

# Inspection of a good school: Northmead Junior School

Grange Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 9ZA

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2022

## **Outcome**

Northmead Junior School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are highly enthusiastic about this inclusive and nurturing school. As one pupil stated, 'All the teachers are really great. Everyone is welcoming and friendly.' Leaders keep the school motto of 'try more, learn more, achieve more' at the centre of their work. They aspire for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve highly. Leaders are particularly proud of the school's inclusive ethos. They have introduced several strategies to ensure that all pupils can fully immerse themselves in school life, for example through sessions that teach pupils to manage risk and become resourceful and resilient.

Pupils are exceptionally polite and respectful towards adults and each other. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are not tolerated. Staff resolve these incidents quickly when they occur.

Pupils benefit from many opportunities to nurture their talents. There is a wide range of sports clubs, including for athletics, cricket and football. Animal club is particularly popular. Pupils are passionate about caring for the school's animal population of ducks, hens and guinea pigs. All pupils get the chance to perform in the school's annual production. There are also additional performance opportunities for pupils at a local music festival and nationally at the O2 arena in London.

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

Leaders have designed a broad curriculum. In all subjects, they have identified the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. In some subjects, for example in physical education (PE), all pupils, including those with SEND, develop knowledge in a clear sequence that builds over time. However, in some subjects, for example history, the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn is not yet identified in full. Leaders know exactly what they need to do to complete the curriculum so that pupils can achieve well in all subjects.

In some subjects, for example in PE and in reading, teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Teachers plan activities that help all pupils, including those who may need additional help, to make connections between topics, remember their learning and achieve well. In these subjects, teachers routinely check pupils' understanding and plan activities to strengthen and deepen this during lessons. For example, in a hockey lesson, pupils revised previously learned movements during their warm-up that they needed to use to play hockey games later in the sequence of lessons.

However, in some other subjects, teachers' knowledge of how to support pupils to remember their learning over time is less well developed. Where this is the case, teachers do not always use the most effective strategies to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they could.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. They want to inspire pupils to love reading and to read well. Teachers use carefully chosen, high-quality texts to teach comprehension and extend pupils' vocabulary. Leaders have introduced a phonics programme to support pupils at the early stages of learning to read. Pupils following this programme develop confidence as readers by reading books that are closely matched to the sounds they are learning.

Pupils behave very well. Leaders have high expectations for pupil behaviour. They ensure that all staff apply these consistently and fairly. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Pupils have highly positive attitudes to their learning and they contribute well in lessons.

The school's work to support pupils' wider development is strong. Through half-termly 'Fantastic Fridays', leaders provide a variety of opportunities to enrich pupils' education. For example, pupils have enjoyed line dancing, cooking, animal husbandry and sign language. Leaders encourage pupils to contribute to their local community. Some pupils have become penfriends with the residents of a local care home, while others have led community carol singing. Pupils are also proud to make a difference to their school. The information technology (IT) team enjoys helping staff to troubleshoot IT problems, and the eco team encourages all members of the school community to care for the environment and to save energy.

Leaders and governors are mindful of staff workload. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported by leaders. Staff state that they are encouraged to prioritise those tasks that have the most impact on pupils achieving well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders promote a strong culture of vigilance. They have established clear systems to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. Leaders deal with concerns swiftly to ensure that pupils and their families get the help and support they need, and they readily seek advice from other professionals when necessary.

Pupils confidently name trusted adults in school whom they can speak to about any worries or concerns. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when online. They know that they must not share personal information on the internet and not communicate with people they do not know.

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

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

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not consistently identified the key content that teachers need to teach. Series of lessons in these subjects do not always enable pupils to make links between concepts securely enough, so that they build knowledge systematically. Leaders need to continue to refine the curriculum, so that pupils can achieve effectively across the whole curriculum.
- Teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge is not as strong in some subjects as it is others. Where this is the case, pupils do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders need to strengthen teachers' pedagogical content knowledge so that they ensure that pupils learn and remember the intended curriculum well.

## **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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Northmead Junior School, to be good in July 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.

## **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>	146025
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240338
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	353
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Fergal Roche
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debbie Brown
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northmead.surrey.sch.uk">www.northmead.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Northmead Junior School is larger than the average-sized junior school.
- It is part of the Learning Partners Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the chief executive officer and school improvement advisers from the Learning Partners Academy Trust. She also met with representatives from those responsible for governance, including the chair of the local governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and interviewing staff, and through discussions with pupils.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

### **Inspection team**

Sue Keeling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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