

Inspection of a good school: Trotts Hill Primary and Nursery School

Wisden Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 5JD

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 November 2022

Outcome

Trotts Hill Primary and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their learning at Trotts Hill. They find many lessons fun and exciting. There are opportunities to sing, role play, investigate, and learn outdoors in the forest school.

Pupils treat each other with tolerance and respect, and behave well. They follow the school rules of being safe, responsible and kind. Any incidences of bullying are extremely rare. Staff develop caring relationships with pupils. They also mentor pupils to ensure they achieve their best. The combination of these things helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Pupils know teachers have high expectations for what they can achieve. Teachers carefully adapt learning to meet each pupil's needs. Pupils get to attend one-to-one or group catch-up sessions if they need extra support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have personalised plans. All of this helps pupils to make strong progress with their learning.

Pupils get lots of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. There are a variety of clubs, activities and sports teams. Pupils also have opportunities to engage in a variety of leadership opportunities, such as on the student council, as reading champions or as eco-warriors.

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

Leaders have empowered teachers to design a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. They have ensured that subject curriculums are based on research of effective practice and that they build up pupils' knowledge effectively over time. For example, in mathematics, leaders have worked with the local 'maths hub' to research the most effective approach to teaching mathematics. This has informed their decisions about how to sequence what pupils learn in each year group. Leaders have worked with teachers to carefully tailor how this curriculum is taught to meet the needs of pupils at the school, such as by exploring mathematics in depth through the use of physical resources in each

year group. Teachers' involvement in this has led to a sense of shared ownership and a common understanding of the approach.

The curriculum has many experiences that help to bring learning to life for pupils. For example, pupils visit Stevenage Museum and Knebworth House to actively learn about the history of the local area. This supports them to develop key historical skills, such as exploring what artefacts tell them. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They model learning effectively. They consistently use assessment to check what pupils know so they can adapt teaching accordingly. On occasion, teachers do not ensure that pupils consolidate and secure in their long-term memory what they have been taught. Although pupils understand this information, they are not able to recall it as well as they might.

Pupils at the school achieve well, including in reading. Right from Nursery a love of reading is developed. In Nursery, pupils get to explore a range of picture books, and learn sounds through rhyme and songs. Leaders have ensured that this foundation is built on in Reception, where pupils learn to decode and blend words through an engaging phonics programme. Staff have been well trained in teaching phonics. They ensure that the books pupils read match their phonics stage. Where any pupils are behind, they are well supported to catch up to ensure that, over time, they become confident, fluent readers.

Pupils across the school read high-quality texts as a class. They are supported to develop vocabulary and to be able to infer meaning from a variety of different types of text. Leaders make sure that pupils read books from the library regularly. This is tracked in reading records and support is provided for any reluctant readers. As a result, most pupils love reading and are enthusiastic to talk about what they have read.

Pupils are well behaved. Low-level disruption does not interrupt learning. This is partly because pupils' needs are well met. Staff have a clear understanding of the identified needs of pupils with SEND and adapt provisions to cater for these needs in lessons. This includes in the early years foundation stage, where pupils learn to share and take turns, and where those with higher levels of need are supported to engage as appropriate.

Leaders have ensured an effective programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is in place, supported by an assembly programme which makes sure pupils learn about British values. Pupils learn about relationships in an age-appropriate way. Pupils value the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and trips.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders consider staff's workload and well-being effectively. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has worked with governors and the local authority to ensure that governors now provide a more robust, independent challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff have had training to be able to identify need. There are regular safeguarding updates for staff, which consider topical issues such as the 'Prevent' duty and county lines. Once a concern is identified, it is accurately recorded. Appropriate, timely follow-up action is taken. Leaders provide challenge to external agencies to champion the needs of pupils.

Leaders have ensured that appropriate safer recruitment checks have been carried out. These are accurately recorded in the single central record.

Pupils know they have a variety of people they can go to if they ever have a worry or concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, teachers do not ensure that pupils consolidate what they have been taught. As a result, pupils sometimes struggle to recall what they have learned or be able to apply their understanding well. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils remember key knowledge in the long term and can apply it effectively.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2012.

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

Unique reference number	117292
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10211392
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Altringham
Headteacher	Elizabeth Evans
Website	http://www.trottshill.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2017. A new deputy headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- No pupils attend alternative provision.
- An on-site after-school club is run by another registered provider.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with curriculum 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.
- The inspector conducted meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and leaders of provision for PSHE, SEND, behaviour and attendance, safeguarding and personal development.

- The inspector observed breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspector also visited assembly and after-school time. Parents were spoken to during after-school time.
- The inspector visited other subjects, including science and religious education.
- The inspector explored the school's safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- The inspector considered the 82 responses and 45 free-text responses made by parents to the Ofsted Parent View survey. Inspectors also considered 31 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 36 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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