

# Inspection of Hamilton School

Hamilton Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 8AH

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Inspection dates:	8 and 9 April 2025
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

There are many positive and exciting changes happening for pupils at Hamilton school. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a period of significant change. New leaders have joined and are developing a new and ambitious curriculum to reflect the needs of the pupils here. However, the curriculum is in the early stages of development. Despite the school's high expectations for pupils, there is a recognition that there is more work to do before the ambition for pupils' achievement is fully realised.

Pupils are happy. Staff take time to understand pupils' interests and personal backgrounds. These are celebrated. For example, pupils share photos of their families, along with other aspects of their religion and culture, such as music and food. Everyone is welcomed and included. As a result, pupils know the importance of treating everyone with respect and kindness.

Pupils enjoy a range of wider experiences. These include lunchtime clubs, visitors to school and residential visits. Pupils across the school visit local supermarkets. They practise counting money to buy food. This helps to promote pupils' independence and life skills.

Pupils' mental health is well supported. The school sees this as a priority. Pupils receive the help they need quickly from well-trained staff. Pupils are able to name trusted adults who will help them. Most pupils at the school behave well.

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

Over the last few years, pupil numbers and classrooms have increased significantly and are continuing to grow. During this period, the school has prioritised recruiting new staff to meet these changes. The school prioritises providing professional development opportunities for staff to support pupils. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning and development.

Recent curriculum developments are helping pupils to learn and remember important key knowledge and skills. The curriculum is broad and starts from the early years. However, in lessons, the curriculum is not always implemented well enough. Activities do not always clearly match the knowledge that pupils need to learn from the lesson and does not build on what pupils already know. This slows down learning for some pupils.

The school has developed new approaches to support pupils' communication, interactions and behaviour. All pupils' individual communication needs are clearly identified and shared with parents and carers. The school works closely with external agencies, who offer support and expertise. The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use a range of communication aids and strategies across the school day. These include aided learning displays, visual aids and objects of reference. However, at times, staff do not always consistently implement the agreed communication and behaviour strategies. This means that some pupils cannot share their thoughts and feelings well enough. As a consequence, a small number of

pupils become unsettled because their communication needs are not supported as well as they could be.

The school prioritises early reading. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme. Those staff new to the school receive additional professional development and support. This ensures that phonics is taught well most of the time. Pupils who are at the pre-phonics stage are taught early reading skills. Those that require additional support receive this alongside the phonics programme. Consequently, many older pupils can read key texts independently, growing in confidence as readers.

In the early years, relationships between staff and children are positive and caring. The school provides clear transition processes when children start at the school. This means children and their families are well supported from the start. However, children do not always benefit from high-quality interactions with staff. This continues as children move into the main part of the school. As a result, children do not begin to build their early independence, language and communication skills as quickly as they could.

The support for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils experience visits to the farm, aquatic centre and places of worship. Pupils know about democracy. They are very proud and enthusiastic about their school parliament. Pupils speak confidently about online safety. They learn about healthy relationships.

Caring leaders and staff lead the school. They are supported by a governing body that is equally as ambitious for pupils here. Together, they have accurately identified the areas that need further improvement. Leaders are taking action to address these. Pupil attendance is taken very seriously. As a result, pupils attend very well. Parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some pupils, including children in the early years, do not benefit from high-quality interactions with adults. As a result, pupils do not begin to build their early independence, language and communication skills as quickly as they should. The school should ensure that all staff across school have the knowledge and skills to provide high-quality and purposeful interactions with pupils, to develop these important skills in a more timely, effective way.
- Staff do not always implement the curriculum well enough to support pupils' learning. At times, learning activities are not planned well enough to support the knowledge pupils need to learn. They are not used to build on what pupils know and can do. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school should ensure that the

curriculum is delivered through effective learning activities that build on the important skills and knowledge pupils need to learn.

- At times, staff do not always implement the agreed communication and behaviour systems in their classrooms. This means that some pupils are not able to communicate their thoughts and feelings or what they need. This can lead to some pupils becoming unsettled during the day. The school should ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to consistently implement communication and behaviour strategies that effectively support pupils to communicate.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103600
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10371067
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Foundation special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Michael Watson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Katie Williams
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hamilton.bham.sch.uk">www.hamilton.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	15 and 16 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is currently undergoing significant building work to support the future expansion of the school. Some classes are currently being taught in temporary accommodation on site.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of classes has grown significantly. Additional age ranges have been added to the school roll, including Years 7 and 8. In September 2025, Year 9 pupils will also be added to the school roll.
- There have been significant changes to leadership since the last inspection.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The primary areas of need include autism spectrum condition and cognition and learning. Pupils also have associated needs, such as severe learning difficulties; speech, language and communication needs; and sensory and medical needs.
- The school runs an after-school provision on site. This is led by an external provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use any 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 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteacher, the inclusion team, subject leaders, staff and pupils. They met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. They also talked with parents.
- The lead inspector met with three local authority representatives, including school improvement representatives. The lead inspector also met with an external school improvement representative.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading; communication and language; personal, social, health and economic education; mathematics and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of individual education plans for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, formally and informally, about their learning and experiences at school. Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school policies, curriculum documents and SEND records.

## **Inspection team**

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Andrew Orgill

Nicola Harwood

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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