

Hartsfield Junior Mixed and Infant Primary School

Clothall Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 6PB

Inspection dates 14–15 June 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have taken effective action to improve a previous two-year decline in pupils' achievement in English and mathematics at key stage 2. Above-average attainment in the early years and key stage 1 has been sustained since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good. It is most effective in key stage 1, where learning is adapted skilfully in response to teachers' assessment of pupils' understanding.
- Strong leadership of individual subjects ensures that pupils make good progress. Pupils do well in physical education, geography, science, art, and design and technology.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they know how to keep themselves safe.
- Safeguarding is effective. It is a priority within a culture of shared responsibility for keeping pupils safe. Welfare requirements in the early years are met.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils lend confidence to pupils' enjoyment in learning as reflected in their above-average attendance.
- The curriculum provides extensive enrichment activities and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Children in the early years are taught proficiently. They make good progress in their learning and development, and are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils receive very clear guidance on how to improve their writing, the quality of feedback is less effective in mathematics.
- Leaders and governors gather a wealth of information about teaching and learning. However, appraisal of this valuable information is too general to substantiate the root causes of identified weaknesses.
- Disadvantaged pupils' achievement is improving markedly but it is not a high enough priority in plans for improvement for each subject.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve assessment and its impact on pupils' learning by:
 - spreading the good practice in key stage 1 more widely
 - developing, in line with the school's policy, the quality of written feedback pupils receive about their mathematics work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders and governors are more incisive in the analysis and reporting of information about teaching and learning, and in the planning for future improvement
 - the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is expressed explicitly as a priority in all subjects in the school improvement plan.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and governors have successfully created a cohesive, effective and motivated staff team. They ensure that every pupil feels valued as a unique individual. They know about pupils' interests, preferences and special talents and promote them at every opportunity.
- Staff go the extra mile to meet pupils' learning, emotional, behavioural, physical, mental and medical needs because inclusion and equality of opportunity lie at the heart of this school's ethos and culture.
- British values are woven into the school's schemes of work, assemblies and school life so that pupils develop an understanding of the values British people live by. For example, involvement in the 'Magistrates in the Community' project raises pupils' awareness about the British criminal and civil justice system.
- Subject leaders are passionate about their responsibilities and inspire others to improve provision continuously. They have been pivotal in developing a broad, balanced and generously enriched curriculum for pupils to learn. The 2014 national curriculum is fully established. Subject leaders identify effectively where staff require training to deliver aspects of new learning confidently.
- Training and coaching for staff make a difference to the quality of teaching. For example, following training, staff have improved the teaching of problem-solving in mathematics and marking in English this year is much improved.
- The headteacher ensures that systems for appraisal of staff performance are implemented effectively.
- The deputy headteacher does a sterling job in ensuring that assessment information is accurate and that the information is transferred on to the school's chosen electronic data system. This enables leaders to check that pupils in each class are making enough progress and to provide extra one-to-one or small-group teaching for those who are falling behind.
- Leaders at all levels and governors are involved in continuous monitoring of teaching and learning. This involves a wide range of approaches. The wealth of information gathered contributes to the school's awareness of its strengths and weaknesses, but it is not evaluated and appraised well enough.
- Governors ensure that the sports premium funding is allocated wisely to increase pupils' participation in sports. The leaders responsible for physical education use the funding extremely well. The school community celebrates its collection of trophies for winning many local inter-school competitive events. Staff receive regular training to boost their confidence in teaching physical education, which they enjoy teaching to a high standard.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that raising disadvantaged pupils' achievement is included in the school's improvement plan, but not as a high enough priority. In reading, most disadvantaged pupils are making expected progress. However, in writing, a third of pupils supported by the pupil premium have not reached expectations for their ages, yet specific actions for this group of pupils do not feature sufficiently well in the school's development plan.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a good knowledge of the school community, staff, pupils and parents. They make regular visits to the school and monitor the school's work effectively.
 - The governing body has people with the right skills to govern the school effectively. These are used beneficially in the interests of pupils and parents. For example, a governor with expert technology skills raised the issue that the school's website was not fit for purpose and a complete rebuild of the website is underway as a result.
 - Governors understand their roles and responsibilities and are generally confident to ask questions of school leaders and hold them to account.
 - Management of finances is proficient and governors know that value for money is achieved only when spending makes a difference to outcomes for pupils, such as allocation of the pupil premium and sports premium funding. They check to see that the funding is making a difference.
 - The governing body understands how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression and ensures that the headteacher's performance is appraised annually.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and governors ensure that safeguarding is a priority and that everyone plays their part in keeping children safe. Teaching and non-teaching staff are confident in raising any concerns with the designated lead professional for safeguarding and child protection because they are regularly trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

