

Hertsmere Jewish Primary School

Watling Street, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 7LQ

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
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 an inadequate school

- The school has failed to maintain a positive culture of safeguarding. Too many members of the school and wider parent community are not confident to raise concerns about pupils' wellbeing. Therefore, leaders do not know if all pupils are safe.
- At all levels, including governance, professional and personal boundaries have been allowed to blur. Appropriate confidentiality has not been maintained.
- Some important records, such as behaviour logs and records of concerns raised by members of the community, are ineffectively kept. They do not give leaders a meaningful oversight. Some records are missing.
- The governing body has not fulfilled its responsibilities well enough, specifically with regard to providing effective strategic leadership.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. This enables them to make appropriate improvements.
- Additional funding is used well. Leaders have a precise understanding of the needs of significant groups of pupils and meet these effectively.
- Pupils typically behave well. They conduct themselves appropriately in their free time and show positive attitudes towards others.
- Pupils achieve well at all key stages. Attainment is above average at the end of the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Early years provision is a strength of the school. Children make strong progress through the early years and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching is typically good. However, on occasions, teachers do not set work that is well suited to pupils' abilities or interests. Some pupils lose interest and do not make as much progress as they could.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency, leaders must ensure that pupils are safeguarded by:
 - creating an open culture in which all members of the community have confidence that their concerns will be listened to and managed professionally
 - ensuring that staff at all levels, and governors, always maintain professional boundaries and appropriate confidentiality
 - making sure that records, including about behaviour, are kept in line with best practice to ensure that they serve the purpose of keeping pupils safe.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of governors by developing their strategic role, establishing professional ways of working and ensuring that governors understand and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding pupils.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that teachers set work which is matched closely to pupils' interests and abilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Safeguarding is not effective. Over time, leaders and governors have allowed the professional boundaries between staff, governors and other members of the community to blur. Matters which should have remained confidential have been shared too openly. Too many members of the community lack trust in the school and are not confident to raise concerns with staff and leaders. This means that leaders cannot know whether they have the information required to make judgements about the best ways to support vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of education, in particular the curriculum they provide for pupils. Leaders know where teaching is best and where it could be improved. They take effective steps to address this. For example, leaders' recent focus on the teaching of mathematics has improved the way in which pupils are taught and increased the progress they make. Additionally, a range of subjects, including geography and history, are now taught more frequently.
- Leaders' support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength. Leaders have chosen to provide all pupils with SEND with a 'provision map'. This documents the amount and frequency of support they need. Leaders use the maps well to monitor the help these pupils get and to hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress. Leaders have high expectations of pupils with SEND and work closely with parents to help pupils meet these. This range of support is effective in helping pupils to overcome the individual barriers to learning they face.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well. Leaders meet regularly with disadvantaged pupils and discuss the work they are doing. Leaders provide opportunities for disadvantaged pupils to experience extra-curricular activities they might otherwise miss out on and check on the progress these pupils make. As a result, these pupils make progress in line with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Assemblies cover a range of topics, such as different religious festivals and the monarchy, while personal, social and health education (PSHE) examines matters such as rights, responsibilities and different lifestyles.
- Leaders make good use of sports premium funding. All pupils now take part in inter-school sporting events. A wide range of extra-curricular activities are provided and the proportion of pupils participating in these has increased by 10% over the last year.
- Leaders have worked closely with the local authority. Although this has supported leaders, including governors, to identify and start to act upon weaknesses in governance, it has not sufficiently improved the safeguarding culture of the school.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have been too involved in the operational management of the school, rather than its strategic leadership. The governing body has suffered from a number of failings, including with regard to communication and confidentiality. These

have undermined the confidence of some parents in the effectiveness and professionalism of the governing body, contributing to the lack of openness in the school's culture of safeguarding.

- Having recently been alerted to the significant weaknesses in their practice, governors have begun to make improvements. For example, new governors have been appointed and governors have undertaken more training so they better understand their strategic role. However, these changes are very recent and have not had sufficient impact on regaining the trust of the community in the leadership of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- For too long, professional boundaries have not been maintained and appropriate levels of confidentiality not secured. Some parents expressed significant reluctance to speak with members of staff in case what they said was shared too widely. This has eroded the open and trusting culture required for people to share the information leaders need to keep pupils safe.
- While the school's specific 'safeguarding files' are well-kept, some other important information is not recorded effectively. For example, some behaviour records are missing and those that do exist vary in quality. This undermines leaders' ability to keep pupils safe.
- There are some aspects of safeguarding which work well. Pupils say that they feel safe. The single central record of vetting checks on staff is well maintained. However, those aspects which do work well are not sufficient to outweigh the serious weaknesses in the safeguarding culture of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers give pupils a good variety of opportunities to apply their writing skills. They expect pupils to maintain the high standards they show in their English books when they write in other subjects, and pupils respond well to this. Leaders have already begun implementing plans to build on the school's strengths in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to write at length and so further embed their skills and develop their stamina.
- Most teachers make sure that mathematics lessons are logically sequenced. This means that pupils are able to embed and develop what they have already learned. Some maths teaching is particularly effective, with teachers setting work of a very high standard to ensure that pupils work above the expectations for their age.
- Teachers often make good use of questions to check and develop pupils' understanding. Pupils are supported to explain, expand and deepen their learning.
- Many teachers are adept at setting work which helps pupils to move on well from their starting points. The work interests the pupils and maintains their focus during lessons.
- The best learning is founded on teachers having high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They set work which challenges pupils and builds well on what pupils already know and can do. However, on occasions, teaching does not challenge pupils to

