

Inspection of a good school: George Street Primary School

George Street, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 5HJ

Inspection dates:

30 November and 1 December 2021

Outcome

George Street Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to be a part of this school. They love learning and especially enjoy reading stories. Pupils say that this is a great school to grow up in. Pupils and staff know each other well. All newcomers to the school are welcomed.

Pupils respect their teachers and appreciate that they help them to achieve their best. They feel safe because they know that staff listen to, and care about them. Pupils say that bullying is rare. When it does happen, staff are good at resolving it.

Pupils know the school's values 'Ready, Respect, Safe' well. They understand how staff expect them to behave. Pupils work hard in lessons and move sensibly around the school. Pupils are kind and helpful to each other. They have good manners. They hold classroom doors open for each other and wait patiently in line for lunch. Playtimes are happy and social occasions.

Pupils take part in a range of activities that spark their interests. They enjoy the after-school clubs such as football, healthy living, and Irish dancing. Year 6 pupils are proud of the lunchtime clubs they organise and run for younger pupils.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious and well-planned curriculum across all subjects. Subject leaders have made sure that teaching plans set out clearly the essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn from the beginning of Nursery to the end of Year 6. In general, teachers use these plans to make sure that a series of lessons connect to each other, building upon what pupils are learning. Teachers encourage pupils to recall what they have learned previously. Pupils use this knowledge to tackle more challenging work or help them find out about new things. For example, during a mathematics lesson, Year 6 pupils were using their knowledge of timetables to subtract fractions with different denominations.

In English and mathematics, teachers skilfully check what pupils know and can do. They use this information to plan the right content for the next lessons. In other subjects, teachers do not assess pupils' progress as effectively. Teaching does not always support pupils to build on their knowledge and understanding over time.

Leaders have established a well-organised curriculum for teaching reading, including phonics, throughout all year groups. Well-trained teachers and teaching assistants deliver the phonics programme consistently and with continuity. Leaders ensure that the books pupils read match the sounds that they know. Any pupils falling behind get the extra help they need so that they can catch up quickly. Leaders have purchased a range of high-quality texts for pupils to read and enjoy. Teachers and pupils make recommendations to others based on their reading experience.

Leaders place a sharp focus on developing pupils' language. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children have regular opportunities to learn new words and talk in sentences through hearing stories, rhymes, and songs. For example, in the Reception class, children were seen using vocabulary, such as 'thick' and 'thin, and 'longer and 'shorter' correctly to describe their play dough worms.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively. Staff ensure that they fully understand the individual needs of each pupil. Teaching assistants break down learning into manageable parts and provide extra resources where necessary, so that these pupils access the same curriculum as their friends. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported well. Pupils attend specific outdoor activities to boost their confidence and resilience.

Leaders and staff make sure that pupils listen carefully in lessons and focus on their learning. Lessons include many opportunities for pupils to discuss and share their ideas with each other. Pupils say that they like to help each other, so that they can 'learn even more'.

Leaders provide a range of activities to promote pupils' wider development. Events, such as a visit from a poet and an ex-professional rugby player, raise pupils' aspirations. Pupils learn about how to help their community. For instance, following a visit from the local police about safety, Year 5 pupils took part in a 'mini-police' project. They designed safety posters and delivered these to local shops to put on display.

Leaders have created a happy and united school community. Staff feel they are valued and that their views matter. There is a strong sense of teamwork and cooperation throughout the school.

Governors hold leaders to account effectively. Governors know the school's strengths well and what needs to improve further. Like leaders, they share the same commitment to make the school even better.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the impact of the school's improved curriculum on pupils' achievement may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils' safety and welfare is given the highest priority. Leaders provide all staff with regular, up-to-date training. Staff report any concerns without delay. Leaders take appropriate actions, and these are well documented. Leaders work well with external agencies to provide support for the pupils and families who need it. Leaders make sure that all the necessary checks are completed before staff begin to work at the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils understand how to stay safe online and what to do if they feel worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In reading, writing and mathematics, assessment is used effectively to inform teaching. However, assessment is not embedded in the foundation subjects. In these subjects, teachers are not always clear what pupils know and understand. Leaders need to develop how teachers assess what pupils have learned and remembered in the foundation subjects. This will support teachers to identify any gaps in pupils' learning and plan future lessons that are closely matched to pupils' next steps across all subjects.

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 on 8 and 9 February 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	117106
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10199656
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jez Tucker
Headteacher	Angela Hughes
Website	www.georgestreet.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2020.
- All the class teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation.

- During this inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the early years leader. The inspector also held meetings with the business manager, the office manager, and a group of staff to discuss the impact of the support they receive from leaders.
- The inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and four other governors. Additionally, the inspector met with a local authority adviser to discuss their work with the school.

- The inspector did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing and history. The inspector met with curriculum leaders for these subjects, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. The inspector observed some pupils reading to staff and talked to pupils about their reading habits. The inspector also checked the curriculum provision and pupils' learning in other subject areas during the second day of the inspection.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils to seek their views about the school. The inspector also spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes.
- To check leaders' management of safeguarding, the inspector spoke with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader. The inspector reviewed the single central record and records related to behaviour and safeguarding incidents. The inspector considered the school's processes for reporting safeguarding concerns and spoke with pupils, staff and governors to check their views on safeguarding.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including the school's own evaluation, improvement plans and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector considered the 52 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 52 responses to Ofsted's free-text system. The inspector also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. Additionally, the inspector took account of the 26 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the 70 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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