they read to children whenever possible, explaining unknown words and phrases clearly. Children enjoy explaining vocabulary they have learned related to topics, such as remembrance, or from stories they have heard. Early reading is another priority. Children learn phonics from the start of Reception using a well-sequenced programme. Staff benefit from expert training that enables them to deliver this programme well. Children who need extra help to learn to read receive appropriately targeted support.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders leave nothing to chance with inclusion. They are determined that all disadvantaged pupils should have every opportunity to achieve and thrive. Clear policies and processes ensure that all staff know what they need to do to provide the very best for pupils in their care. The school has a forensic approach to identifying pupils' needs right from when they start. Pupils' additional needs and the support they should receive are pin-pointed in granular detail. This helps staff understand how to respond to pupils' needs well. Effective partnerships with external professionals also aid this aspect of the school's work. In the early years, the school provides inclusive spaces for children with more complex needs. This helps these children get off to a positive start in their education. Additional inclusive spaces are also available for older pupils who would benefit from them. Leaders keep clear oversight of inclusion. They make sure that all staff have the training they need to deliver effective additional support for those pupils who need it. They make effective use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant. In addition, leaders keep a close eye of the impact of this work on pupils' learning, making appropriate and swift changes when needed. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from other disadvantaged groups receive the support they need to be successful. Expected standard

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders know their school and pupils well. They have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and

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any barriers that pupils and their families face. They take action to reduce or remove these. Leaders model high levels of professionalism and integrity at all times. They know what their school does well and the aspects of the school that need to improve. Most parents and carers have a very positive view of the school. Staff want to do their very best for pupils. They value being part of a supportive culture where everyone works together for pupils' benefit. Staff appreciate the carefully planned programme of professional development that gives them the knowledge and skills they need for effective classroom practice. This is based on up-to-date research and is closely linked to the school's priorities for improvement. Staff are highly positive about the support leaders provide. Furthermore, staff appreciate the support they receive to help them to manage their workload and wellbeing. Those responsible for governance know the school well. Members of the local governing body understand the school's priorities. They work closely with leaders to ensure that their work enables these priorities to be met. The multi-academy trust (MAT) maintains secure oversight of the school. MAT leaders support school leaders and governors effectively to continue to drive improvements. Additionally, some elements of the school's work are valued and shared across other schools in MAT. Personal development and well-being Expected standard Leaders have put in place a carefully designed programme to support pupils' personal development and wellbeing. This includes a logically sequenced curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education, which covers all statutory requirements. Pupils learn key knowledge that prepares them well for life in modern Britain. For example, they have a growing understanding of equality and diversity and know that prejudicial behaviours, such as racism, are wrong. Pupils also learn about democracy and why laws are important in society. In addition, pupils experience democratic systems in practice through the elections for the pupil parliament. Leaders ensure that relationships and sex education is taught in an age-appropriate way as pupils move through the school. Most pupils have a secure understanding about healthy and unhealthy relationships and the concept of consent. Pupils enjoy learning about aspects of financial management and budgeting, which they understand is important for their future. Additional events enhance this further. For example, in Year 6, pupils take part in an enterprise event, carrying out purposeful fundraising activities. Leaders' work to support pupils' emotional and physical health is a strength. For example, the school uses its outdoor facilities to offer a range of activities and experiences that enhance pupils' mental wellbeing. Pupils also learn about the importance of healthy diets and exercise. They can describe food groups and how to eat a balanced diet. There is a wide range of extra-curricular experiences on offer. Pupils particularly enjoy clubs, such as netball, singing and maths. Leaders encourage pupils to make a positive contribution to their school through taking on leadership roles and responsibilities. These include house captains, head pupils, reading ambassadors and wellbeing ambassadors. Leaders make sure that all pupil groups, including the most disadvantaged, benefit from this wider offer and are represented in pupil leadership roles.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are positive about their school. They appreciate belonging to this supportive and nurturing community. Pupils are happy and they feel very safe. They socialise well together at breaktimes, enjoying the variety of activities available to them. Unkindness and bullying do not concern pupils because they are very rare. Pupils trust staff to help them resolve any worries or concerns that they might have. Pupils really appreciate the school's far-reaching pastoral work, particularly the support offered for their mental health. Pupils benefit from a range of approaches that support their welfare. Furthermore, pupil wellbeing ambassadors help their peers understand how to care for others and address friendship issues. All of this means pupils are keen to come to

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school and attendance is high. The school aspires for all pupils to achieve well, both personally and academically. Inclusion for all is a real strength. Leaders make sure that pupils' individual needs are known and addressed well. This gives everyone every chance of being successful. Classrooms are calm, focused places. Generally, pupils are attentive and they work hard. They enjoy explaining their ideas and sharing the new knowledge that they have acquired. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, learn the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for secondary school by the end of Year 6. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that enhance and enrich the curriculum. The school makes effective use of the wealth of resources available in the local area, such as museums and leisure facilities. Pupils enjoy learning about the history of their city and the famous people associated with it, such as King Henry VIII. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe around water through visits to the beach and swimming lessons. This is particularly important in this coastal community.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to improve the effectiveness of teaching to ensure that it consistently supports pupils to learn the important knowledge they need to be ready for their

next steps

. This includes learning basic skills, such as letter formation and multiplication tables, in English and mathematics.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils behave well. They are proud to be members of this school community. They respond well to staff's instructions and cooperate well. Pupils concentrate well in class and focus eagerly on their work. Positive relationships exist between all members of the school community. Typically, pupils show respect to staff and to each other. Staff have high expectations and do not tolerate any form of poor behaviour, including discrimination. Staff ensure that they provide considerate and appropriate additional support to pupils who need help to regulate their emotions and behaviour. As a result of the school's thoughtful approach to promoting positive attitudes to learning, pupils thrive and enjoy school. Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders have a clear moral purpose to ensure that all pupils attend well. The school is tenacious in how it promotes the importance of high attendance for all pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All attendance figures are at least in line with national averages, with many being above the national figure. In addition, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is much lower than the national average. This means that most pupils do not miss out on important learning through being absent too often. This gives pupils every chance of academic success.

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For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/highbury-primary-school-portsmouth>