Documentation is detailed and well organised, enabling referrals to external agencies to be made quickly and confidently. Statutory checks made on all staff, governors, regular volunteers and contractors are thorough to ensure their suitability to work with children. Risks associated with off-site visits, pupils' medical or mental health needs or potential hazards such as building works on the school site are considered carefully. Leaders and staff use the assessments to take suitable steps to reduce risks and to keep children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is typically good across the school in all classes including the early years and, according to the school's monitoring of teaching over time, it is often very effective.
- Strong relationships between staff and pupils lend confidence and enjoyment to learning. Teachers enjoy teaching as much as pupils enjoy learning. In an outdoor sports session, a whole year group were taught expertly by staff and a sports apprentice who all showed their expertise in the subject. This had a profound impact on pupils' learning and desire to join in. They were visibly energetic, upbeat and intent on doing well as they learned and practised new skills in throwing, bowling and batting for cricket.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well – quietly yet assertively. Conversations with individuals are unobtrusive and low key. This ensures that time for learning is maximised without interruption and the work gets finished on time. Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants expect a good work ethic and they create positive conditions for learning.
- Teachers plan carefully for learning in all subjects, taking the various needs of individuals into account. In Years 1 and 2, teachers do not hesitate to change the plan or move away from it if pupils are finding the work too difficult or too easy. Individual needs are also catered for well in this way to ensure their good progress. All teachers check at regular intervals in lessons to probe pupils' understanding. The quality of their questioning is usually good. Some teachers do not act on what they find out and adjust the learning confidently. In key stage 2, teachers are more constrained by the learning that they have planned in advance.
- Outcomes from assessments are discussed with senior leaders at least once every term. Between these meetings, teachers double-check their assessments for accuracy with each other and local schools; in some cases, the local authority does an external check. Assessment is a daily activity in the early years to build an accurate picture of what children know and can do, and what they need to learn next.
- Opportunities for testing out pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the national curriculum are mapped out in advance. This gives teachers a good understanding of what pupils know and can do and they plan ahead with this in mind.
- Teachers give feedback to pupils about how well they are learning frequently. The guidance that pupils receive in English is helpful. It tells pupils explicitly what could be even better and how they can improve. Marking is less useful in mathematics. Comments are often superficial and less challenging: they do not signpost what pupils need to learn next and make them reflect on what they have learned. The same applies to marking in subjects other than English where written work is involved.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- A strong commitment to keeping pupils safe supports and promotes their welfare. Pupils are knowledgeable about keeping themselves safe online when using technology.
- Pupils know how to be a good learner and they are thoughtful about why they find learning enjoyable. Year 6 pupils suggested that the use of technology, practical games and puzzles in mathematics, and the way their teachers place learning in real-world situations, are reasons why they find learning fun. Inspectors found evidence to support their views.
- Pupils' physical needs are catered for especially well throughout the school day. For example, pupils in need of prescribed medication for serious medical conditions are helped to administer it while allowing their access to all of the activities that other pupils engage in. The school acts quickly to use the expertise from health professionals to support pupils with mental health or emotional needs. As seen at break times and in lessons, pupils get along well with each other. One of the reasons why pupils feel so

