

Inspection of a good school: Hall Green Junior School

Stratford Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B28 9AJ

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

Outcome

Hall Green Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hall Green Junior School gives its pupils a high-quality, well-rounded education. Everyone is included. All staff want the best for every pupil. Leaders know their school well, so that they are strongly placed to make further improvements. Some pupils' learning has been set back considerably by the COVID-19 pandemic, but leaders have responded effectively. Procedures to re-establish pupils' self-confidence and social responsibility have been particularly successful.

Pupils are safe and happy. Bullying is rare, and staff sort out problems promptly when they do arise. Pupils behave very well in class and in the playground. They understand how their own attitudes can contribute to better learning. Pupils look smart, explain themselves articulately and present their work neatly. Everyone has a pride in the school.

Leaders have developed suitable curriculum plans. Teachers are using these plans well. They often combine learning in different subjects effectively. For example, pupils can explain how reading fiction about the Second World War enhances their historical understanding.

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

The curriculum in different subjects is organised and sequenced so that pupils can build up their knowledge over time. Each subject in the national curriculum receives due attention. Leaders plan a unit of work for each half term around a central theme, such as whether explorers are heroes or egotists. A newly created immersive zone uses projection to transport pupils to, for example, Ancient Egypt or the Galapagos Islands. Teachers are knowledgeable, and use the technical terms associated with each subject accurately. They generally explain learning well. However, pupils' understanding of complex ideas in subjects like science is less secure because, on occasion, staff do not present the information as well as they might do.

Leaders have provided effective training to help teachers adapt the learning for each class. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn well. Teachers review pupils' work in books and question them effectively to check on their understanding. They use the outcomes of assessment to provide pupils with more support when needed.

Leaders prioritise reading. In teaching reading, staff have due regard both to the skills that pupils need to learn, and to their enjoyment of a text. They are aware that to understand a text fully, pupils need to know about the culture from which it comes. As a result, pupils are proficient readers and display a love of reading. The current practice of using senior leaders to support the weaker readers in each year group is proving successful. Staff ensure that these pupils read books that are well matched to their reading abilities.

Pupils particularly enjoy their learning in mathematics. Across the school, teachers use practical equipment and diagrams to help pupils understand difficult concepts. Pupils learn how to perform calculations accurately and fluently, and how to apply their learning to practical situations. Pupils of all abilities learn to think about how to solve problems. They currently benefit from brief catch-up sessions twice a week. Teachers help pupils to remember more by checking their recall a short time after a topic has been completed.

Leaders have responded well to the impact of the pandemic on pupils' learning. However, lockdowns and continuing restrictions have particularly affected practical work in some foundation subjects. For example, pupils have been unable to play musical instruments or prepare food. Leaders are currently prioritising this practical knowledge to help pupils catch up quickly.

Leaders promote responsible behaviour and positive attitudes to learning most effectively. Teachers uphold the school's high expectations. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on their own moral and social attitudes, for example in their 'learning journeys'. Pupils enjoy taking part in extra-curricular activities such as gymnastics, football or baking. However, these opportunities are currently limited. Only the school choir has restarted after the suspension of extra-curricular activities during lockdowns.

Staff work together as a team and value the support from leaders. The headteacher understands the school and its community very well. She has revised the school's marking policy and enabled some training to take place during school time. Staff appreciate the steps the headteacher has taken to reduce their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school and the community that it serves. This enables them to be alert to the issues that pupils may face. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained so that they are vigilant and able to identify any risks to pupils. When a concern arises, leaders take the right steps to involve other agencies that work with children.

Pupils feel safe in school. Staff have ensured that pupils are fully aware of whom they can turn to if they are worried.

Leaders make the necessary recruitment checks on the staff who join the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers sometimes do not deliver challenging abstract concepts such as light or gravity with sufficient clarity. This means that sometimes pupils do not easily understand what they have been taught. Leaders should help teachers to refine the way in which pupils learn complex and difficult work.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted pupils' learning across the curriculum. Lockdowns and ongoing restrictions have affected practical work in subjects such as music and technology. Leaders should ensure that pupils currently in Years 4 to 6 access the practical learning that they missed during periods of national lockdown.
- Since the return from periods of national lockdown, extra-curricular opportunities have been limited. Pupils told the inspector that they would relish the opportunity to take part in a range of sporting and other activities. Leaders should make sure that pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of activities that promote their personal development.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2011.

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	103209
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10199980
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	485
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rupert Connolly
Headteacher	Maxine Charles
Website	www.hallgrnj.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hall Green Junior School shares a site and a federated governing body with Hall Green Infant School.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The chair and another member of the governing body met with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the inspector looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff. He also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of governors' meetings, and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspection took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. These included several narrative comments. He met with parents and carers in the playground at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspector also considered the responses to the survey for staff, and pupil questionnaires.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. In these subjects, the inspector considered the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. The inspector also met with pupils and with teachers to discuss learning in these subjects.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Year 3 reading.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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