

Propps Hall Junior Infant and Nursery School

Propps Hall Drive, Failsworth, Manchester M35 0ND

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher is inspirational. She is supported by a highly skilled deputy and leadership team and motivated staff.
- In this exceptionally innovative and successful school, staff work together to give pupils an outstanding education from the start.
- The school is a wonderland for children. Classrooms are enchanting places to learn. Themed rooms such as the woodland, space and ocean rooms are stimulating settings for further learning.
- The broad and rich curriculum supports pupils to make outstanding progress in all subjects. Pupils' work in art, design and technology and foundation subjects is of high quality.
- Classrooms are superbly organised and resourced. Pupils learn independence and enjoy reasoning and solving problems at the 'investigation stations'. They read widely in the inviting reading corners.
- Outstanding teaching fosters a love of learning. Exciting activities fire pupils' imagination, challenge their thinking and deepen their understanding of the world.
- Exceptional provision in the early years supports children to make excellent progress from their various starting points. Their joy in learning is evident in all that they do.
- Pupils of all abilities build on their skills with great success as they move through school. They currently attain above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics assessments at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils' personal skills are developed exceptionally well in all subjects. Pupils use their initiative and make an excellent contribution to the running of the school.
- Pupils feel and are safe. Their behaviour is exemplary and bullying is unknown.
- Leaders at all levels make a telling contribution to continuous improvement. Their incisive checks on teaching and pupils' progress ensure that best practice is shared and improvements are made where needed.
- Governors provide highly effective support and challenge to leaders. They are skilled, knowledgeable and ambitious for pupils.
- Leaders and governors are constantly reviewing the school's effectiveness and pupils' progress. They have identified that pupils' spelling and handwriting skills lag behind the in-depth content of their writing.
- There is strong capacity within the school to sustain the outstanding provision and great enthusiasm to do so.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In line with the school's improvement planning, develop pupils' handwriting and spelling more effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is supported by a highly skilled deputy and assistant headteacher. Together with excellent leadership at all levels and enthusiastic staff, they create an exceptionally innovative and successful school. Highly motivated staff create an exciting environment in which pupils make outstanding progress. This cultivates a love of learning in pupils.
- The school environment is enchanting. Exciting and attractive displays capture the rich curriculum and extend and celebrate pupils' learning. Space is used creatively to enrich pupils' learning. For example, the 'woodland room', with natural materials and animals, helps pupils to investigate and learn about nature. The 'space' room provides a base for pupils' meetings and the 'ocean' room provides a restful and calm setting for nurture groups and personalised support.
- Curriculum planning is a key strength. Sporting, creative and foundation subjects are covered extensively, alongside the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers plan fun activities and have high expectations, so pupils enjoy learning and make outstanding progress in all subjects. The curriculum is enriched with themed days, residential trips abroad, visits and visitors. The 'culture day', for example, introduced pupils to French cuisine and extended their French language skills. The art day introduced pupils to traditions, art and music from around the world.
- Many before- and after-school clubs enrich pupils' learning further. The breakfast and after-school care provision gives pupils a calm and enjoyable start and end to the day. Pupils also have fun participating in musical, fitness sporting, technological, art and craft activities. The 'crime scene investigation' club is particularly popular; pupils use their investigative and deductive skills to great effect.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to everything the school does. Their social skills and understanding of moral issues, different faiths and cultures are developed skilfully in many subjects and extended in assemblies and themed days.
- British values are promoted in a meaningful and thought provoking way. Older pupils' ideas to create 'superheroes' such as 'Respectful Ruth' and 'Liberty Luke' have helped younger pupils to understand the key principles of democracy, law, liberty, respect and tolerance.
- Underpinning the creative and stimulating approach there are highly effective policies, systems and procedures that are rooted in the practice of all staff. Senior leaders have high expectations and an excellent understanding of the strategies that promote the best outcomes for staff and pupils in their school.
- Additional funding is used highly effectively. The pupil premium subsidises extra-curricular activities, additional support with learning and tuition to extend pupils' talents and skills. Disadvantaged pupils of all abilities make just as rapid progress as other pupils in school from their starting points. The additional funding for special educational needs is also used creatively to adapt the curriculum and provide personalised additional support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They consequently make excellent gains in their personal development and achievement.

