

Inspection of a good school: Northolmes Junior School, Horsham

Leith View Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 4ET

Inspection date: 31 January 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Northolmes Junior School. They are well cared for and nurtured so that they grow in confidence during their time at school. Pupils are offered many opportunities to use this confidence to try something new through opportunities such as clubs and sporting tournaments. Pupils relish this. They speak with enthusiasm about how much they enjoy participating in activities such as dodgeball tournaments and residential trips. Leaders make sure that all pupils benefit from these opportunities.

Pupils are expected to behave well and work hard. However, sometimes the curriculum is not structured or delivered in a way that offers pupils enough challenge to ensure that they achieve well. Pupils occasionally lose concentration when this happens. Mostly though, they behave well around the school and at playtime. They are motivated by the rewards they receive for good behaviour, such as house points or a golden mention in assembly. Pupils do not worry or have concerns about bullying, because bullying is rare in this school. They are confident that staff quickly resolve any unkindness. They feel safe because staff care about them and give their well-being a high priority.

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

The school has been through a period of considerable change. Leaders have accurately identified key aspects of provision that they need to improve. They have set about securing improvements with focus and determination. This is beginning to have an impact, although there is more to be done before this results in consistently improved outcomes for pupils.

Governors are providing strong support and challenge for school leaders. They are knowledgeable, experienced and capable. Staff feel supported by leaders. Everyone is united in striving for the very best for pupils.

Leaders have a clear focus on strengthening the provision for reading. Leaders have taken action to address gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. Well-trained staff effectively deliver the new phonics programme. Regular assessment helps to pinpoint needs. This is helping pupils to catch up quickly, including pupils who speak English as an additional language. Despite this, there are still improvements needed to strengthen the wider reading curriculum. The curriculum for reading is not always ambitious enough. This means that the teaching of reading is not always clear or sufficiently challenging in order to build and deepen pupils' knowledge. However, pupils like reading and being read to. They are gripped by the exciting stories they study in class.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well sequenced and planned across other subjects. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum. Ongoing staff training is helping to support staff in implementing the curriculum. Leaders have clearly set out a teaching approach to help pupils learn more and remember more over time. This is beginning to have an impact. For example, in art, pupils were able to remember and apply what they had previously learned about different ways of mark making across a range of media. However, sometimes teachers do not routinely check or build on what pupils already know and can do. When this happens, pupils do not learn as effectively as they could.

Pupils mostly listen to teachers and are keen to offer their ideas through answering questions. They take pride in their work and try their best. Pupils work well in pairs or groups. They support and encourage each other.

There is a strong curriculum focus on pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs and demonstrate their understanding of inclusivity. They value the cultural diversity within the school population. They are fascinated to learn about each other's experiences and languages. For example, pupils are proud of having learned to say 'good afternoon' in Arabic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding here. They provide all staff with the training they need to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff follow clearly communicated and agreed processes for reporting concerns. Leaders provide all staff with any required additional time to help ensure that all information is captured and recorded.

Leaders are tenacious when seeking engagement from professional agencies when pupils and families really need it. Governors have effective processes in place for checking that leaders are taking the right actions to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The reading curriculum is not sufficiently rigorous nor adapted consistently well enough to support pupils in attaining highly in reading. Pupils' knowledge is therefore not always systematically built and deepened. Leaders should continue to support staff in planning and delivering a suitably challenging reading curriculum so that pupils' reading comprehension is developed consistently well.
- Teaching across the curriculum is not always underpinned by sufficient subject knowledge and pedagogy. Teachers are also not consistently checking on what pupils already know and remember. As a result, pupils do not always build consistently on secure prior knowledge. Leaders should continue to support staff in developing their knowledge and expertise to help them implement curriculum plans 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2017.

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	125836
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10256444
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Oakley
Headteacher	Kathryn Saunderson (acting headteacher)
Website	www.northolmes.w-sussex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Northolmes Junior School is part of Greenfields Federation with Littlehaven Infant School. There is a shared governing body and senior leadership team across the federation.
- At the time of this inspection, the headteacher and leadership team are working in their roles in an acting capacity, following some leadership changes. Several subject leaders and teachers are also new to post.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 the evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with school leaders. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the board of governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with

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

- Safeguarding records were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. The inspectors spoke to staff about safeguarding and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspectors talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including about their workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons, at playtime and during a tour of the school.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Oliver Allen

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023