

Inspection of a good school: Old Hall Junior School

Old Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 3QR

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 February 2023

Outcome

Old Hall Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and carers, and staff praise the school's caring and inclusive ethos. Pupils work hard and are keen to do well. Many say that they enjoy lessons, especially when the work challenges them to think deeply.

Pupils behave very well. They have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy earning rewards, such as 'ace points', for upholding the school's values. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They understand that bullying is wrong. They are confident that teachers will act quickly to sort out any issues that may arise.

There is a range of popular lunchtime and after-school activities on offer for all pupils, such as sports, crafts, science and cooking. The curriculum is enriched by visiting places such as the National Space Centre or the Derbyshire 'plague village' of Eyam. Older pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as reading mentors or school council members. These opportunities enable pupils to develop as well-rounded individuals.

Pupils settle quickly when they join the school in Year 3. This is because there are strong links with the local infant schools. Staff liaise and cooperate well to ensure a smooth transition for pupils into the school.

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

Leaders have recently rewritten all aspects of the school's curriculum. They have introduced new programmes for teaching mathematics and reading. They have ensured that the curriculum sets out the key knowledge and skills that pupils should acquire, and in what order, in all subjects. Leaders and staff have also made sure that the curriculum is relevant to the school's pupils and context. They have carefully considered the books and resources that support the curriculum, with resources reflecting cultural diversity and modern British society.

Since September 2022, teachers have started to deliver the revised curriculum. Leaders have begun to check how well the curriculum supports pupils' learning and development. Their early findings are positive. Leaders do not yet have a full picture of the impact of the curriculum on pupils' knowledge and skills over time.

In mathematics, teachers are familiarising themselves with the new approach to the subject. They carefully adapt their methods and resources to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum. Staff regularly check pupils' work in lessons so that they can pick up on any misunderstandings as soon as they occur. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They work hard in lessons.

Leaders regard reading as a high priority. They say that it is 'at the heart of the school'. Leaders provide high-quality books in classrooms and in the attractively refurbished school library. Staff quickly identify any pupils who are not yet fluent, confident readers. These pupils receive skilled support. They read from books that match their stage of reading development.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in the life of the school. Staff liaise regularly with parents. Staff care about these pupils and their well-being. Some aspects of the provision for pupils with SEND are not as effective as they might be. Sometimes, the targets teachers set are not precise or measurable enough. They are often too general. Leaders do not systematically ensure that staff receive regular training and updates on matters relating to SEND.

Leaders promote pupils' broader development well. They ensure that pupils learn about and respect a range of faiths and cultures that are different to their own. This is delivered through the curriculum, assemblies and special events. Pupils develop as thoughtful young citizens who are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Staff speak positively about the support they receive from leaders regarding their workload and well-being. Leaders have introduced positive changes that reduce pressure on teachers so that they can fully focus on their teaching. Those responsible for governance say that having a 'happy staff' is a key priority for them in their work to support the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. They ensure that all staff receive regular training and updates. Staff understand the importance of being alert to any concerns and logging them without delay. Records show that leaders follow their mantra of 'listen, then act'. Leaders work closely with local agencies, such as support workers, to offer help to pupils and families.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to stay safe online. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about the importance of healthy relationships and consent. This support is extended to parents and carers by means of online workshops about internet awareness.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The revised curriculum is in the early stages of implementation. Teachers are beginning to use assessment to adapt the curriculum to allow for pupils' precise needs. Leaders have begun the process of monitoring the impact of the curriculum. They do not yet have a fully accurate picture of the implementation and impact of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is fully and consistently implemented in all areas of the school and that it is effective in enabling pupils to know and remember more in all subjects.
- Teachers do not always set precise, measurable targets for pupils with SEND to achieve. Leaders have not ensured that staff who work with pupils with SEND receive regular and systematic training for their roles. Leaders should ensure that pupils with SEND receive skilled, targeted support to access the full curriculum and achieve as highly as possible.

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 predecessor school, Old Hall Junior School, to be good in July 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	147118
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10268959
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Rutherford
Headteacher	Rachel Davies
Website	https://thelearnerstrust.org/old-hall-juniors/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Old Hall Junior School converted to become an academy school in June 2019. When its predecessor school, Old Hall Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer and other officers of The Learners' Trust and the chair of the local governing board.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the

curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum and reviewed curriculum planning in a range of other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- The inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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