

Hursthead Junior School

Kirkstead Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 7PZ

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders work intelligently and skilfully to develop a good and improving school. Leaders consult widely and act decisively. Staff morale is high because leaders treat them with respect. Staff value the many opportunities they have to access training and improve their work. Staff who join the school do not want to leave.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are proud of their school. They demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They are a credit to themselves. They feel and are kept safe.
- Pupils' progress from their starting points is good. Even so, improving weaker aspects of pupils' mathematics, writing and geography skills requires greater attention from staff and leaders.
- Governors and trustees care deeply about pupils and staff. They act wisely and manage the school with careful consideration for what will happen in the future. Governors and trustees have a detailed knowledge of the work of leaders and staff. They know precisely what the school does well and how leaders are pursuing further improvement. Governors make sure that pupils benefit from an exciting range of subjects, activities and after-school clubs.
- Middle leaders are beginning to play a valuable role in assisting the development of the school.
- Staff assess pupils carefully. Teaching is good and helps pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils learn successfully, including in history and science. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is high.
- Pupils read with fluency, understanding and enjoyment. They read widely and often.
- Pupils are creative, artistic and musical. It is not uncommon in the school to hear singing, guitar playing or a hubbub of team debate and discussion in activities.
- Staff and leaders celebrate pupils' persistence and achievement. They teach very positive attitudes towards other people and communities. Pupils are respectful, thoughtful and emotionally settled.
- Pupils thrive at the school. Their academic achievement and excellent personal development prepares them very well for life in the diverse world of Cheadle Hulme, as well as modern Britain.
- Learning areas throughout the school are attractive and exciting. Staff value pupils' good work in high-quality displays. They present information on the walls which celebrates and supports pupils' learning well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leaders and teachers on pupils' progress by:
 - improving pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - helping pupils acquire more skills in editing their writing and in using spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - challenging pupils to make the same strong progress in geography as they do in other subjects
 - sharing the best teaching in the school even more with other staff.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, governors and trustees are ambitious for what the school can achieve. They set out a clear vision to which staff are fully committed. This is a school where leaders and staff celebrate pupils' effort and gains in their personal development as much as their achievement.
- Hursthead Juniors is a school where many local families wish to send their children. This is because leaders and staff provide pupils with a broad, rich and rewarding education. Teaching is good. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Their attainment across subjects is high.
- The headteacher knows the school in detail. She makes sure that other leaders share her understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders pursue clear and considered plans to improve teaching and learning.
- Pupils told inspectors they enjoy a wide range of subjects, especially mathematics, art and computing. They value the many opportunities to be musical and creative. For example, they sang Second World War songs to gathered grandparents and older local people as part of a recent celebration. On educational trips, pupils love to learn about Shakespeare or Dickens, as much as learning to abseil or to fence. An impressive number of pupils currently take up after-school clubs as varied as Bible explorers, rock band, eco-craft and girls' football.
- Every week leaders make sure that pupils have many chances to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding – for example, by learning about the Holocaust, or important British landmarks or by celebrating Black History Month. Pupils learn the importance not just of respect but of charity. Pupils regard fundraising efforts seriously and are successful in their efforts to contribute.
- Leaders use resources prudently to develop and improve the school. For example, school information confirms that the funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities makes a positive difference to pupils' learning and their progress. Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding to provide a wide range of additional activities. Pupils learn to keep physically fit, as well as to understand the importance of teamwork and effort. The vast majority of pupils participate in extra sports activities.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding carefully to make sure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well.
- The work of middle leaders is beginning to play a helpful role in improving teachers' work in different subjects. Middle leaders feel well supported by senior leaders.
- The school's positive culture extends to staff's experience of their employment. Leaders and governors give a thoughtful focus to making sure that staff have proper time with their own families, away from the demands of their jobs. Staff who completed the Ofsted survey are very supportive of the school. They say they love being part of the team. As one member of staff said, 'We have fun – it is a shame you didn't catch us on a fancy dress day.'

- Leaders make sure that staff access regular training and development which makes a positive difference to the success of their work. A typical staff comment was that leaders 'always encourage you to try something new in order to benefit the school and yourself'. Even so, the quality of some teaching of geography, writing and problem-solving in mathematics is less strong.

