

# Inspection of Giles Junior School

Durham Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 4JQ

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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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?**

Giles Junior School is a happy place to learn in. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils are respectful and kind to each other. Bullying rarely happens. Pupils are polite and have positive relationships with staff. Pupils trust adults to resolve any problems quickly.

Pupils behave well. They work hard during lessons. They follow the clear routines that are in place to ensure that everyone moves sensibly around the school.

Pupils across the school like to read. Most pupils learn successfully, and those who need extra help get the right support. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils develop positive habits such as perseverance, which helps them to be better learners. Pupils play a helpful role in the school community by taking on responsibilities, such as being a school leader, or by fundraising for local charities.

Pupils learn about other cultures and diversity. This prepares them well for understanding and living in the wider world.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that enables pupils to develop their knowledge across all subjects. They have identified the essential information and content that pupils must learn and the order in which this needs to be taught.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Work is well matched to pupils' stages of learning. Teachers explain new concepts clearly to pupils. In some subjects, such as history, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding during lessons are inconsistent. As a result, some pupils develop misconceptions and gaps in their learning.

Leaders promote a love of reading across the school. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the books they have read. Pupils learn how to understand the texts that they read. They have opportunities to practise what they have learned. This supports pupils to become confident and fluent readers. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read have books matched to their reading stage. Leaders' chosen approach to teach phonics to pupils who struggle with reading is not consistent across the school. Some staff have not been suitably trained, and lack confidence. This means that a few pupils do not learn to read quickly enough. Gaps in their phonic knowledge are not identified quickly enough, nor are they addressed consistently.

During lessons, teachers use positive language to motivate pupils. Pupils are keen to learn, and help each other. Teachers encourage pupils to be independent. For example, pupils appreciate the way that they can choose what equipment to play with at lunchtimes.

Teachers identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND accurately. They understand how best to help pupils learn. Leaders make good use of external expertise to ensure that pupils receive the support that they need. Pupils with SEND, including those who attend the school's resourced provision, have opportunities to practise and remember the knowledge they have been taught. These pupils are fully involved in the life of the school.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum supports pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to recognise their own emotions and those of others. This helps them to manage their feelings and behaviour. Pupils learn to appreciate difference and to contribute to the local community. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn about people from different cultural backgrounds. This helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Staff are proud to work at Giles Junior School. They feel part of a close-knit team. Staff appreciate the way that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Governors work in partnership with school leaders, but do not always hold leaders to account as well as they should. Governors do not know enough about the quality of education in subjects other than English and mathematics or for pupils with SEND who have more complex needs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make pupils' safety a priority. They have established a strong safeguarding culture. There are clear processes for identifying and managing concerns. Staff and governors receive regular training so that they are confident to spot and report concerns. Leaders work closely with a variety of external agencies to support pupils and their families effectively. They put support in place promptly to keep pupils safe.

Pupils learn about risks when online and learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations.

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

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

- In some subjects, staff do not check what pupils have learned and understood systematically. This means that some pupils' misconceptions are not being identified. Leaders must ensure that staff check pupils' understanding and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively in all subjects.
- Leaders do not have clear expectations for identifying and supporting pupils at the early stages of reading. Some staff have not been sufficiently trained. Some pupils have gaps in their phonic knowledge, and these are not identified quickly

enough to enable pupils to become fluent readers. Leaders must ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills to teach phonics effectively.

- Governors do not know enough about the quality of education and pupils' achievement in foundation subjects or for pupils with SEND who have more complex needs. This means that governors do not hold leaders to account as well as they should. Governors should ensure that they have sufficient information and understanding to both support and challenge leaders appropriately.

## **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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 117306   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Hertfordshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10240986   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Junior   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 329  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Kim Hedley   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Louise Whitby  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.gilesjm.herts.sch.uk">www.gilesjm.herts.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 23 and 24 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005      |

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- There are several staff members who have been employed since the previous inspection.

## 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. The 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 the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspectors met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspectors spoke to staff to discuss workload, well-being and safeguarding.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors considered the design of the curriculum, spoke with subject leaders, visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' books, listened to pupils reading and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subject areas.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning, safeguarding and behaviour.
- Documentation relating to safeguarding and behaviour was scrutinised by inspectors.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors observed and spoke with pupils, including at breaktimes. The inspectors took account of the 106 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the 63 responses and the 63 free-text comments submitted to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.
- The inspectors took account of the 45 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff.

### **Inspection team**

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sara Boyce

His Majesty's Inspector

Rod Warsap

Ofsted Inspector

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