

Inspection of a good school: Hillside Infant School

Northwood Way, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 1RX

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 October 2023

Outcome

Hillside Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a real sense of community at this school. Pupils thrive here. This is because staff get to know pupils and their families, so they understand what they need in order to achieve well. Pupils are happy and safe and enjoy coming to school to learn and interact with their peers. Pupils feel safe at school, and they trust teachers to deal with any unkind behaviour from their peers.

Pupils learn a broad and interesting curriculum. Every subject develops cumulatively from early years onwards. This means that pupils build the knowledge and skills they need to access learning in key stage 1 and beyond. Pupils are typically well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They enjoy learning and try hard. This is because teachers have high expectations of them. They relish the opportunities to learn outside the classroom. A programme of new activities introduced on 'Try Days' encourages pupils to experience something new. This includes educational visits that enhance the planned curriculum.

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

There is a sharp focus on language development as soon as children join Nursery or Reception. This supports pupils to learn to read well. Staff are well trained to implement the chosen phonics programme with precision. Teachers check pupils' progress regularly. Pupils who are new to the country, as well as those who may be falling behind, are given extra support to help them catch up. Pupils read books which are closely matched to the sounds they know. This helps pupils to read with increasing fluency and accuracy.

The curriculum matches the scope and ambition of what is expected nationally. Leaders have considered both the knowledge and the skills pupils need to acquire in different

subjects. The curriculum is well sequenced so that pupils develop an increasingly secure understanding of key concepts and are given ample time to practise and apply what they learn. However, on some occasions, the tasks and activities that are set do not consistently match the ambition of the planned curriculum. In these instances, pupils do not routinely develop the same depth of knowledge and understanding.

Teachers and leaders use assessment effectively to find out what pupils have learned. They use this to address any misconceptions and revisit any topics where pupils need further support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the right support to ensure they access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. This gives pupils a sense of achievement and helps build their confidence.

Staff have worked hard to establish routines so that pupils know and understand the appropriate behaviour during different times of the school day. This begins in early years where there is a focus on routine, being patient, taking turns and self-regulation. 'The Hillside Values' allow all pupils to understand the expectations of them, and they use these as a framework for how to conduct themselves. As a result of this work, low-level disruption in lessons is extremely rare. Leaders have effective systems in place to ensure pupils attend school each day.

There is a strong focus on pupils' broader development. Social skills and understanding the wider world are a focus from the start of early years. Leaders work closely with parents and carers, inviting them to come to school and learn what their children are learning. This helps parents understand how and what their child is doing at school and how they can be supported at home. It also supports and nurtures the thriving relationship the school has with parents who are fulsome in their praise of the school.

The school is well led. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, recognise the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have developed a culture of training and development for all members of staff meaning everyone is striving to enhance their own knowledge and improve their practice. Staff are happy at the school and feel supported by leaders in both managing their workload and the plentiful opportunities for professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On some occasions, the activities provided to pupils do not match the ambition of the planned curriculum. When this happens, the opportunities for pupils to practise and apply what they have learned are more limited. The school should ensure that the tasks set consistently match the ambition of the curriculum and provide pupils with sufficient opportunity to embed their knowledge and understanding in different subjects.

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 May 2018.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	102434
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10293241
Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anne Porcheron
Headteacher	Rebecca Fennell
Website	www.hillsideinfant.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has recently reduced in size to a two-form entry infant school.
- The school currently makes no use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders. The inspector also met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, computing and science. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- Other subjects were considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including school development plans and behaviour and attendance records.
- The inspector gathered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and by considering their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Amy Jackson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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