Governance of the school

- Governors and trustees use their deep knowledge of the school to good effect. They are influential. They check the accuracy of what they are told about teaching and pupils' achievement. They speak with pupils, parents and staff regularly. Governors listen to the views of pupils whom they invite to governing board meetings. Governors and trustees challenge leaders to raise the quality of the school even further. Their work helps to keep the school moving forward at pace.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is a secure, calm environment where staff take as many steps as they can to protect and care for pupils.
- Staff and leaders give frequent advice to families about safeguarding and wider school matters. For example, leaders raise issues about pupils' safety in walking home from school alone. Pupils and parents have many opportunities to share any concerns they may have with staff.
- Leaders give staff regular opportunities to discuss national and local safeguarding issues. Staff and governors undertake regular training about child protection, including pupils' safety when online.
- Leaders keep a close check on any low-level issues about pupils' welfare in case information indicates more serious concerns. Leaders make appropriate links with other agencies to protect pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Lessons typically feature staff using their good subject knowledge to provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn. Staff carefully model and explain important teaching points. Pupils learn from and with their peers. They make good progress.
- A strength in teaching across the school is teachers and teaching assistants working well together to support different pupils. Staff give much thought to adapting activities, particularly in English and mathematics, to pupils' needs. The best learning in the school absorbs pupils in activities that challenge them well.
- Pupils benefit from learning in classrooms, study areas and corridors, which are attractive and enticing. Staff and leaders celebrate pupils' good work, as well as their achievements and efforts, very positively in displays on the walls of the school. Displays of information throughout the building support pupils' learning well.

- Staff create a positive ethos in classrooms which supports learning. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They make sure that relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are highly positive.
- Pupils develop the skills and passion to read a wide range of literature and information books, because the teaching of reading is particularly skilful. Teachers use their detailed subject knowledge to good effect to inspire pupils during adult-led group sessions. Staff questioning supports pupils very well to study and review challenging texts.
- Staff plan and teach thoroughly respect, democracy, liberty and the rule of law. Staff and leaders make full use of a wide range of teaching times, including assemblies and collective worship, to teach pupils about the modern world. Leaders stimulate debate among pupils about important current issues. As a result, pupils' personal development flourishes.
- Positive links with the nearby infant school help teachers to gain an accurate understanding of pupils' skills and abilities as they start junior school. Staff use assessment carefully in most subjects and lessons. Teachers check pupils' learning frequently and in detail. Their careful reviews of progress mean that staff and leaders are clear about individual pupils' achievement.
- Parents strongly agree that their children are taught successfully at the school. Pupils say homework aids their learning. They enthuse about the topics they study. Activities at school inspire pupils to bring examples of their own learning from home to share with staff and classmates.
- Teaching inspires pupils to want to write in English and other subjects, such as history. The content of pupils' writing is thoughtful and creative. However, their learning is sometimes made more difficult by lingering weaknesses in their skills in editing their work and in their use of spelling, grammar and punctuation. This affects their progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is good and improving. Pupils are taught well to use graphs and charts, not only in their mathematics work but also in science. Leaders are fully aware that, in mathematics, pupils need to improve their skills in solving problems and explaining their thinking. Staff training is helping to develop teachers' subject and teaching knowledge in this area. Clear plans are in place to strengthen staff learning about mathematics throughout the next year.
- An exciting new initiative is under way to broaden pupils' learning in mathematics. Extra activities focus on helping pupils understand spending, saving and borrowing, earning money, helping others through charities, keeping financial records and understanding value for money. Although it is too early to see the benefit of this work, it is little wonder that pupils say how much they enjoy mathematics at the school.
- In science, lessons are made even more worthwhile by educational trips, for example to study the work of a recycling centre. Pupils also benefit from extra events, such as the celebration of British Science Week. As a result, pupils make good progress in science.
- Some teaching of geography is unchallenging. For example, pupils learn to use an atlas to locate different countries but focus too much on colouring in a given worksheet.