- The physical education and sport funding is used to develop teachers' skills as well as broadening pupils' experiences and increasing participation in physical activity.
- Self-evaluation is incisive and accurate. It is based on thorough monitoring of teaching and searching analysis of pupils' progress. School improvement planning is consequently focused on the most important priorities and actions have resulted in sustained improvement over time.
- The procedures to check pupils' progress and improve the impact of teaching are exemplary. Pupils' progress is tracked assiduously by the deputy headteacher, who knows each pupil's learning achievements and needs in detail. Leaders at all levels are skilled in scrutinising pupils' work, observing lessons and ensuring the accuracy of teachers' assessments. They provide unequivocal feedback that supports teachers to improve.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. As well as evaluating the impact of teaching in school, they research and explore ways to invigorate practice and raise pupils' achievement. Their planning for improvement is innovative and highly effective. Staff constantly learn from each other and share best practice.
- The headteacher manages the performance of teachers extremely well. Teachers have challenging targets for pupils' progress and motivating targets to contribute to school wide initiatives. Teachers relish their opportunities to lead on initiatives that they have identified, such as transition, developing problem-solving and developing reading for pleasure. Other staff are managed by leaders across the school and have similarly motivating targets that enable them to use their initiative.
- Senior leaders invest in developing the skills of teachers and leaders at all levels. They use external expertise and training effectively. All teachers have completed training in coaching and are participating in a professional development programme that develops their skills in reflecting on and improving teaching.
- Leaders at all levels lead training within school very effectively. The recent emphases on improving teachers' questioning skills and pupils' ability to solve complex problems have had a positive impact.
- Partnership working is extensive. The executive headteacher is the long-standing headteacher at Propps Hall and more recently has become executive headteacher of Springhead Nursery and Infant School. She is also a local leader of education, a mentor to new headteachers and a school improvement partner. She uses her skills well, to support staff development beyond the school. She also ensures that leaders at all levels have the skills to sustain outstanding provision within the school.
- Other staff also use their skills to support improvement and develop staff in other schools. They develop their own skills at the same time. For example, a 'phonics enquiry day' enabled teachers from other schools to observe successful practice in phonics sessions and participate in training. Many teachers work with the local teaching school to moderate assessments across clusters of schools. The deputy headteacher, sports coach and special educational needs coordinator support improvement in the federated school.
- Parents who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire and many more who spoke to inspectors were unanimously positive about leadership of the school, stating for example, 'It is a well-run school with a very welcoming headteacher who knows every individual child'.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide highly effective support and challenge to senior leaders.
- Governors have in-depth knowledge of the school based on their understanding of assessment information for each year group, insightful reports from leaders across the school and regular visits and discussion with pupils.
- Governors make sure that additional funding is spent to the best effect. They make sure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make just as rapid progress from their starting points as others in school and at least as well as other pupils nationally.
- Governors oversee the management of staff's performance and manage the performance of the headteacher effectively with support from an external adviser
- Governors share the vision and ambition for pupils to experience an outstanding education and develop all-round skills for life.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Policies and procedures are extremely thorough and followed by all staff. Requirements for the safe recruitment of staff are met. Extensive and regular training for staff ensures that they are vigilant to signs of safeguarding concerns. Detailed records are kept of any safeguarding concerns.
- Staff engage with outside agencies, carers and parents effectively to make sure that everything possible is done to ensure pupils' safety. Early help, which is initiated by the pastoral lead, is highly effective in providing coordinated support for families. There are excellent procedures to ensure that the most vulnerable children are safe and that children who are looked after achieve well.
- Procedures for handling bullying and racist incidents ensure that appropriate action is taken should they occur. Incidents are rare, but followed up diligently.
- Parents who made their views known were unanimously positive about safeguarding. 'There is a lovely community feel that makes children feel really well cared for', and 'It is a secure, safe and welcoming school' were typical comments.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers plan exciting activities that capture pupils' imagination and make learning fun. At the same time, teachers make sure that pupils build on their knowledge and skills systematically as they move through school. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress in all subjects and develop a love of learning that motivates them to learn independently.
- Teachers have in-depth subject knowledge and share best practice enthusiastically. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. They are knowledgeable and deployed effectively.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning skilfully and plan lessons with the right amount of

challenge or support to maximise their progress. Pupils of all abilities make at least good progress and most make exceptional progress. Pupils rise to teachers' high expectations for their work and behaviour. The most able pupils have many opportunities to deepen their learning through well-matched activities and independent investigations.

