

Inspection of an outstanding school: Propps Hall Junior Infant and Nursery School

Propps Hall Drive, Failsworth, Manchester M35 0ND

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 July 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding 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, including children in early years, are proud to belong to this school. The school is a calm and harmonious place for pupils to learn.

Pupils arrive each day full of smiles and eager for the day that lies ahead. They value the strong relationships that they have with their fellow pupils and staff. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Leaders and staff want all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to be successful academically. They have designed a curriculum that is interesting and engages all pupils. There are many high-quality displays and murals around the school that bring the curriculum to life. However, leaders' curriculum thinking in a few subjects is not complete. Nonetheless, most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects.

Leaders expect pupils to behave well, and they do. Pupils are polite and extend a warm welcome to visitors. They enjoy the time that they spend being active with their friends in the well-resourced outdoor play area. Any incidents of unkindness or bullying are dealt with well by staff.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences beyond the academic curriculum to promote their personal development. They take their many leadership responsibilities seriously and are proud of their contribution to decision-making in the school.

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

Leaders have put in place a well-thought-out curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, including children in early years and pupils with SEND. Leaders have set out in a logical order the knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn from early years through to key stage 1 and beyond. They have taken care to ensure that new learning builds on what pupils already know. Across subjects, leaders have given consideration to the subject-specific vocabulary that they want pupils to learn. However, in a few units of learning, they have not given enough thought as to the order in which they want key vocabulary to be taught. From time to time, this hinders teachers in designing learning for pupils.

In some subjects, such as early reading and mathematics, there are clear procedures in place to check on pupils' learning over time. However, assessment strategies to monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school are in their infancy for many subjects in the wider curriculum. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate overview of how well pupils are deepening their understanding of these subjects.

Most teachers explain new concepts well. Their subject knowledge is secure. Typically, they provide learning activities that help pupils, including children in early years, to remember the intended learning. Misconceptions are dealt with as soon as they arise. Pupils listen well in class. They value the opportunities that they have to share their thoughts and ideas with their friends. Poor behaviour rarely disrupts learning.

Reading is celebrated. Pupils have access to a wide range of books in classrooms and in the inviting school library. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, which starts as soon as children enter early years. Some staff make effective use of their voice, body language and resources to make the teaching of phonics a pleasurable experience for all pupils, including pupils with SEND.

Teachers carefully match books to pupils' phonic knowledge. Leaders make sure that those pupils who are struggling to read get the support that they need to help them catch up quickly. By the end of key stage 1, most pupils are confident and fluent readers.

Older pupils enjoy reading. They talk confidently about their favourite authors and the different types of books that they like to read.

Pupils with SEND have their needs identified quickly. Staff make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum so that most pupils can learn the same curriculum as their friends. Pupils with SEND take an active part in all that the school has to offer.

Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Leaders provide a wide range of exciting clubs and trips, which all pupils clearly enjoy. For example, older pupils talked fondly about recent residential visits to Wales and France. Pupils develop into active citizens. They enjoy helping others and raise money for charitable causes. They understand the importance of saving the planet for future generations. Pupils respect the views and beliefs of others. Leaders pay due regard to pupils' physical and mental health. Many

pupils have a secure understanding of British values and leave the school well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors are proud of the school. They offer leaders appropriate levels of support and challenge for most aspects of the school's work.

Most staff appreciate all that leaders do to ensure that they have an acceptable workload and work-life balance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff know pupils and their families well. They are vigilant and know how to keep pupils safe. Staff have a secure understanding of the safeguarding risks in the local area. They recognise that everyone has a responsibility for keeping pupils safe.

Leaders work with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable families get the help and support that they need. Pupils are taught about the risks that they face when online and how to manage these. They take part in regular fire drills, which further assures their safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some units of learning, leaders have not given enough thought to the order in which key, subject-specific vocabulary should be taught. This hinders pupils' progress as they move through the curriculums. Leaders should refine their curriculum thinking so that teachers are clear about the order in which important, subject-specific vocabulary is taught.
- Assessment strategies to check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum over time are at a very early stage of development for many of the subjects in the wider curriculum. This means that leaders do not have an accurate view of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum in different year groups. Leaders should develop these systems so that they have a secure understanding of how well pupils are learning the curriculum over time.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding 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

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| Unique reference number | 105663 |
| Local authority | Oldham |
| Inspection number | 10291389 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 240 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Jacqueline Rule |
| Headteacher | Gillian Kay (Executive Headteacher) |
| Website | www.proppshall.oldham.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 4 and 5 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Ivory Federation. There are three schools in the federation. Each school has its own governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 held meetings with curriculum leaders from The Ivory Federation, governors, the executive headteacher and staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke to teachers and with some pupils about their learning. The

inspector looked at a sample of pupils' work. She listened to pupils read with a familiar adult. The inspector also considered the curriculums in some other subjects.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. She spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about the culture of safeguarding across the school.
- She observed behaviour as pupils moved around the school, and in class, the dining hall and the outdoor play area.
- The inspector considered the views expressed by parents and carers in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. She also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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