

Inspection of a good school: Micklem Primary School

Boxted Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP1 2QH

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 November 2023

Outcome

Micklem Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Micklem Primary School know that staff care deeply about their welfare. Pupils understand and follow the school 'rules for life' of be kind, show respect, aim high. Pupils want to aim high to reach the expectations the school has of them.

The school has carefully planned an interesting curriculum. It meets pupils' needs. They learn to read fluently and accurately. They enjoy opportunities to learn musical instruments and to talk in French. Pupils receive additional support, when needed, to help them learn successfully.

Behaviour is generally good. Most pupils are focused and engaged in their learning. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and falling out with their friends. They say that bullying does not happen very often. They are confident that staff deal with it effectively. Pupils feel safe here.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities to attend the range of clubs and activities available to them. These are varied and include arts and crafts, sports, and music. Pupils are proud to celebrate their achievements in regular assemblies. They enjoy having a voice in the school as school councillors, house captains and peer mediators.

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

Leaders have prioritised improving the quality of education. They have thoroughly revised the curriculum and its delivery. The key knowledge they expect pupils to learn in all subjects is now set out clearly from the early years through to Year 6. Resources are carefully selected and adapted to suit pupils' needs.

The school has broken this important knowledge down into small, accessible steps. This helps teachers to quickly spot where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They use these checks to adapt their teaching and address any gaps. The curriculum has been designed to provide pupils with opportunities to revisit important knowledge and subject-specific

vocabulary. This helps pupils to secure their understanding of this knowledge and language. In the foundation subjects, the new curriculum has raised expectations for what pupils should know and understand. Teachers typically have secure subject knowledge. However, in some curriculum areas, this is still developing.

Leaders are determined that pupils will become strong readers. Children in the early years quickly learn the letter sounds and how to blend these sounds into words. They use consistent strategies, such as robot arms, to help them do this. The school provides effective support for pupils who find reading difficult. Teachers check pupils' understanding of phonics with precision. They use these checks to identify any pupil who is finding reading hard. These pupils receive reading books that help them to develop their fluency. This helps to deepen pupils' knowledge of other areas of the curriculum.

The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the effective support they need. Most pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as everyone else. The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Teachers carefully adapt their lessons to ensure these needs are met. Other adults provide useful individual and group support.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Changes to the way the curriculum is taught have helped to ensure that pupils are engaged in their learning. Children in the early years get off to a good start. They quickly learn the routines of the school. Most pupils behave well and display positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are generally kind and understanding when some find it more difficult to regulate their behaviour or emotions.

Leaders have put in place strategies to work closely with individuals and families. The newly established pastoral team provides effective and personalised support. Attendance is a high priority. Most pupils attend school regularly. However, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This means they miss important learning.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits, activities and clubs. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is well structured. It is closely linked to pupils' needs. Pupils learn about other cultures and about different relationships. They develop their understanding of the many differences in the world. They show respect and tolerance for those who are different to them.

Senior leaders are thoughtful and reflective. Their decisive and determined action means that the school is improving rapidly. Governors are committed and well informed. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff feel well supported and are proud to work in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The improvements the school has made to the curriculum are relatively new. In some subjects, staff are developing their subject knowledge. The school must continue to provide staff with the ongoing training and support they need to teach all subjects effectively so that pupils secure their understanding of important knowledge.
- Some pupils are absent from school too often. This means they miss important learning and have some gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that its work with pupils and their families results in improved attendance for pupils who are persistently absent from school.

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	117231
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10294969
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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kalpna Shah
Headteacher	Joshua Swift
Website	www.micklem.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of the governing body and a new headteacher have been appointed. The current headteacher took up the post in September 2022.
- The school operates a daily breakfast club. An after-school club is run by an external provider.
- The school does not use any 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 lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector met with governors and held a telephone conversation with the local authority's school improvement adviser.

- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about 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 lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum and reviewed documentation for a range of other subjects. He also reviewed school policies, leaders' evaluations and development plans, and documentation setting out support for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead 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 lead inspector spoke with groups of pupils to understand what it is like to be a pupil in this school. He also reviewed 124 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The lead inspector met with members of staff to discuss the school's work and considered responses to the confidential Ofsted staff survey.
- The lead inspector reviewed 56 responses and 31 free-text responses submitted to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

John Constable, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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