

# Inspection of a good school: Harwood Hill Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School

Harwood Close, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL8 7AG

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

## **Outcome**

Harwood Hill Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy and safe at this inclusive and welcoming school. They study a broad curriculum that prepares them well for the future.

Teachers encourage pupils to aspire, learn and achieve. They make lessons interesting. Pupils know that learning is important, so they work hard and try their best. They enjoy special events such as Science Week and Spanish Day, which bring subjects to life for them.

Pupils are confident and friendly. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. They look out for one another and treat others with respect and kindness. Pupils across the school say that bullying almost never happens. They believe that if it did, staff would deal with it effectively.

Pupils are taught how to look after themselves and stay safe, including when they are online. They are confident that staff care about them and will help them if they have any worries. Pupils who need additional help, or who find school more difficult, are supported very sensitively.

There are lots of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. These include subject-based clubs, football, chess and yoga. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as becoming science ambassadors and sports leaders.

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

Leaders know their pupils well and have clear and ambitious expectations for them. They have designed a broad curriculum to prepare pupils well for the future. Detailed plans for each subject set out the important content they want pupils to know and remember. This helps teachers design lessons that meet pupils' needs. Leaders are working with less

experienced subject leaders to ensure that subject plans are delivered consistently well and build pupils' knowledge effectively.

Teachers explain new ideas clearly. They check pupils' understanding carefully and use a range of strategies to help pupils remember what they are taught. As a result, pupils are able to recall and retain key subject knowledge. They value the individual conversations they have with their teachers about their learning. These help pupils focus on the important things they need to do to improve.

Leaders prioritise early reading. Staff receive training and support to deliver the relatively new phonics programme effectively. Children in early years make a very positive start. They quickly and systematically learn to blend sounds into words. They use familiar strategies to help them. Leaders identify pupils who need extra help. They provide regular support so that, over time, these pupils learn to read fluently. Leaders ensure that the reading books closely match the sounds pupils know.

Teachers choose high-quality texts for pupils to read as a class. Lessons across the curriculum, including in early years, help pupils build a wide vocabulary. Carefully planned activities help pupils become confident readers. As a result, most pupils enjoy their reading and can talk enthusiastically about what they like to read and why.

The reorganised early years provision is well led. Children choose enthusiastically from a wide range of activities designed to help them learn new knowledge and skills. Leaders have linked the early years curriculum to the subjects children will move on to learn in the rest of the school. This means children are well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly and accurately identified. Teachers make adaptations to ensure that pupils can access the curriculum. Adults provide effective individual and group support. Consequently, most pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers and achieve well.

Leaders have created a strong culture of positive behaviour with clear expectations. As a result, pupils show mature levels of self-control and cooperation. Teachers help pupils to reflect carefully on their behaviour and actions if they make poor choices.

Leaders promote pupils' wider development very well. Pupils learn to look after their emotional health. They are taught about healthy relationships and how to keep safe online. Pupils take part in a range of additional activities. Leaders use daily assemblies to celebrate pupils' achievements and promote the values of the school.

Most parents and carers are very supportive. They appreciate the school's strong community feel. Leaders are aware that a small minority of parents still feel that the school could communicate more effectively with them about how to best support their children.

Staff enjoy working at the school and feel supported by leaders.

Governors are well informed and use their knowledge to check the improvements being made. Governors are committed to ensuring that pupils receive the best possible education. They successfully hold leaders to account through an appropriate balance of support and challenge.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training to keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date. They are aware of the risks that pupils may face and report any concerns promptly. Detailed safeguarding records show that leaders take prompt and effective action when issues are raised and liaise effectively with external agencies where necessary.

Parents, staff and pupils all agree that pupils feel safe in school and are well looked after. Pupils know they can talk to adults if they have any worries.

Appropriate safer recruitment and employment checks are carried out.

Governors have a secure knowledge of safeguarding and check arrangements thoroughly.

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

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

- Leaders have put in place a structure where all teachers have responsibility for leading subjects. However, some subject leaders are still developing the expertise to check how well their curriculum is being implemented throughout the school. This means that they do not know as much as they could about how well staff are delivering the subject plans or how well pupils are building their knowledge. Leaders should continue to provide appropriate training and support so that less experienced subject leaders develop the knowledge and skills to fulfil their leadership roles effectively.
- Leaders have worked hard to engage with parents. However, leaders are aware that a small number of parents still feel that the school could communicate more effectively with them. This means some parents do not know how best to work with the school to support their children's learning. Leaders should ensure that all parents are provided with the information they need to help and support their children 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 November 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117227
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268535
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Cirla Peall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Yvette Page
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.harwood.herts.sch.uk">www.harwood.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has combined the nursery and reception classes into a single provision.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 this into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector spoke with the chair of governors and another member of the governing body. A further telephone discussion was held with the school improvement adviser from the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspector checked the school's single central record, considered the safeguarding policy and spoke to staff and pupils. The inspector also discussed safeguarding records with the designated safeguarding leaders.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans and safeguarding and behaviour records.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life to understand what it is like to be a pupil in this school.
- The inspector considered the views of parents, including 51 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 24 free-text comments submitted during the inspection. The inspector also took account of the four responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

John Constable, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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