Some teachers do not adapt geography activities fully to the abilities of different pupils. This means that not all pupils progress well in geography.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils show high levels of independence, self-confidence and self-belief. They are emotionally settled and eager to learn. Pupils say they feel completely safe at school. They know what they need to do to succeed in life.
- Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of types of bullying. They know how to avoid language which would be homophobic.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online – for example, how to avoid being groomed, stalked or bullied. This is because staff and leaders place such a frequent and supportive emphasis on teaching pupils about online safety.
- Photographs and displays throughout the school celebrate very positively the teams of pupils undertaking a range of volunteer roles. Leaders seek and value pupils' contributions and views about the school. Even a version of leaders' plans for improving the school is discussed with pupils.
- Leaders and staff give pupils first-rate opportunities to take responsibility for many aspects of school life. Pupils respond with commitment, skill and enthusiasm. They enjoy, for example, being a volunteer librarian. They proudly represent the school at events, such as the annual book award ceremonies in Stockport.
- Pupils are very well prepared for their lives in the diverse world of modern Britain. For example, they know about democracy because they see it lived out in the work of pupils, staff and governors. They understand how democracy works at a national level because they learn about the work of Parliament.
- Pupils respect differences between people. This year, Tim Prendergast, a visually impaired, gold-medal Paralympian, visited the school, during which pupils learned about disability not being a barrier to success.
- Pupils know about the important contributions made by famous Black people to civil rights, for example Nelson Mandela in South Africa and Rosa Parks in the United States.
- Teachers and pupils have successful links with the adjacent infant school. This means that pupils arriving at the junior school have a buddy, with whom they are already familiar, to assist them as they settle into Year 3. This helps to make transition between schools smooth and positive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Pupils' conduct across a wide range of school activities is exemplary. Pupils represent themselves, their families and their school extremely well, for example when meeting with inspectors.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of rules for their behaviour at school. They respect the boundaries they are given. They know how to manage their own feelings and behaviour. They told inspectors that staff apply school arrangements to manage pupils' behaviour consistently and successfully.
- The school is a calm oasis of learning. Disruption in lessons is infrequent, low level and short-lived.
- Pupils' attendance at school is high. They want to come to school and they make every effort to attend and to arrive punctually to all lessons. Persistent absence is low. The headteacher knows the reasons for every absence. Leaders act promptly and supportively on the rare occasions where parents need additional help.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. Differences in the achievement of groups of pupils, such as girls and boys, increasingly diminish by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make positive steps forward in their learning, in line with their individual needs. This is because of good support by teachers and teaching assistants and careful reviews of the school's work by the SEN coordinators.
- In 2016 and 2017, pupils attained highly in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Together with their good progress and their excellent personal development, pupils flourish at Hursthead Junior School. They are skilled when working alone as well as in a team. They are resourceful, responsible and keen learners. They leave school ready for the demands of secondary school.
- Pupils develop much confidence and skill in reading. They are enthusiastic and fluent. They use their phonics knowledge expertly to read tricky words. Their progress is above average and improving. Leaders focus relentlessly on making sure that pupils are taught to read well. Staff and leaders celebrate and promote a joy for books, reading and stories.
- Published information suggests that pupils do not make the progress that might be expected in mathematics, given their prior attainment. School information and pupils' work show that current pupils' progress is good. Pupils are becoming competent mathematicians. Even so, some pupils are not solving problems or explaining their answers, methods or thinking mathematically as skilfully as they should.
- Published information which suggests that pupils' progress in writing is below average must be treated with caution. This is because the reliability of assessments of pupils' writing across schools nationally is still being developed. The overall picture in the school from a range of information, including current pupils' books, is that their progress in writing is good. However, some pupils are held back from achieving even more because of a lack of skills with which to edit their work. Some pupils do not use a high standard of punctuation and spelling in their writing.

- Pupils make good progress in other subjects, such as history and art, because teachers plan the curriculum carefully and teach well. In science, pupils develop thoughtful scientific diagrams and charts to show their findings. They write considered explanations and conclusions. Yet, in geography activities, pupils' progress is not as strong as in many other subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	140925
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10032813

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	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Dr Rick Benton
Headteacher	Ms Eleanor Losse
Telephone number	0161 439 6961
Website	www.hursthead-jun.stockport.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@hursthead-jun.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school, highly popular and oversubscribed.
- The school provides a large number of after-school clubs for pupils.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.
- The school opened as an academy in June 2014 and is part of The Kirkstead Education Trust. The trust manages one school. The trust takes the lead responsibility for

strategy and finance. Other responsibilities are delegated to the school's governing board. The chair of the trust is also the chair of the governing board.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Some observations were made jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in the playground, in classrooms and as they moved around the school. Inspectors spoke formally with a random sample of 24 pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed with leaders a sample of pupils' work in English, mathematics, science, history and geography.
- An inspector heard some pupils from Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 read. An inspector visited a girls' indoor football training session.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with school leaders to consider their reviews of the school's performance and their plans for improvement. Inspectors considered information about pupils' progress and attainment.
- Inspectors met with the school leaders for mathematics, English, geography, history, safeguarding and for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors spoke with staff around the school, including the school librarian. Inspectors considered 25 responses and 14 free-text responses from staff to an Ofsted questionnaire.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of Stockport local authority, which the academy trust has commissioned to give external challenge to school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing board, who also hold positions on the board of the academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents as they dropped their children at school on the second day of the inspection. Inspectors reviewed 80 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors reviewed a summary of 142 responses from parents to a recent school questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed the checks made by the school on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Inspectors reviewed school records about the care and protection of pupils.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Rigby

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

Kathy Nichol

Ofsted Inspector

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