

Inspection of a good school: Watford Field School (Infant & Nursery)

Neal Street, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 0WF

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 March 2022

Outcome

Watford Field School (Infant & Nursery) continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Being thoughtful and kind to everyone they meet is a noticeable feature of the pupils who attend Watford Field School. Pupils enjoy their learning, like their teachers and always try to do their best.

Pupils show a maturity beyond their years when talking about their learning and their feelings. This reflects the time that pupils spend discussing emotions and learning strategies to deal with different situations they may encounter in their daily lives.

Pupils say that everyone is friendly. Bullying is rare, but if it does happen, pupils know whom to talk to and are confident it will be dealt with.

Pupils enjoy the range of clubs that are on offer, such as choir, dodgeball, archery and ninja warriors. Visits to the farm, the country park, the mosque and the church are all memorable events for the pupils. One pupil said, 'I wish I could stop growing so I could stay here.' Another said, 'It's fun, it's friendly, I want to be here forever.'

Parents are complimentary about the school. Parents who have children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) particularly appreciate the nurturing side of the school.

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

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum to ensure that pupils experience a broad range of subjects that are taught in a logical order. Leaders ensure that the correct resources and teaching activities match the pupils' needs appropriately and support them to build upon what they already know. This is particularly well developed in key stage 1.

Staff have secure subject knowledge to teach the key stage 1 curriculum. Staff have received effective training to make sure appropriate teaching methods are used to deliver the curriculum as leaders intend. Staff are skilled at breaking learning down into smaller

tasks and then giving opportunities for pupils to apply their learning. For example, in art and design, pupils were taught how to create a mosaic, change the tone and create a mixed media piece of art. In this instance, pupils could remember their learning well.

The teaching of reading is a key strength of the school. Pupils love reading. Pupils are able to read fluently when they leave the school. Phonics is taught to a high standard from the start of the Reception Year. Pupils quickly learn to read words with confidence. The books pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. Some pupils have extra sessions to successfully recap or catch up. The support for the weakest readers is effective and helps them to read fluently.

While the curriculum in the early years is strong in reading and mathematics, leaders know the curriculum needs further thought and development in the other areas of learning. Leaders do not currently have clear expectations of what pupils should know and remember by the start of key stage 1 in the foundation subjects. Where staff explain new words and concepts in detail, pupils learn well. However, there are times when staff are not sure what children should be learning. Consequently, opportunities for children to embed and extend previously taught knowledge are more limited.

This is an inclusive school. Pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and achieve well. Staff are well trained to support pupils with SEND. When required, pupils have individual timetables that take account of their complex needs. Staff work with specialist advisers to review these plans frequently so access to the curriculum is well thought through. This results in pupils with SEND accessing the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Behaviour in lessons and on the playground is good. Pupils play well together and enjoy their social times. Pupils, including the youngest children in Nursery, follow instructions closely and respond well to the established routines.

Leaders and staff have created a culture of tolerance and respect by providing first-hand learning opportunities to understand diversity. Pupils enjoy comparing different places of worship and are confident in asking questions about religion. Pupils mirror the inclusive values of the school in all aspects of learning and play. One pupil said, 'It would be so confusing if we all looked the same.'

The local governing body knows the priorities for the school and holds leaders to account to ensure that they are focusing on the agreed actions for improvements. The local governing body carries out its statutory duties to ensure safeguarding is effective. However, leaders have inherited a range of systems for recording information about behaviour and safeguarding incidents. There is variation in how these systems are used. Consequently, governors are not currently receiving detailed information to analyse patterns or to monitor the links between behaviour and safeguarding for vulnerable pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff place a high importance on keeping pupils safe. Staff receive frequent training and know how to report any concerns about pupils or adults. Leaders are quick to follow up concerns by talking to and sharing information with the relevant agencies.

Pupils know about safe and unsafe behaviour. They know to talk to adults in school if they have any worries. Pupils understand about physical safety and keeping safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The information regarding the concerns, actions and outcomes of behaviour and safeguarding incidents is currently recorded in a variety of ways. This is making it difficult for leaders to evaluate any patterns or trends that might occur. Leaders must review the current systems. Governors must then check the systems are working and monitor the support given to vulnerable pupils more closely.
- The curriculum in the early years is not fully developed. Leaders must make sure the expectations across all areas of learning are as clear as the reading and mathematics curriculum. Leaders must ensure staff are trained to deliver the curriculum well so that children are accessing ambitious learning experiences matched accurately to the children's needs.

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 November 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	117161
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10212421
Type of school	Infant & Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Staddon
Headteacher	Nicky Selby
Website	www.fieldinfants.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has been through significant senior leadership changes since the previous inspection. There have been several interim and co-headteacher arrangements. Leaders are now all in substantive positions.
- The school does not 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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of governors, two other members of the governing board, the school's local authority improvement partner and the district school education adviser for Watford.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum 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 a sample of pupils' work.

- The inspector also spoke to leaders and looked at pupils' work in religious education, personal, social and health education and science.
- The inspector spoke to parents when pupils were being dropped off at school. The inspector also spoke to pupils on the playground at breaktimes.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the school's single central record, considered the safeguarding policy and spoke to staff and pupils. The inspector looked at case files and discussed a range of safeguarding records with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector considered 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 28 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. The inspector reviewed 14 responses to the online staff survey and three responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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