

Inspection of Hamstel Junior School

Hamstel Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 4PQ

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The headteacher of this school is Christine Farrell. This school is part of Portico Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Cheryl Woolf, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Karen Packer.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and confident. They enjoy demonstrating the 'Hamstel Habits' of determination, courage and excellence. They are enthusiastic about school and like talking about their learning. There are high expectations, modelled well by adults, and pupils meet these expectations.

There are strong relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and work positively with their peers. Pupils trust the adults to take care of them.

Pupils' behaviour in classes is excellent. It is not yet as good outside, but it is improving. Pupils know their 'Hamstel Rights' to be safe, respect and learn. They show this through their respect for others and their environment. They appreciate having resources such as the reading shed and allotment.

The school offers a broad range of opportunities to build pupils' understanding of citizenship. Pupils can join a variety of clubs, such as Glee Club and cooking club. They can make changes to their school through leadership roles, such as Eco-Warriors and the school council. Pupils learn about and contribute to society. They fundraise for charities such as Comic Relief. Pupils learn about events such as International Women's Day and Black History Month.

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

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Leaders have carefully considered the knowledge they want pupils to gain. Teachers use strong subject knowledge to plan well thought out and resourced lessons. Pupils produce work of a high standard. They respond to guidance from their teachers and make improvements to deepen their understanding.

Teachers revisit important knowledge to help pupils remember it easily. Where teaching is most effective, teachers check on pupils' understanding regularly and move pupils on to new learning when they are ready. However, this does not always happen, which slows some pupils' progress.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading. Pupils still at the early stages of learning to read have daily phonics sessions, taught by well-trained staff. Staff work closely with colleagues from the neighbouring infant school to ensure consistency. Pupils who need to improve their fluency read to 'reading assistants' every day, ensuring they catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy reading books often. Daily lessons focus on developing a wide range of reading skills. Most pupils leave as confident, fluent readers.

Leaders ensure they identify pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. They help teachers to put appropriate support in place. Pupils with SEND benefit from skilfully adapted teaching and resources. This supports them to

work independently and access the curriculum successfully. Pupils use resources well to aid their understanding and help them to keep up with their peers. Teachers and other adults check on the understanding of pupils with SEND often and further adapt teaching if needed. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils attend school regularly and punctually. If this is not the case, leaders work closely with families to bring about improvements. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. Pupils follow well-established routines. Most pupils meet the high expectations of behaviour. When there is less adult supervision, behaviour is not always as good. Leaders work closely with staff and parents to help pupils make the right behaviour choices.

The school's offer for pupils' wider development is strong and open to all. Pupils can participate in many activities they may not otherwise experience. They experience a variety of trips, visits and theme days in school. Pupils learn how to stay safe and identify risks. This includes learning about knife crime, gangs and county lines. Professionals visit school to share knowledge about the world of work. This helps pupils consider their futures and recognise the importance of school.

Leaders make thoughtful decisions, with pupils at the heart. The trust provides effective support and challenge to leaders. Staff appreciate the efforts the school makes to manage their workload and well-being. They benefit from purposeful training and opportunities to plan collaboratively with colleagues.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils spend too long learning concepts they already have a firm grasp on. This means that pupils do not all move through the curriculum as quickly as they could. The school should ensure teachers move through the curriculum at a pace that suits the pupils in their classes and recognise when pupils are ready for new learning.

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	143335
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10295087
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	591
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Packer
CEO of trust	Cheryl Woolf
Headteacher	Christine Farrell
Website	www.hamsteljuniors.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club for pupils.
- The school has been a member of the Portico Academy Trust since September 2016.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the members of the senior leadership team, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and several subject leaders. They also met with a trustee, the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, physical education and art. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Sarah Fowler, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Ofsted Inspector
Ania Vaughan	Ofsted Inspector

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