safe is because bullying is rare. The oldest pupils told inspectors that minor falling out among friends happens occasionally but pupils are soon over it.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. More than 90% of Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) responses strongly agreed or agreed that this is the case. Pupils are welcoming and treat visitors respectfully.
- The above-average attendance of almost all pupils is testament to how much they enjoy school and feel safe. In their responses to Parent View, parents confirmed that their children are happy and feel safe.
- The school takes action quickly and works closely with the very few families whose children do not attend as regularly as they should. These approaches are having positive results.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in the building and outside at play.
- Pupils come to school ready and eager to learn. They take pride in their work and respond to instructions quickly and without any fuss.
- Although pupils throughout the school enjoy taking on responsibilities, some of the youngest children in the early years do not take enough responsibility to clear up after themselves.
- Pupils are attentive in class and well behaved. However, some of the older pupils are too hesitant in speaking up and seeking help quickly when they are confused or struggling to grasp new learning.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Most children start school in Reception at a level of development that is at least typical for their age. Staff keep careful records of their progress from these starting points that show almost all children make good progress in the Reception Year. External moderation by the local authority this year confirms the validity of teachers' assessments.
- Good teaching in the early years ensures that children transferring into Year 1, including children who attract early years premium funding, are ready to learn the national curriculum having reached a good level of development. In particular, their early reading, writing, physical and technology skills are well established.
- From Year 1 to Year 2, pupils continue to do well in reading, writing and mathematics. Year on year, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the standard in the phonics (sounds that letters make) screening check is above average. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. These impressive results have been sustained consistently over time through consistently good and better teaching.
- Pupils in key stage 1 love to read and they understand its purpose. They enjoy it, have access to a wide range of good-quality literature, and talk about books articulately and with enthusiasm. They use their phonics knowledge and skills well to break down words into shorter sounds so that they can read them. In the same way, they are able to use phonics to build words and spell them in their writing.
- In 2014 and 2015, pupils in Year 6 did not make sufficient progress from their above-average starting points at the beginning of Year 3. The school's assessment information shows a much better picture for this year. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those who have special educational needs or disability, are making good progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding. In reading, at least half of these pupils are doing well, and in writing and mathematics around a third are making good progress.
- As a result of better progress, attainment in most classes in key stage 2 is on track to rise this year. The school's assessment information shows that Year 6 test results are set to rise. Work seen in pupils' books confirms this. Year 5 has the highest proportion of pupils whose attainment is lower than it should be. The school is fully aware of this and has taken steps to address their needs to boost their learning and enable them to catch up.
- Disadvantaged pupils are receiving considerable extra help and support that is making a difference. This has been particularly effective in helping them to make up for previous lost ground in reading. They are achieving well in mathematics. Currently, only two thirds of disadvantaged pupils meet expectations in writing. Rightly, this has been identified as a priority by leaders and staff.
- The most able pupils are challenged well. Usually, this involves teachers planning ahead and always having an extension activity prepared if they complete the work with ease. Most-able pupils told inspectors that they feel that they are making good progress and that the work is of the right level of difficulty. Even so, inspectors found that these pupils sometimes work through the same steps as others before reaching the level of challenge that really makes them think.

- Pupils with special interests and talents in music and physical education are particularly well catered for to excel through the extensive extra-curricular programme.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision covers all of the required areas of learning and enables children to develop as confident, happy individuals who are well prepared for the curriculum they will learn in Year 1.
- Good-quality teaching helps children to make good progress in Reception, including children who are eligible for the early years pupil premium funding. The teaching of phonics is a strength. Almost all children reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. This means that they have reached or exceeded the national early learning goals for personal development, communication and language, physical development, literacy and mathematics.
- Vigilant ongoing checks of children's progress are used well to identify individual children's areas of strength and the areas of their learning that they need more support with. Teachers use this information to plan activities that will move them on to the next stage quickly. Some of the activities that children choose for themselves are not particularly challenging.
- The early years leader checks the quality of teaching and learning regularly and ensures that safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- Parents are involved closely in their children's learning right from the start. In particular, they play a big part in developing their children's love for reading by reading with them at home.
- Children play happily alongside each other, making choices about what to play with and sharing toys and other resources. They behave well and play safely. Nonetheless, children do not pay enough attention to clearing up carefully after they have finished playing.

School details

Unique reference number	117376
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10017330

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandie Rice
Headteacher	Suzanne Summerhayes
Telephone number	01462 894741
Website	www.hartsfield.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@hartsfield.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2006

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The majority of pupils join the school in Reception and stay throughout the primary phase of their education.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current national floor standards for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Information on the school's website does not meet requirements. Arrangements for admissions are not published, including those for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. No information is available about pupils' progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2. The website does not provide a link to the national school and college performance tables. Much of the information for parents about the curriculum, events, clubs and activities is out of date.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out following concerns raised about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has the discretionary power to inspect any school in England under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection began as a one-day, no formal designation section 8 inspection led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). During the first day, the HMI converted the inspection to a full section 5 inspection and four Ofsted Inspectors joined the team on the second day to complete the inspection.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes at least once and sometimes jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' written work in their exercise books and information that the school showed them about the progress that pupils are making currently. They observed pupils playing in the playground at break times. They spoke to pupils while they worked in class and more formally in groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors, senior leaders, subject leaders and staff responsible for administration.
- Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documentation including the school's most recent information about pupils' attainment and progress, and systems and policies for safeguarding, behaviour and safety. They evaluated the school's self-evaluation and its plans for future improvements.
- The views of 118 parents who responded to Parent View were taken into account.

Inspection team

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