achieve as well as they could. This means that some pupils lose interest and some pupils make less progress than they should.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are kind to each other and have positive relationships with other members of the school community. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were positive about people with different outlooks on life to their own. For example, pupils say it is fine to be gay.
- Most pupils enjoy school. Pupils spoke with inspectors about their friendships, the staff who help them and the lessons and extra-curricular activities they enjoy. Of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 90% said that their child is happy at school.
- Parents were particularly positive about the support that leaders provide for pupils with SEND. They described how well adults help pupils with SEND, both academically and socially. Parents were effusive about how valuable they find this.
- Pupils are taught to keep safe through, for example, e-safety week. They also say that they feel safe. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that there is someone in school they would talk to if they were worried about something.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is uncommon and is dealt with well if it happens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils follow routines around the school well. They are polite and self-assured with visitors.
- Attendance is good. It is consistently above the national average. The reasons for pupils' absence are understood and addressed well by leaders.
- Rates of exclusion have been below the national average for a number of years.
- Pupils usually behave well. They listen to instructions, respond to teachers' requests and settle sensibly to the work they are set. They respond well to teachers' questions and speak with confidence to and in front of their peers.
- On the occasions when teachers do not match work closely to pupils' current level of understanding or interest, some pupils become distracted. However, effective classroom management ensures that there is little disruption to learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment at both key stage 1 and key stage 2 is consistently above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next step in their education by the time they complete key stage 2.

- The outcomes of pupils in the Year 1 phonics screening check are consistently strong. For the last three years, more pupils than the national average achieved the expected standard.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics improved between 2017 and 2018 at key stage 2. This was because leaders recognised a need to improve mathematics teaching and did so effectively.
- Pupils' progress in writing at key stage 2 improved and was a strength in 2018. Leaders are taking effective steps to build further on this success.
- Leaders recognise that pupils' progress in reading in 2018 was not as strong as their progress in writing and mathematics. They have implemented changes to the way they develop pupils' reading and this is beginning to bear fruit. Inspectors saw pupils being given effective extra support to improve their reading and using high-level vocabulary when speaking. They heard pupils read well and learned from them that they read widely and often.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' understanding of a range of topics develops well. Pupils spoke with confidence about the different types of religion they have studied, for example. They showed a good awareness of current political issues. Pupils' attainment in science has been above average for a number of years.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress in overcoming the barriers to learning their needs might create. This is because of the strong support that leaders provide.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision is skilfully led by knowledgeable adults who recognise the typically high starting points of the children who come to the school and adapt what they do accordingly. Leaders ensure that the curriculum consistently covers what children need to know and that adults provide children with a good level of challenge so that they progress well.
- Nursery provision is particularly effective. This is because, from the outset, young children are encouraged to develop a love of learning that they successfully apply to all activities.
- Children quickly acquire basic skills, such as the characteristics of being a good learner, writing and number formation. They participate in activities of varying levels of difficulty which are well matched to what they already know and can do. Adults recognise when children are ready to move on and help them to do so. Consequently, children's development over time is strong, regardless of their starting points.
- Adults plan a range of activities which interest the children and help them to develop across a broad range of areas of learning. Children are consistently involved in meaningful tasks, regardless of whether they are guided by an adult or working independently.
- Children behave well. They maintain concentration on what they are doing and respond well to adults' questions. They develop positive relationships with others and act sociably.

School details

Unique reference number	131955
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10085406

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Iain Blakeley
Headteacher	Mrs Rita Alak-Levi
Telephone number	01923 855857
Website	www.hjps.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@hjps.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2009

Information about this school

- Hertsmere Jewish Primary School is a larger than average primary school serving the area of Radlett.
- The school has a Jewish religious character. Its most recent Section 48 Pikuach inspection was conducted on 3–4 June 2015 and graded the overall effectiveness of the school as outstanding.
- The school has recently undergone changes in leadership, including the appointment of a different chair of governors and the addition of some new members of the governing body. The headteacher has very recently been appointed on a substantive basis following a period as acting headteacher.
- The school has a lower than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils and a lower than average proportion of pupils with SEND.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. They met with 10 governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors, sometimes accompanied by leaders, visited parts of 30 lessons in key stages 1 and 2 and spent time in all early years classes. They reviewed the work of pupils in their books.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school and improvement plans. They looked at safeguarding records, behaviour records and records of complaints. They considered the school's information on pupils' progress and attendance, as well as reviewing governing body minutes of meetings.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of both days of the inspection and with others over the telephone, as well as considering the 237 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They sought further views from parents through the free-text option on the second day of the inspection and received 105 responses. Emails which were sent to Ofsted during the inspection were considered, as was a qualifying complaint received prior to the inspection. Inspectors reviewed copies of the school's own staff and parent surveys and spoke with pupils during their free time and in arranged meetings.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Debbie Rogan	Ofsted Inspector
Sean Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Rudman	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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