

Inspection of a good school: Hamstead Junior School

Hamstead Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, West Midlands B43 5BE

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 September 2021

Outcome

Hamstead Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The 'Hamstead values' thread throughout the school's ethos and learning. Pupils understand the values, with comments including 'I think the most important value is tolerance', 'we are all equal and we should all be treated equally' and 'whether we have different languages or come from a different country, we are all equal'.

Pupils are well cared for and staff keep a close eye on them to make sure they are kept as safe as possible. Pupils get on well with each other. They are respectful, kind and behave well. Pupils in Year 6 understand the responsibility they carry as the oldest pupils and act as positive role models for younger ones.

Leaders, staff and governors have high aspirations for all pupils. They provide opportunities to help pupils learn about the world in which they live and gain new experiences. Responsibilities are promoted across school. Pupils have opportunities to be a class ambassador, eco-warrior, sports crew or well-being champion, which helps them to contribute to the wider life of the school.

Opportunities and challenges abound. Governor 'challenges' were popular during the pandemic. Pupils and their families took up the full range of challenges, bringing the school's 'motivate, share, explore and adapt' values to life.

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

The headteacher and other leaders want the school to be successful. They lead with integrity. They seek and provide the right support at the right time. The changes they have made since January this year are improving the school well. Governors make sure that they are up to date with what is happening in school and whether it is working. They use time wisely in school, getting to know the school community and curriculum. They use this information to challenge leaders. Staff are proud to work at Hamstead Junior School.

Leaders promote reading successfully. Staff follow the agreed approach to the teaching of reading. They help pupils who do not achieve the required standard in key stage 1 to catch up. Books are appropriately challenging. Pupils speak fondly of the 'Governor Challenge' books and say it inspires them to read a range of books. Consequently, pupils read well.

Reading is a vital part of the curriculum across all subjects. 'Reading Hooks' are used successfully at the start of topics. They allow pupils to think deeply about a quote or a statement. Pupils can discuss and debate their own viewpoints.

Reading links closely to writing. Leaders use a 'reading into writing journey' to support a clear sequence of learning. This is helping pupils to use what they know in their writing across subjects. Pupils told me that 'teachers challenge us to use and express our emotions' and 'teachers expect us to use all that we know in our writing'. However, in some year groups, teachers do not check that pupils present their work neatly and accurately. Some errors in pupils' spellings of subject-specific words are also not addressed.

Leaders have set out clear guidance on what should be taught in most subjects over time. Teachers use this to plan well-sequenced lessons. As yet, religious education (RE), design and technology (DT) and computing are less developed than other curriculum subjects. Learning guides, quizzes and experience days offer opportunities for pupils to deepen and extend what they know.

School leaders make sure that all pupils study a broad range of subjects. They adapt the curriculum well so that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can join in and learn alongside their peers. Wider projects, such as linking university tutors with pupils, have successfully raised their aspirations. Teachers plan extra activities and experiences to bring subjects to life.

Leaders help pupils to become active and responsible citizens. Pupils learn about the challenges and benefits of living in different places. They also learn how to help address important issues. For example, pupils spoke with knowledge and passion about their learning in geography on the sustainability of rainforests.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff receive regular training. They understand the importance of the smallest detail and are vigilant to any signs of harm. They report any concerns quickly. Leaders keep detailed records of any concerns and incidents, along with any follow up. Record-keeping is detailed and informative.

Leaders follow correct procedures when appointing new staff. All relevant checks are completed.

The school ensures that pupils are kept safe online. The school website provides a range of useful information to help parents at home.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' successful development of the curriculum is not yet fully embedded in all subjects. As a result, pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in computing, RE and DT do not develop as well over time as in the other curriculum subjects. Leaders should maintain and build on recent curriculum improvements and ensure that the RE, DT and computing curricula are fully embedded. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied.
- Some teachers do not insist on leaders' high expectations of how pupils present their work or spell subject-specific words. At times, this leads to inaccuracies and errors in pupils' work because they are not precise with their recording. Teacher should check and insist that pupils present their work to the high standards. Teachers should also address any inaccuracies in pupils' spelling so that mistakes are not repeated, and pupils can continue to build on 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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 8 and 9 June 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	103895
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10199830
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lynn Howard
Headteacher	Nicholas Fowler
Website	www.hamsteadjuniorschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher were appointed in January 2021.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, RE and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Pupils from Year 3, Year 4 and Year 6 read to her.
- The inspector met with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, office manager, the special educational needs coordinator, three governors including the chair of governors, teachers and subject leaders. The inspector also met with the school improvement partner.
- The inspector explored safeguarding arrangements by reviewing safeguarding records, checking how risks are managed, talking to staff and pupils about how they keep safe

and checking the school's single central record. She met with the school's designated safeguarding leads.

- The inspector considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures relating to pupils with SEND, pupil premium funding, safeguarding and child protection. The school's website was also checked.
- The inspector considered 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 28 responses on Ofsted's pupils' survey. She also took account of the parent questionnaires along with the school's own surveys of parents' views.
- The inspector talked to pupils to gather their views about their school, behaviour, their safety and learning. She also observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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