

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

Cambridge Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 0JP

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Inspection dates:

4–5 March 2020

## Outcome

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

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Highover Junior Mixed and Infant School. They say that it is a school where they can show what they are good at, as it is ok to be good at things. One parent's comment was typical of the views of many: 'The whole ethos and general feeling of Highover School is one of encouragement. Guiding the children to be the best they can be in all aspects of life and to care for and respect everyone and everything. I do not have anything negative to say.'

Pupils' excellent behaviour makes the school a happy and friendly place. They are kind and respectful and look after one another. They say that they feel safe and that bullying is not a problem. Pupils enjoy playing together. They have extra responsibilities, such as those of lunchtime buddy readers, school council membership and the library tidy crew.

Pupils appreciate all the clubs teachers run. If a pupil, for example, has an interest in music, they are enabled to flourish through wider experiences. Staff offer all pupils the same opportunities to develop their interests in areas such as music, art, sports and craft. Pupils told me that, 'The teachers could have been doing something else, but instead they are helping the children.'

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

Leaders expect all their pupils to meet high standards and have a well-rounded education. They have achieved this. Leaders are not complacent though. They have built a strong and happy team whose members look for new and creative ways to make the school even better.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Right from the start of early years, children learn phonics and that helps them to read. Staff who teach phonics are well trained. Pupils who need extra help get the support they need to catch up. At lunchtimes,

reading leaders from Years 1 and 5 meet in the library to improve pupils' reading confidence. Pupils quickly develop into fluent readers.

As they progress through the school, pupils read increasingly complex texts, bringing reading alive. For example, in one class, pupils used a music video, 'This is me', from the film 'The Greatest Showman' to interpret complex phrases.

Curriculum leaders have developed subject plans that show what pupils will learn and in what order. Pupils achieve well where teachers' subject knowledge is strong. However, this is not the case in all of pupils' learning. In some foundation subjects, teachers do not build on pupils' prior knowledge successfully. This is because teachers' subject knowledge is not secure in these areas of the curriculum.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the curriculum well. Staff support pupils with SEND to develop independence when tackling tasks. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that pupils with SEND receive the support they need. The SENCo helps teachers to understand the barriers to pupils' learning. Teachers match activities to pupils' needs well.

Many activities and opportunities support pupils' wider development. Through the curriculum, they learn about keeping healthy, for example by inviting parents and carers to 'come dine with me' events about eating healthily. The school council introduces pupils to ideas of democracy and working together to represent others in the school community.

Governors provide good support and challenge to the school. They ensure that they have the information they need to hold school leaders to account. They understand their duties about keeping pupils safe.

Leaders are proud of their school and its place in the local community. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported and staff morale is very high. Staff agree that the leaders and governing body consider their workload and well-being and manage change carefully. All parents and carers are positive about the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on adults before they begin to work or volunteer at the school. All staff receive training and regular updates, so they know how to identify and report any concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders work well with external agencies to make sure that pupils get the help and support they need.

Pupils are safe and know how to stay safe when online and in other environments. Classroom 'worry boxes' give pupils further opportunities to talk through any concerns they have. They are confident that adults will help them.

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

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

- Some foundation subjects are not as well developed as others. Leaders have ensured that for every subject, the content is well chosen and in a logical sequence. They have provided teachers with training and support with planning. However, not all teachers have sufficient depth of knowledge and confidence in teaching these subjects. Leaders must ensure that teachers understand how to use all the planned curriculum so that effective use is made of pupils' prior knowledge and pupils are challenged to think deeply about their learning.

## 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 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, 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 2 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117115
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110264
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	443
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mrs Lee Clarke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lisa Hayes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.highover.herts.sch.uk">www.highover.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Highover Junior Mixed Infant School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The early years provides part-time Nursery education and full-time education for children in the Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the two deputies and other leaders, including the inclusion leader and curriculum leaders. I also met with the chair of the governing body and nine other governors.
- A conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Deep dives were carried out in reading, music and history. For each of these areas, I spoke to senior leaders, curriculum leaders and teachers and pupils. I visited lessons and looked at pupils' work, including video evidence.

- To inspect safeguarding arrangements, I spoke to the designated safeguarding leaders, scrutinised safeguarding documentation, checked the single central record, looked at the responses to the parent, pupil and staff surveys and spoke to pupils.
- I observed pupils' behaviour while they were in lessons, moving around the school and in the playground, and asked pupils for their views on behaviour and bullying.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's own evaluation and development plan and external reports.
- I took into account 152 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 151 written comments. I also considered responses from 36 staff who completed Ofsted's survey. There were 174 responses to the pupil questionnaire. To gain their views of the school, I spoke with pupils during the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Cassandra Williams, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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