

Inspection of Kingshill Infant School

Heath Drive, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 0RL

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 15 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly, welcoming school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy coming to learn and play in a very inclusive environment.

Adults set high expectations, while being kind and nurturing. This makes pupils feel safe and happy. They are keen to please the adults, so they behave well. Pupils respond quickly to the signals adults give them, whether it is time to tidy up, move to their carpet spaces or line up at the end of playtime.

The school provides many enrichment activities for pupils. These include a range of after-school clubs, trips beyond the immediate locality or workshops in school. Leaders plan these opportunities carefully to broaden pupils' experiences.

There is a strong focus on kindness and well-being. Pupils know what bullying is and say it does not happen at Kingshill. They are confident that adults would sort it out if it did happen. Pupils appreciate the mindfulness sessions, the nurture club, the school counsellor and the therapy dog, Pepe. These all support their readiness to learn.

Pupils are highly motivated and love earning certificates and rewards. One of the most popular of these is having hot chocolate with Pepe on a Friday afternoon.

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

Senior leaders have designed an ambitious new curriculum, keeping the needs of the pupils at the forefront of their minds. The curriculum is rich in vocabulary as leaders are committed to developing pupils' language and communication skills. It starts in early years and is sequenced so that pupils gradually acquire the knowledge and skills they need. Each new step they take builds on what they have learned before and prepares them for what comes next.

Curriculum leaders share senior leaders' vision for the curriculum. They support colleagues with training and advice where needed. They regularly check that the curriculum is helping pupils learn what they need to achieve the planned outcomes.

In early years, as in the rest of the school, children show curiosity and are eager to learn. Early years staff plan activities that meet children's needs and support the ambitious curriculum. There is a sharp focus on communication skills, including sign language. Children delight in using this when discussing the day ahead. Leaders have plans to improve the extensive outdoor area, so that all resources support learning as well as possible.

Leaders and staff promote a love of reading. Pupils listen to stories at least once a day, often more frequently. In Nursery, children enjoy acting out stories they have heard. In Reception, they relax with a book on a beanbag in their reading area. The

recently introduced phonics programme enables pupils to develop their reading and writing skills quickly. They are well-versed in the language and routines of the new programme and are gaining the skills they need to become fluent readers. The books they read match the sounds they are learning. All teaching staff have had training in teaching phonics, although some are more confident than others. There are some inconsistencies in the delivery of phonics sessions, and pupils' levels of engagement vary from one group to another.

In all subjects, teachers explain things clearly and give pupils opportunities to orally rehearse new learning. Teachers check pupils' understanding often. They identify those who need extra help and ensure this is given promptly. They adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs. The school has its own speech and language therapist, who supports pupils with communication difficulties. Leaders liaise with other specialists as and when their help is required. Pupils with SEND are well integrated with their peers and access the same curriculum as them.

The school develops pupils' character in a variety of ways. A programme of 'picture-book assemblies' teaches pupils about issues such as equality and diversity, through high-quality texts and carefully chosen music. Pupils know about different religions and understand that people can believe different things. They show tolerance of those whose opinions may not be the same as theirs. A school council has been elected, and its members are looking forward to having a say in what happens at school.

Since his appointment, the headteacher, along with senior leaders, has worked tirelessly to effect positive change in the best interests of pupils. The leadership team is supported by committed governors, who bring a wealth of skills and experience to their role. Leaders value their staff highly and are determined to provide them with the training and support they need to be as effective as possible. Staff are proud to work at the school, and everyone works together to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained in identifying and reporting any safeguarding concerns they have. Leaders keep staff informed with regular updates and check their understanding with quizzes. Leaders act quickly to support pupils who may be at risk, sometimes liaising with outside agencies. Record-keeping is rigorous. This includes records of the checks carried out on staff joining the team.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They are confident that the adults in school will keep them safe, and they know they must talk to an adult if they have any worries about safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some inconsistencies in the way the new phonics programme is delivered. Some pupils do not have the same opportunities as others to orally rehearse the sounds they are learning. As a result, pupils' engagement with their learning varies, and some groups may not be making progress as rapidly as they could. Leaders should continue to prioritise the way they support and train staff, and share good practice in the teaching of early reading.

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	117319
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10242256
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Munoz
Headteacher	Luke Wildig
Website	www.kingshill.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up his post in September 2020.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was not using any alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and five members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, art and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with

subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The team inspector met the subject leader for personal, social and health education as part of the inspection team's evaluation of pupils' personal development.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and two deputy DSLs. The team inspector scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke to governors, staff and pupils to evaluate safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of governors' meetings.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils.
- To gather parents' views, the lead inspector reviewed the 76 responses and 56 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors gathered staff members' views by meeting groups of them during the course of the inspection.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lynda Walker

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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