

# Inspection of a good school: Arnett Hills Junior Mixed and Infant School

Berry Lane, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 4BT

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Inspection dates:

8–9 January 2020

## Outcome

Arnett Hills Junior Mixed and Infant School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

At this school, every individual is treated as a valued member of the community. Many staff, pupils, parents and carers told me that the school is like a loving family. Teachers teach pupils to care for each other. They do so very well. Pupils behave well in lessons and during playtime. When disagreements arise, pupils know how to resolve issues positively themselves. Pupils told me that bullying at the school is very rare. When it does happen, staff deal with it effectively so that it does not continue.

Teachers teach pupils from an early age to love learning. Pupils show great curiosity and enthusiasm for their learning. Pupils support each other well and happily share their learning. Using resources such as the 'reading river', pupils recommend books for other pupils to read. Leaders have created an environment where pupils are regularly congratulated for their achievements. Pupils value each other's achievements. Nearly all pupils said that they enjoy school.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The teaching of reading is effective. Most pupils leave Year 6 with strong reading skills. Pupils enjoy reading and understand its importance in their education. Teachers carefully match books to pupils' interests and reading abilities and to topics in the curriculum. At times, however, pupils do not always have the background knowledge they need to read certain texts. This means that pupils are sometimes not able to improve their reading because they do not understand the content of the text.

Staff ensure that pupils learn how to read from an early age. Leaders have created a well-ordered curriculum for early reading. Teachers teach phonics well in the early years and key stage 1 so that most pupils can use phonics accurately. Teachers' support for pupils that struggle with reading is usually effective. In key stage 2, however, the support for pupils who find reading difficult does not always help. Sometimes, teachers do not give these pupils books or learning activities that match their needs. As a result, some of these pupils do not read as well as they could.

Leaders are improving the teaching of mathematics. Pupils like the changes in mathematics and that lessons are now harder. Pupils said that teachers support them better with tricky mathematical concepts. Pupils learn how to reason and solve mathematical problems well. Pupils also discuss their mathematical thinking with sophistication. Most pupils have a strong understanding of calculations, including times tables. Leaders have not yet developed the curriculum well enough to support pupils who do not understand basic mathematics and calculations in key stage 1. As a result, some of these pupils fall behind in the curriculum.

Pupils have a strong understanding of historical and geographical facts. For example, pupils recall details of historical events exceptionally well. Pupils do not, however, have the same grasp on the skills of these subjects. This is because leaders have not made clear for teachers exactly when certain skills should be taught and reviewed. When teachers move to new areas of the curriculum, some skills are not reviewed. As a result, pupils forget some of what they learn.

Leaders work closely with families to develop appropriate plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers use these plans effectively and ensure that these pupils overcome the challenges they face.

Leaders are committed to pupils' personal development. Pupils learn how to maintain positive mental health and what to do if challenges arise. Pupils also have many opportunities to take responsibility for others and their school. For example, members of the eco club have worked with school leaders to reduce the amount of plastic used at the school. Leaders have also ensured that there is a wide range of clubs for different interests and talents. Most pupils at the school attend a club.

Children make a strong start to their education in the early years. The early years leader has created a well-planned curriculum. The early years provision prepares children well for the challenges of Year 1. Staff provide fun and enriching learning opportunities. Children have very positive attitudes to learning. They speak about their learning articulately. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to develop confidence. For example, children regularly act out roles from stories they read in front of the class. Children quickly learn leaders' high expectations of behaviour.

Governors share leaders' aim to make the school even better. Governors know what is working well and what needs to improve. They ensure that the school works in the best interests of pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the pupils very well. Staff know the signs that a pupil is potentially at risk of harm. Staff also know what to do when concerns arise.

Leaders work well with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders keep meticulous records of this work and ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need.

Leaders ensure that all required checks are carried out so that adults working with pupils are suitable. The local authority and governors make sure that these checks are carried out as required.

Teachers teach pupils how to stay safe, whether online or in their daily lives.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- At times, pupils do not have the background knowledge needed to understand what they are reading. This is because the curriculum and the texts chosen by teachers do not always match well enough. Teachers need to ensure that, when teaching reading, pupils have the background knowledge they need to understand the topic. This will enable pupils to focus on developing their skills of reading.
- Some pupils in key stage 2 do not have a firm grasp of phonics so do not read fluently. Teachers must provide texts for these pupils that match what they know about phonics. Teachers must also provide activities that enable these pupils to learn the phonics they have not yet mastered, while practising what they know.
- Some pupils in key stage 1 struggle with some of the basic skills in the curriculum. As a result, some pupils are falling behind. Teachers' support, though effective in addressing the problem with basic skills, does not enable pupils to keep up with the rest of the curriculum. Leaders must design the curriculum so that these pupils have opportunities to improve, while keeping up with the rest of the curriculum.
- Leaders have not made clear in all subjects when teachers should teach the skills that all pupils must know. This means that teachers do not always revisit these skills often enough and pupils forget them. Leaders must make clear when teachers should teach and revisit these skills, even when the main topic has moved to something different.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 24–25 February 2016.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 117289   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Hertfordshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10110287   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Maintained   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 212  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Local authority  |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Ashok Patil  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Tracey Ali   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.arnetthills.herts.sch.uk">www.arnetthills.herts.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 24–25 February 2016  |

## Information about this school

- In 2019, the school was awarded the Primary Science Quality Mark.
- There have been no other significant changes to the school since the previous inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- I had discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders. I also had discussions with members of the governing body.
- I spoke with parents and I analysed 113 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 113 written responses from parents and 94 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- I spoke with teachers, including the newly qualified teacher, support staff and pupils through the course of the inspection.
- I took account of a wide range of information, including the school's website, development plans, information about pupils' needs and leaders' records about pupils' behaviour. I reviewed documentation regarding safeguarding.

- I visited lessons across the school and carried out a scrutiny of pupils' books. I started the inspection with a focus on reading, mathematics, history and geography. To answer questions raised on the first day of the inspection, I visited lessons in other subjects on the second day of the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Al Mistrano, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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