

Inspection of Colney Heath Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School

High Street, Colney Heath, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL4 0NP

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are eager to learn and they feel proud of their school. They listen closely to their teachers and to each other. They support one another in lessons.

Pupils learn well in lessons because their teachers explain clearly. Pupils make links between new learning and things they have learned before. This helps them remember important knowledge.

Pupils are kind and polite. Year 6 pupils look after Reception-age children as part of a buddy programme. This helps the children settle into school life and feel secure. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Teachers will deal with it quickly, if it should occur. Pupils concur that they can share concerns with staff when they experience a problem. As a result of this, pupils feel happy and safe at school.

Pupils take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities that help them gain important life skills. Through the school council, pupils raise funds for charities. This helps pupils develop an understanding of those who are less fortunate. Pupils keenly hone their skills in football, netball and cross-country. Older pupils look forward to residential visits and outdoor activities like paddle-boarding and kayaking.

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

Leaders give the highest priority to the teaching of reading. They have constructed a well-sequenced phonics curriculum which ensures children learn sounds quickly. Leaders provide training so that staff adopt a consistent approach to teaching phonics. They help pupils who fall behind through small group work. As a result, pupils learn to read confidently. Older pupils enjoy reading books written by a diverse selection of authors and pupils learn about different cultures through books their teachers read to them. Teachers regularly read to the pupils. This helps to promote a love of reading.

Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced an ambitious curriculum in all subjects. They have made sure the content pupils learn is relevant to the context of the school. For example, in history, pupils learn about Queen Elizabeth I because of her links to the local area. In most areas of the curriculum, leaders have provided teachers with the subject knowledge they need. This ensures that what pupils learn builds well from the Nursery Year to Year 6. Pupils revisit previous content, which helps them to remember more effectively. In a small number of areas of the curriculum, some teachers do not have the precise subject knowledge to ensure that pupils learn as well as leaders expect.

Most teachers systematically identify mistakes, misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning. They provide support so that pupils know how to improve. At times, this does not happen. As a result of this, pupils occasionally continue to make the same mistakes and misunderstand some ideas.

Leaders' high expectations ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They ensure that teachers adapt the curriculum well so that pupils with SEND learn well. Where needed, pupils receive additional support that helps them keep up with their peers. For example, pupils are helped by being taught specific vocabulary in advance of it being needed.

In lessons, pupils behave well. Staff model respectful interactions and pupils follow the example set. Most pupils behave well outside lessons too. However, during break and lunchtimes, a small minority of pupils behave less positively. This is not always dealt with effectively, and is not always reported to leaders by staff. A few pupils then accept this behaviour as normal and so do not share their concerns with staff, so it remains unresolved.

Leaders' oversight of attendance is thorough. Their timely actions ensure pupils' attendance is improving. As a result, some pupils whose attendance was previously a concern now attend regularly.

Leaders and staff cater well for the personal development of pupils. Opportunities to perform develop pupils' creativity and confidence. The choir performs locally, singing Christmas carols for elderly residents. They have sung nationally, at the Royal Albert Hall. School trips complement pupils' learning in class. For example, a visit to the British Museum allowed Year 4 pupils to see artefacts relating to the ancient Egyptians. This helped them embed their learning as they could make connections between their lessons and the real artefacts they had seen.

Governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They hold leaders to account. They carefully consider how they can best support the school to continue to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure appropriate recruitment procedures are followed. They make necessary checks so that they know all new staff are safe to work with children.

Leaders provide staff with appropriate training. The weekly safeguarding briefing helps staff to remain vigilant by reminding them of the systems for reporting concerns. Leaders keep detailed records which record their prompt actions. Leaders make timely referrals to external agencies so that pupils receive the support they need.

Learning about safety is woven through the curriculum. For example, in computing, pupils learn how to use the internet safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not have the precise subject knowledge to teach all aspects of the revised curriculum confidently and well. As a result of this, some pupils do not build some important knowledge or develop understanding of more-complex ideas in a small number of subjects. Leaders should provide teachers with the training and support they require so that they implement all areas of the curriculum effectively.
- There are occasions when teachers do not check what pupils know and can do. As a result of this, pupils continue to make the same mistakes, and gaps in their knowledge remain. Leaders should ensure teachers consistently use assessment well to inform their teaching.
- While behaviour is generally positive, leaders' systems and processes for identifying, reporting, and following up low-level behaviour incidents across the school day do not capture all of the low-level behaviour incidents that they should. Consequently, some negative behaviours persist. Leaders should ensure all staff know what behaviours are not acceptable, and that staff tackle and report unacceptable behaviour effectively.

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	117145
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10240990
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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Patrick Delaney
Headteacher	Anne Clark
Website	http://www.colneyheath.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school offers before- and after-school childcare provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also met with representatives of the school's local governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, scrutinised curriculum documentation, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work.

- The inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training records.
- The inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views. This included formal meetings and informal discussions during playtime, lunchtime and in lessons. The inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke to parents and staff to gather their views. The inspectors also considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View and staff's responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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