

# The Hall School

The Grange, Rickmansworth Road, Northwood HA6 2RB

## Inspection dates

26–28 March 2019

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	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Leaders have maintained the outstanding quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Pupils make very strong progress in their learning, and their attainment is high.
- As a result of highly personalised teaching, pupils make rapid progress in English and mathematics. Staff address pupils' misconceptions quickly and thoroughly. They provide pupils with sufficiently challenging activities in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years make excellent progress from the time they start. The school's key-worker system is highly effective. All staff know children very well, and work with parents and carers to ensure that children's care and learning needs are met. Provision for two-year-old children is very effective.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. From a young age, they develop a secure understanding of good manners, friendship and kindness. The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is very strong.
- The headteacher, together with other staff, ensures that the curriculum is well planned. Pupils acquire knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. Nevertheless, in key stage 1, opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge in humanities subjects are not routinely of the highest quality.
- Leaders have worked effectively to address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. They have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities.
- In all year groups, pupils demonstrate high levels of motivation and enjoyment of learning. The high expectations of staff and the positive relationships that exist throughout the school ensure that pupils are happy, safe and settled.
- Parents are extremely positive about their children's learning. They say that their children are well looked after and exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## **Full report**

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

- Further strengthen the planning and teaching of humanities in key stage 1 so that opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding are routinely strong.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement that were identified at the previous inspections. They have ensured that the independent school standards are met. Leaders work very well together to identify ongoing priorities for improvement.
- Staff share the headteacher's vision for the school. They feel valued as part of a dedicated team. The headteacher and other staff are highly ambitious for the school. Pupils and their families are at the centre of their work, and the aim to support each pupil to achieve success at the right pace for them is shared and understood by all staff. As a result, pupils make exceptionally strong progress during their time at the school.
- Leaders are clear about the purpose of the school's curriculum. There is a significant emphasis on developing pupils' skills in English, mathematics and science. The curriculum also provides opportunities for pupils to learn a wide range of other subjects, including humanities, physical education, computing, music and the arts. The planning in humanities subjects could be more detailed in breadth and depth.
- Pupils enjoy a range of activities that enrich their learning. For example, during the inspection, pupils visited the farm. Pupils learn to swim, and have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. They enjoy learning to speak French. The school makes good use of its limited space. Outdoor play opportunities are well planned, and they make good use of the school grounds for physical education.
- Leaders ensure that all staff are very well supported. They identify professional development opportunities, including training, to continually improve the skills of staff. The whole-school focus on raising the profile of mathematics this year has been effective. Staff are confident in their delivery of mathematics. They use training from external consultants well to strengthen the mathematics curriculum, particularly in the early years.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given the same importance as developing their academic skills. Leaders use assemblies and personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education lessons to help pupils to gain a strong understanding of these values. Staff use resources very well that promote respect for others. For example, storybooks and toys in the early years support children's understanding of different families, disability and diversity. Work on display celebrates pupils' understanding of all faiths. Their 'prayer flags' are particularly effective and demonstrate a strong sense of togetherness and kindness.
- Parents are extremely pleased with the school. They praise the staff and leaders because they feel the school meets their children's academic and personal development exceptionally well. They are delighted with the small class sizes and the personalised approach to ensure that each pupil's individual needs are understood. Parents commend the friendly, approachable and caring staff, and the way in which their children are well prepared for entry examinations and the next stage in their education.

### Governance

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has worked with external consultants to ensure that the independent school standards are met. She meets regularly with the

deputy headteacher to check the school's compliance with the latest safeguarding legislation.

- The proprietor has very high expectations of the staff and pupils. She reviews the school's work regularly, and has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She ensures that all the required policies are in place and suitable.
- The school now has a suitably detailed accessibility plan in place. The proprietor ensures that the health and safety policy is implemented consistently.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have undertaken a full review of all safeguarding procedures. Pupils continue to be safe, settled and happy at the school. Leaders acknowledged that some of their procedures at the time of the previous inspection lacked rigour, particularly in relation to record-keeping. They have addressed these inconsistencies.
- Staff are well trained and understand the latest safeguarding legislation. All those spoken to during the inspection have an accurate and up-to-date understanding of how to report concerns about a child's welfare. They understand how to manage allegations, including those against the proprietor or school leaders.
- The designated safeguarding leaders understand their roles. They make sure that record-keeping is robust and procedures for staff recruitment are appropriate. The single central record of staff suitability checks is compliant. The school's safeguarding policy is appropriate. It meets current requirements and is published on the school's website.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and their parents agree. Staff plan activities and assemblies to help pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of online safety. They know not to give their personal details to anyone online, and that they should speak to an adult immediately, if they are worried.
- Pupils learn about fire safety. Their attractive paintings and posters that are displayed at the top of the school's stairs give advice about what to do in the event of a fire.
- The strong and positive relationships that exist throughout the school enable pupils to feel secure and happy. Pupils said that they could speak to any member of staff if they were worried about something.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- Leaders have maintained the outstanding quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. This high-quality teaching is characterised by teachers' excellent understanding of what each pupil knows and can do. They meet pupils' individual learning needs very effectively.
- In lessons, pupils work through a range of well-planned activities that are pitched at the right level. Excellent intervention by staff ensures that any misconceptions are addressed swiftly and effectively. Staff provide pupils with extension activities and challenges, to help them excel.

