

# Hobletts Manor Infants' and Nursery School

Adeyfield Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 5JS

**Inspection dates** 30 April–1 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Improvements to the way children in the Nursery and Reception are taught mean they are now making rapid gains in their learning.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2.
- Attainment is above average in writing, and pupils apply their writing skills well to a range of topics.
- Pupils are well taught. There are examples of outstanding learning in some lessons.
- Leaders and staff have created a very positive atmosphere and a stimulating learning environment where pupils learn and develop.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners who participate well in the activities provided.
- Throughout the school pupils behave well. In some lessons, attitudes to learning and behaviour are exemplary.
- Procedures to ensure pupils are safe are effective. Pupils say they feel safe and very well looked after by staff.
- Art, writing and the outdoor learning activities provided are particularly strong.
- Pupils make exceptional gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership in promoting achievement and developing teaching, and is supported well by the deputy headteacher, other key leaders, staff and governors.
- Parents hold very positive views about the care and education provided for their children.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes in lessons, work is not at a suitable level of difficulty for different groups of pupils.
- Attendance levels have been below average for the last few years.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 is lower in reading and mathematics than in writing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspection team took account of 42 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the results of the school's own parental survey.
- Questionnaires from 18 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and the school's development planning.

## Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bimla Thakur

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized school.
- About three quarters of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a range of ethnic heritages including Pakistani, African and Indian.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.

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

- Improve teaching and raise attainment by the end of Year 2 to above average in reading and mathematics by:
  - making sure that work is always set at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils.
- Take effective steps to improve attendance by:
  - making this an improvement priority for all staff
  - raising the profile of the importance of good attendance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery with knowledge, understanding and skills below those typically expected for their age. Improvements to provision in Nursery and Reception mean that children make outstanding progress across all areas of learning. This is because of high quality teaching and the exciting indoor and outdoor activities provided.
- In the Nursery, children talk about their learning with excitement. For example, they described clearly how they planted pumpkin seeds. They know that the rain and sun help plants to grow. Children applied physical effort and creativity as they became jumping beans, jelly beans, stringy beans, frozen beans, French beans and so on. They demonstrated coordination and control in their movements.
- Children in Reception make rapid progress in consolidating and extending their knowledge and understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). They use technology very well to support their learning. For example, they created attractive and colourful pictures of sunflowers on computers and labelled the main parts such as the roots and stem. Others produced striking pictures of multi-coloured fish.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is average in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing is above average and pupils make outstanding progress in this area.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional support and ensure eligible pupils make good progress. In the 2013 Year 2 assessments, the pupils supported by the pupil premium attained lower standards than the others in writing and mathematics, but similar standards in reading. The school is taking effective steps to narrow the gap in attainment between the groups. One-to-one tuition and other initiatives are having a positive impact.
- An above-average proportion of Year 2 pupils exceeded the nationally expected levels in writing in 2013. Average proportions reached the higher levels in reading and mathematics. In some lessons, the most able pupils are not set sufficiently demanding work to extend their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive effective guidance and support and work is adapted in line with their needs.
- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. This is because teachers provide well-planned opportunities for them to discuss their learning in pairs or small groups and to express their ideas and opinions to the class.
- The results of the phonics screening tests for Year 1 were below average in 2012 and well below average in 2013. The school has recently taken positive action to address weaknesses in the teaching of phonics, and pupils are now making faster progress in this area.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in writing have improved in recent years. Pupils acquire and apply writing skills very well in English lessons and in their topic work. Pupils in Year 1 made good progress in describing an underwater setting. In their Victorian studies, Year 2 pupils wrote interesting accounts of their Victorian school day experience and interesting pieces on demanding jobs tackled by Victorian children. Their writing is creative, imaginative and accurate. Punctuation, spelling and grammar are developing well.

- In mathematics pupils make good progress. They effectively acquire different mathematical methods and operations. They apply these skills competently in solving problems. For example, pupils in Year 2 made exceptional progress in solving multiplication problems.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through the school's physical education programme and the additional sports opportunities provided.