- Pupils' reading, writing and communication skills are developed and consolidated exceptionally well. Pupils' phonics skills are developed effectively in the early stages and they are provided with wide-ranging materials that foster an interest in books. Older pupils read widely for different purposes, including for example to carry out personal research, follow instructions for an investigation, or enjoy a novel. The pupil-run library is well used and well stocked.
- Pupils' writing skills are developed effectively across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils gain an excellent understanding of the features of different types of writing and extend their vocabulary very effectively. Pupils' handwriting and spelling skills do not consistently reflect their ability in other aspects of writing and leaders are currently seeking to improve these aspects. Nevertheless, the depth of pupils' understanding shown in their writing in subjects across the curriculum is impressive.
- Pupils have lots of opportunities to apply their mathematical skills. Staff are constantly looking for ways to make learning more interesting and develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. The 'investigation stations' provide pupils with challenging and interesting investigations, enquiries and experiments.
- The 'enrichment days' enhance pupils' learning in a range of subjects and help pupils to apply their learning creatively in different contexts. The Second World War day, for example, resulted in some excellent artwork and many different types of writing. The science and culture days gave a meaningful context to pupils' learning in several subjects.
- The highly effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities assures that they make just as rapid progress as other pupils in school. Teachers and the special educational needs coordinator assess the needs of these pupils in detail and produce high-quality individualised plans to meet them. Where possible, pupils are fully included in lessons and they are also provided with appropriate additional support to meet their needs.
- Pupils enjoy their homework tasks and so do parents. As well as being used to consolidate pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills, homework is often practical and based on the theme that pupils are exploring during the half term. Homework often enables pupils to research, use their initiative and apply their creative skills. Pupils enjoy sharing their work with other pupils in school.
- Parents are positive about teaching, stating for example, 'The teachers are fantastic; they help my child excel.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Pupils' personal skills are developed exceptionally well in lessons and through their many opportunities to contribute to the running of the school. Pupils have a high degree of autonomy and their views on teaching, the curriculum and the safety of the school are valued. As one pupil said, 'Teachers give us a right to speak and we know they take notice of what we say.'
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developed successfully across the curriculum and promoted in all aspects of the school's work. Pupils use their well-developed social skills to socialise and learn from each other. They have a good understanding of different faiths, cultures, moral and ethical issues because such aspects are explored in many subjects, in assemblies and during enrichment activities.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of British values appropriate to their age. For example, older pupils enjoyed their visit to the Mayor's council chambers to learn more about democracy. Tolerance, respect and rule of law are at the heart of the school's harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils feel completely safe in school and in the before- and after-school provision because they trust staff to care for them well. The culture of safeguarding extends to pupils taking responsibility for their own and others' safety. The pupil 'safety officers' make sure the school is hazard free in their weekly checks of the premises and teachers are told if their classes do not come up to pupils' high standards. All the Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils are trained in first aid and are vigilant in their care for younger pupils.
- Pupils have a firm understanding of how to keep themselves safe outside of school. The 'Be Healthy, Be Safe' week provides many additional opportunities to learn about keeping safe in the community, eating healthily and keeping fit.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including, online, physical and verbal bullying. Older pupils have discussed issues in depth and they are certain that there is not any bullying in school, including that which is prejudice-based focusing on race, gender, sexuality, appearance or disability.
- Pupils of all ages develop excellent leadership skills by taking on jobs within each class. The school council is active and well run by representatives from each class. Older pupils develop their skills further by taking on responsibilities and leading initiatives across the school. Sports leaders, play makers, team councillors and eco councillors all make an excellent contribution to the development of the school.
- Parents are positive about pupils' personal development. 'My child is thriving and absolutely loves school' is typical of many comments.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident and curious learners. They approach the challenging work teachers give them with concentration and perseverance. Their frequent opportunities to investigate, research and explore their own learning helps them to develop self-reliance and self-motivation.
- Pupils' behaviour in shared areas of the school is exemplary. At lunch and breaktimes, pupils play sociably and purposefully together. They are provided with interesting apparatus and equipment to keep them fit. The older pupils who act as 'play makers'

make an excellent contribution by designing and supervising playground games for younger pupils.

- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They are appreciative of the care teachers take to display their work and look after their classrooms and shared areas well. They are smart and wear their uniform with pride.
- Attendance is above average overall. In 2016 persistent absence was above average but this has reduced significantly due to the rigorous follow-up of absence and further support for families from the pastoral leader.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils start school with varying experiences and many have knowledge and skills that are below those that are typical for their age. Pupils make excellent progress from their various starting points as they move through the school. For several years, pupils have achieved standards at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 that are average or above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The rich curriculum supports pupils to develop wide-ranging knowledge and skills in different subjects. The quality of their work in art, design and technology and foundation subjects is excellent. They develop insightful reasoning, deduction and investigative skills in many subjects, especially in science and mathematics. Pupils apply their mathematical skills masterfully in other subjects.
- Pupils achieve above-average standards in the phonics screening in Year 1 and go on to acquire effective reading and comprehension skills. Pupils develop an excellent vocabulary and understanding of different types of writing. They write prolifically in different subjects and the content of their written work shows great depth of understanding. Leaders are aware that spelling and handwriting are not as well developed as other aspects of writing. These areas are prioritised for further improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils make just as good progress from their starting points as other pupils in school and better progress than other pupils nationally. The school has received an award from the Secretary of State for the excellent work done to promote the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers provide the most able pupils with enough challenge to deepen their learning. The most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged pupils, consequently make excellent progress in all subjects. Those with particular talents in sports, arts, music and design are able to develop and excel. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher standards increases in each year group as pupils build on their skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very effectively and consequently often make above-average progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Their well-developed communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills and learning across the curriculum give them a strong foundation for further learning. Their resilience, self-reliance and strong motivation provide them with the personal skills to deal with challenges confidently.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Outstanding leadership, highly effective teaching and an inspiring curriculum support children to make strong progress from their starting points. Children have joy in learning because the experiences they are given capture their imagination in both the Nursery and Reception classes.
- New leadership is having a positive impact. The indoor and outdoor areas have been reorganised thoughtfully to provide more activities to develop children's language, literacy and number skills. They provide highly stimulating activities that promote learning in all areas. Activities are planned with care to ensure that the amount of challenge increases as pupils' knowledge and skills develop.
- Children start in the early years with varying experiences and many have knowledge and skills that are below those that are typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. Their strong progress develops secure foundations for further learning. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has increased over the last two years and is now closer to average.
- Additional funding is used well to make sure that any differences in achievement between disadvantaged children and others in school diminish across the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Children become active and inquisitive learners because the activities that are given to choose from are stimulating and planned well to build on their emergent knowledge and skills. Children thoroughly enjoyed sharing out treasure, for example, using their knowledge of number and writing using newly learned adjectives.
- The development of children's phonics skills is highly effective. The motivating activities develop children's oral, aural and written understanding of letter-sound correspondence. Children's writing skills are developed well in a range of interesting contexts. The current focus is on helping children to develop a good handwriting style and learn common spellings from the early stages.
- Children's personal skills are developed extremely well. Children grow in confidence and develop highly positive attitudes to learning because the carefully planned activities help them experience wonder and succeed.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They know what is expected of them and show consideration towards each other. Children feel safe and are extremely well looked after. All welfare requirements are met.
- Transition is planned well to make sure children's skills continue to develop as they move into the Reception class from Nursery and onto Year 1. They are exceptionally well prepared for Year 1, having grown in confidence and developed a strong foundation in key skills.
- Leaders ensure that children's needs are met effectively through liaison with outside agencies where needed. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with effective support from the early stages.
- Parents are highly positive about the early years provision, stating for example, 'My child loves coming to Nursery, they have grown in confidence and learned so much.' Leaders communicate effectively with parents to make sure that children's needs are met.

School details

Unique reference number	105663
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10032386

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carmel Taylor
Headteacher	Gillian Kay
Telephone number	0161 770 8400
Website	www.proppshall.oldham.sch.uk
Email address	info@proppshall.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 December 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school. It is part of 'The Ivory' federation, which also includes Springhead Infant and Nursery School. The headteacher is the executive headteacher for both schools. The headteacher is also a local leader of education and supports other schools locally as a school improvement partner.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportions of pupils who receive support for special educational needs and who have a statement or an education, health and care plan are below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. A very small minority speak English as an additional language.

- Provision in the early years is a part-time Nursery class and a Reception class.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club, which is managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school and carried out a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work. They talked to pupils about their work in lessons and meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and gained their views about behaviour, safety and bullying.
- They spoke to staff and had meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and four groups of pupils. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation and procedures, including the school's self-evaluation, planning for improvement, records of monitoring, management of performance and training. Safeguarding policies and procedures were examined.
- Inspectors took account of seven responses from parents and eight responses from staff to the Ofsted online questionnaires. They spoke to many more parents and staff during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Lucas	Ofsted Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector

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