- As a result of excellent support, pupils develop secure knowledge over time, and apply this well to a range of situations. For example, in mathematics, pupils apply their knowledge of place value to a range of word problems related to money. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work practically. They use their mathematics skills well across the curriculum, for example in science investigations.
- The teaching of writing is very strong. Teachers ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of how to use grammar and punctuation accurately in their written work. They have excellent opportunities to recap, revise and remember important rules so that their creative writing continually improves. Pupils write for a range of purposes in different subjects, including in religious education and science.
- Pupils are keen readers. They enjoy talking about their books, the characters in their stories, and the different authors they know and respect. Staff promote a joy of reading throughout the school. The teaching of phonics is systematic and highly effective in all year groups. Staff ensure that pupils' progress in reading is checked meticulously. As a result, pupils make substantial gains in their learning.
- Pupils are taught key concepts across subjects, including in history and geography. However, in these subjects, staff do not routinely provide them with activities that deepen their knowledge and understanding. Sometimes, activities in these subjects are not planned as effectively as they could be, and this prevents pupils from making even better progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders place great importance on supporting pupils' personal development. They make sure that pupils' emotional well-being is very well supported, particularly as some pupils find the preparation for entry examinations challenging. Staff establish a good balance between high academic expectations and very good pastoral support.
- Pupils are valued as individuals. In each classroom, family photographs celebrate the different faiths, cultures and family contexts that exist within the school. This, together with a well-planned curriculum, ensures that pupils develop an excellent understanding of equality and inclusion.
- Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures through their religious education lessons and special celebrations. Pupils enjoyed making moving dragons to celebrate Chinese New Year, and creating paintings to celebrate the festival of Holi. Older pupils remember key points from religious stories and make links between these and their own lives.
- Pupils know that bullying is wrong and say that it does not happen in their school. The curriculum helps them to understand the different forms bullying takes. Pupils say that they look after each other and that staff deal with any problems quickly.
- Staff promote healthy lifestyles very well. Pupils have regular sessions outside, and are taught the importance of healthy eating and exercise. During the inspection, pupils learned about how germs can be spread. They enjoyed the interactive activity, where glitter was stuck to their hands to resemble germs. Pupils learned, through investigating, that germs are removed best with hot water and soap. Pupils demonstrated an excellent

understanding of keeping themselves clean and hygienic. This included the importance of washing their clothes, brushing their teeth and trimming their fingernails.

- Pupils are fully involved in making some of the decisions about their school. For example, pupils choose which educational visits might complement different aspects of the curriculum. They helped leaders to design the outdoor garden and playground.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are highly motivated and very keen to learn. They respond to the high expectations of staff, and rise to the challenges they are given. Pupils love coming to school, and make good friends during their time here. The school's family ethos contributes to this kind and caring environment, where pupils flourish.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements. They like the special merits and headteacher awards to celebrate their hard work and good deeds. Pupils know that their behaviour and attitudes are just as important as their academic achievements. Consequently, pupils are highly respectful to adults and to their peers. They display good manners and a maturity beyond their age.
- In all lessons, and as they move around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school's routines are embedded. Pupils design the rules for each class, and understand the consequences of their actions on others. They care for the environment and are quick to offer adults help. Older pupils look after the younger ones very well. They enjoy the opportunities to help adults to look after the two-year-old children. For example, they read them stories and play carefully with them and their toys.
- Pupils say that the school is always calm and orderly. Parents agree that staff ensure that pupils are well behaved. Pupils are a credit to their school and their families, and exemplify the school's values in their everyday actions.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

## **Outstanding**

- The outstanding outcomes seen at the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils make excellent progress across a range of subjects. Their progress in reading, writing and mathematics is particularly strong.
- Pupils are very well supported to attain highly. Pupils' attainment is above average, particularly in English and mathematics. This is because pupils of all abilities are taught exceptionally well. Staff address any gaps in pupils' learning very effectively. This ensures that no time is wasted, and pupils make very strong progress in learning and development.
- The most able pupils make the same strong progress as others. This is because learning is tailored to meet their needs and staff provide opportunities for extension and challenge. This is particularly effective in mathematics. All pupils demonstrate very strong mental arithmetic skills. They quickly recall number facts, including multiplication tables, to solve more complex problems.
- Pupils read fluently. They develop strong comprehension skills, and demonstrate a secure understanding of the texts they read. They transfer their reading skills well to other

subjects and contexts. Pupils articulate their knowledge of different authors well, and learn why authors use different techniques in their stories.