### **The quality of teaching is good**

- The good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning, progress and attainment. Parents who completed the online survey were very positive about quality of teaching. Pupils were equally positive and commented, 'Our teachers make learning fun,' and, 'Teachers help us when we are stuck.' Some examples of outstanding learning were seen during the inspection.
- Throughout the school, teachers establish strong relationships with their pupils. Classrooms are attractive and stimulating and provide a positive environment for learning.
- In the Nursery and Reception, children are extremely well taught and make rapid gains in their learning. They receive high quality guidance and instruction from adults. There are numerous opportunities for children to explore and be creative.
- In a highly successful session in Reception, children made exceptional progress in consolidating and extending their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds. After clear guidance and skilful questioning by the teacher, children articulated the sounds and words correctly. They then made rapid progress in writing instructions for the turnip soup they had made the day before. The teacher's clear explanations and demonstrations promoted learning extremely well.
- Pupils are taught essential skills effectively. The teaching of phonics has improved recently, and the teaching of writing is an established strength. Pupils benefit from visual stimuli such as artwork and illustrations to provide ideas for writing and teachers demonstrate how to construct and improve the writing of sentences. Pupils are taught mathematical operations well and have plenty of opportunities to use their numeracy skills to solve practical problems.
- Pupils in Year 2 made outstanding progress in writing a story chapter. They were fully engaged and rose to the teacher's high expectations and the challenge of the work set. Pupils benefited from the teacher's demonstrations on how to write creative and interesting sentences. Pupils successfully reviewed their own and each other's writing.
- In most lessons, teachers make good use of information about what pupils know and can do to plan their teaching and to set challenging work for different groups of pupils. Pupils' interest is sustained and they make good gains in acquiring knowledge, deepening their understanding and applying skills. Occasionally, work is not set at the correct level and so pupils can find the work too easy or too difficult.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Effective one-to-one tuition and small group teaching in literacy and numeracy helps pupils in danger of falling behind in their work.
- The marking of pupils' work helps them to improve. Teachers provide encouragement and praise for good work. Constructive comments guide the next steps of their learning.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In a number of classes observed, attitudes to learning and behaviour were impeccable. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and very well looked after by the staff.
- The results of Parent View show that parents believe their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school. Parents also indicate that the school successfully promotes good behaviour. These positive views reflect the findings of the inspection.
- Children in the Nursery have settled very well into school because of positive relationships that adults form with them. They feel safe and relate well to others. Children in the Nursery and Reception thoroughly enjoy the learning activities provided. They share, take turns and work very well together. Their very positive behaviour contributes to their rapid learning.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show enthusiasm for learning. They are attentive, cooperative and work well together in tackling challenging problems. Pupils are courteous, friendly and relate very well to adults and to other pupils.
- Pupils are making exceptional progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are excited and inspired by the activities provided. They show a clear understanding of different cultures and faiths. Pupils appreciate the work of different artists and the wonders of the natural world.
- The school's records of incidents show that behaviour is typically good. Discussions with pupils show that they are very happy about behaviour and how well pupils support each other. They report that bullying is unkind and very rarely happens in their school. Pupils informed the inspectors that any unkind behaviour is quickly and effectively dealt with by staff.
- Attendance is less positive. For the last two years, attendance levels have been below average. Attendance has improved recently and leaders are exploring different strategies to raise attendance further, including the involvement of all staff and working in partnership with other local schools.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher is very well regarded by pupils, staff, governors and parents. She provides strong leadership and conveys ambition and determination in providing high quality teaching and learning, and exciting learning activities for pupils.
- The headteacher and staff have successfully created a very positive and exciting learning environment where pupils can thrive. Furthermore, the headteacher has established a positive professional culture among the staff where expertise is shared and there is a commitment to continuous improvement. The deputy headteacher, other leaders, governors and staff share the headteacher's ambitions for the school. Teamwork among the staff is strong and all strive to ensure that pupils have the chance to do their very best.
- The role of subject and other key leaders is well developed. They are fully engaged in checking pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and in improving their areas of responsibility. The leadership of Nursery and Reception is particularly effective.

- Senior leaders and key leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and improvement areas. The findings of their reviews are used well to bring about improvements. For example, since the previous inspection, outdoor learning facilities have been improved considerably. Pupils' achievement in writing has been raised. More recently, positive action has been taken to improve the teaching of phonics. Raising attendance has been less successful and the school has not yet done all it can to promote the importance of good attendance.
- The development and checking of teaching receive good attention. Newly qualified teachers receive effective mentoring and support. There are good procedures for appraising the performance of teachers. Training and improvement targets are linked closely to pupils' progress as well as the school's improvement priorities. Good training and support have helped to improve teachers' skills. For example, all staff have recently received useful training in the teaching of phonics.
- The school provides exciting learning activities. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the additional clubs and educational visits. Learning opportunities in art are exceptional. Attractive displays reflect pupils' high quality work in this area. A local woodland, a 'Forest School', provides interesting experiences. The outdoor equipment and facilities, gardening areas and a sensory garden all enrich pupils' learning. There is no discrimination and all pupils have full access to the learning activities provided.
- The recently introduced primary sports grant has been used to extend pupils' sporting opportunities, and also to train staff and further develop their skills in the teaching of physical education.
- The local authority provides appropriate support. The school's improvement partner has accurately identified its many strengths. However, the impact of weaknesses in phonics and attendance on the school's overall effectiveness have been understated. As a result, leaders and governors believe that the school's overall effectiveness is better than the inspection judgement.
- The results of Parent View and the school's own survey show that parents are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children. A range of literacy sessions to help parents support their children's learning have proved to be successful.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governors are supportive. They show a clear understanding of pupils' attainment and progress and are kept well informed about the quality of teaching and learning. Governors are up to date on procedures for managing staff performance, and ensure that promotion and pay awards are based on responsibilities and pupils' progress. They make sure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively and check its impact on eligible pupils' progress. The governors have attended useful courses to help improve their effectiveness. They make sure all national safeguarding requirements are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117197
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	443756

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tim Bailey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Wendy Hull
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 213854
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