

Inspection of a good school: Hempstead Infant School

Hempstead Road, Hempstead, Gillingham, Kent ME7 3QG

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 March 2024

Outcome

Hempstead Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Hempstead Infant School are friendly, cheerful and respectful. They flourish in the safe and happy environment. Pupils enjoy their learning and value the caring staff who are always there to help them.

The core values of 'challenge, resilience, confidence and respect' are woven into the fabric of the school. Pupils understand these clearly, showing kindness to others and a determination to succeed in their work.

The school expects pupils to behave well. Pupils focus attentively during lessons. Right from the start of early years, children benefit from well-structured routines where they get into great habits. Children in early years are industrious, curious learners.

Pupils enjoy attending extra-curricular clubs such as archery, tag rugby and performing arts. They experience learning outside the classroom, through a range of visits and trips. Through their 'helping hands' roles, older pupils support the youngest children at lunchtime. They enjoy being helpful and know that they make a valuable contribution to school life.

Parents and carers are unanimous in their appreciation of the school. They commend the strong support that it provides for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and value the regular information that they receive.

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

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Staff have considered how learning in key stage 1 builds on children's strong experience in early years. Curriculum plans in most subjects set out clearly what pupils need to know at each stage of their education. In physical education, for example, the curriculum is logically sequenced to

allow pupils to build their skills and knowledge over time. However, in a few subjects, the school has not identified with enough precision the knowledge that it will teach pupils. Here, pupils' learning can be more variable and staff do not assess pupils' knowledge as precisely as in the strongest subjects.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. However, a few staff do not have the same level of expertise to support pupils as effectively. This means that some pupils learn less well. Teachers regularly ask pertinent questions to check pupils' understanding during lessons. They carefully consider the most appropriate resources and activities. For example, in mathematics, pupils with SEND make good use of counters when calculating fractions. Skilled staff in early years make sure that learning is relevant and structured, so that children confidently develop their measuring and counting skills. After reading 'The elves and the shoemaker', children were engrossed in measuring their feet to design and make their own shoes. Across most subjects, pupils, including those with SEND recall their learning confidently and achieve well.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils read frequently and achieve highly in the national phonics test. The school has designed a well-considered phonics programme which combines the sounds, writing and meaning of words. Staff make sure that the books that pupils read match the sounds that they have been taught. If pupils fall behind with reading, the school gives them extra help. Nearly all staff are appropriately trained to deliver the school's reading programme as it is intended. However, a few staff are less confident and require additional training.

The school's provision for pupils with SEND has strengthened more recently. It has made improvements in the identification of pupils' SEND needs and in the support provided. Staff tailor learning to meet pupils' specific needs effectively.

Pupils behave well. There is a warm and respectful culture in the school. From early years, pupils are well supported to develop strong social skills and independence. In the past, too many pupils did not attend school regularly enough. The school has since put in effective measures which have helped to improve attendance.

The school has a well-considered personal development curriculum which prepares pupils for life beyond the classroom. Pupils are taught about friendships, families, growing up and making good decisions. They show a sound understanding of online safety. Pupils make regular use of the playground equipment to be physically active at break times. Through the programme 'It's good to be me', pupils learn about equality and diversity. They readily accept difference, with one pupil commenting, 'The important thing is that we're kind to each other.'

School leaders have the support of staff and parents as they strive to make the school the best it can be. The governing body has a clear view of the work of the school. Staff appreciate the consideration of their workload and well-being. They value the highly supportive ethos 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)

- In a few subjects, the curriculum has not been designed precisely enough. The exact knowledge that pupils should be taught has not been clearly identified. This means that there can be variation in the content that is delivered by staff. Staff are not able to check with certainty that pupils have learned and retained. The school should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is planned with the same degree of precision as the strongest. The school should also refine its assessment systems so that it can assured that pupils have learned and remembered the most important knowledge.
- A few members of staff do not have strong pedagogical expertise in delivering reading and mathematics. They do not support pupils' learning as well as the most effective members of staff. The school should ensure that training is put in place for staff who have less expertise in delivering reading and mathematics.

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 September 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	118555
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10296265
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dr. Sarah Burrows
Headteacher	Paul Cross
Website	www.hempsteadschools federation.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school works in a federation with its neighbouring junior school.
- The federation shares a single governing body and a headteacher.
- The headteacher took up post in the infant school in 2019.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs, based in the junior school.
- The school does not currently 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and other subject leaders.

- The inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector spoke to a representative from Medway local authority.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also looked more widely at a range of pupils' work in different subjects.
- 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 safeguarding culture that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour and the school's wider curriculum.
- The inspector talked to pupils and staff throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. This included the views of staff submitted via Ofsted's confidential surveys.
- The inspector considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted's parent survey.

Inspection team

Maria Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024