- Work in pupils' books and the school's assessment records demonstrate pupils' excellent outcomes. Although pupils make strong progress in history and geography, sometimes they are capable of even more. Some of the planned activities do not deepen pupils' knowledge as well as they could.
- The vast majority of pupils are successful in obtaining places in their chosen schools. The headteacher works closely with staff and parents to ensure that pupils are exceptionally well supported for these examinations.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- As a result of highly effective teaching and extremely strong personal care, children make exceptional progress in the early years. From a range of starting points, children acquire the skills needed for the next stage of their learning.
- The toddler room, pre-school classes and the Nursery class are bright and inviting spaces for children to learn and play. In each room, staff know children extremely well, and work together effectively to meet children's needs.
- Staff create personalised learning programmes for each child. These are used very effectively to identify children's next steps in learning. Assessment procedures throughout the early years are robust and well understood by all staff. The early years leader monitors these carefully, and liaises with staff to make sure that teaching enables children to achieve their goals.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective. Two-year-olds are well supported in a range of ways to learn letter sounds. They accurately identify letters and sounds, and know the actions and songs that match each sound. Children make remarkable progress from their starting points. Older children do equally well. They are taught in ability groups, and staff provide excellent levels of support and challenge. At the start of phonics sessions, children typically cheer with excitement and are keen to show how much they have remembered.
- Children demonstrate a love of books. Reading areas are inviting, and the choice of texts is broad. Staff read to children regularly. Younger children snuggle closely to listen to the stories and talk about the pictures. Older children love the opportunity to repeat their favourite stories, identify rhyming words and discuss the characters.
- Staff develop children's vocabulary well. They know how to promote children's language and communication skills, and do this skilfully during adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff describe children's actions verbally, and encourage them to repeat key words as they play. For example, children use words such as 'pop', 'spin' and 'turn' accurately, as they watch different toys moving.
- Staff promote children's sensory development very well. Children delight as they blow and reach for the bubbles, while others enjoy the texture and smell of soil, as they plant sunflower seeds. Children had great fun creating their own 'sensory bottles' for Mother's Day gifts. They explored a range of flower petals, glitter and sequins before deciding which of these they would place into their plastic container with water. With a little help

from the adults, even the youngest children were able to shake and turn their bottles, and watch the flowers and glitter move around.

- Excellent opportunities exist in all classes for children to learn about the world around them. During the inspection, and as part of their theme of 'spring', children observed and drew flowers, planted seeds and talked about how seeds grow. Impressively, children in the Nursery class remembered the word 'germination', and could sort the picture cards in the right order to show this process.
- Children's writing and mathematics skills develop very well. They respond to the many opportunities to use these skills in real-life situations and in their everyday play. Staff know how children learn to write, and support the development of children's fine motor skills very well.
- Children's behaviour in every class is exemplary. They show very high levels of motivation in all that they do. Staff foster children's self-esteem, and this enables children to flourish and feel good about themselves and their achievements. Children are safe, settled and happy. The welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage are met.
- Leadership of the early years is very strong. Partnerships with parents are positive, and parents are highly satisfied with how staff support their children to achieve their best. One parent's comments were typical of many when she said, 'My daughter has learned so much. The teachers are fantastic, and the level of learning is very high. She loves coming to school.'

## School details

Unique reference number	102455
DfE registration number	312/6054
Inspection number	10092453

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Number of part-time pupils	31
Proprietor	Mrs S Goodwin
Headteacher	Mrs S Goodwin
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,415 to £10,665
Telephone number	01923 822 807
Website	<a href="http://www.thehallschool.com">www.thehallschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@thehallschool.com">info@thehallschool.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	27 February–1 March 2018

## Information about this school

- The Hall School is an independent school catering for pupils between the ages of two and seven. The provision for children below the age of two is called 'The Hall School baby unit', and is inspected separately by Ofsted.
- The school's last full standard inspection took place in March 2018. At that time, outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment were judged as outstanding. However, the school was judged to require improvement overall because some of the independent school standards were not met. A progress monitoring inspection took place in September 2018. At this time, some of the independent school standards were not met.
- At the time of this inspection, the school was organised into five classes: the baby and

toddler room, two pre-school rooms, a Nursery class and a class for key stage 1 pupils.

- The school 'strives to create a nurturing, challenging, secure and happy environment in which pupils are able to explore ideas, develop independence of thought and enhance self-esteem'.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils on roll.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed pupils' learning in all lessons, and in a range of subjects and activities, at different times of the day. The early years leader and headteacher accompanied him on some of these visits.
- The inspector looked at pupils' workbooks across a range of subjects, and reviewed the learning records of children in the early years. He met a group of key stage 1 pupils to discuss their learning and views of the school.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor and early years leader. The inspector met formally with three groups of staff, and spoke informally with staff throughout the inspection. The inspector reviewed a range of documents and conducted a tour of the premises to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector reviewed documentation related to school improvement, safeguarding and pupils' achievement. He checked the single central record of staff checks, and the school's admissions records.
- The inspector considered the 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 19 free-text comments. He spoke with parents at the start of the school day. The inspector considered the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire and met with three groups of staff to discuss their views of the school.

## Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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