

Inspection of a good school: Squirrels Heath Junior School

Squirrels Heath Junior School, Salisbury Road, Romford, Essex, RM2 5TP

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Visitors receive a warm welcome at this vibrant and friendly school. Staff have high expectations for pupils' learning. Pupils study a broad range of subjects and achieve very well. Pupils are highly motivated and learn to study with increasing independence as they move up the school. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils know the school rules well and understand why they are important. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are trusted to conduct themselves with independence and maturity. Many pupils take on roles of responsibility, including supporting their peers with reading. Pupils actively look for opportunities to demonstrate the school values of respect, courage, growth, passion and togetherness. They work hard to be the best they can be.

There is a thriving outdoor learning environment. Pupils look forward to their lunchtimes where they take part in a wide range of organised games and activities. Pupils benefit from the exceptional outdoor provision, including the sensory garden and biodome, where they learn about the growing cycle and how to care for plants and wildlife. There is a popular French club where pupils learn about French culture and customs and communicate regularly with pupils in a French school.

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

The school has embedded a broad and well-sequenced curriculum which has been carefully designed to build on what pupils learn in the associated infant school. The curriculum in some subjects is highly ambitious. Careful consideration has been given to sequencing so that pupils build up the knowledge they need to take on more complex learning further up the school. For example, in science, pupils first learn how to identify and classify different parts of the skeleton and the jobs that each part does. Further up

the school, pupils learn the Latin names for different parts of the body and how this applies to medicine. This helps them to understand the importance of science in our everyday lives.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This is because the school prioritises subject-specific training for staff. In lessons, teachers use their knowledge to teach pupils the distinct vocabulary and skills for each subject. For example, in design and technology, pupils learn how to follow a design brief and how to apply evaluation criteria. They learn to use tools, such as saws and cutting equipment competently and safely. This enables them to use a wide range of materials in their product design. Staff carefully consider which adaptations are needed so that pupils with SEND have the same access to a highly ambitious curriculum.

Reading generates genuine excitement around the school. Pupils look forward to the weekly raffle and the chance to win a book. Pupils enjoy using the catalogue of book reviews written by their peers to help with their book choices. The popular online book club supports older pupils and those with additional needs, to engage in conversations about reading. The school works closely with the infant school to ensure that pupils struggling with their reading are identified promptly and get the support they need. The phonics programme is delivered by experienced and trained staff. As a result, pupils make rapid progress when they join the school.

Behaviour is a strength across the school. Relationships are warm and staff are supportive and encouraging. Pupils show a deep commitment to their education and enjoy sharing what they have learnt. In lessons, pupils ask thoughtful and relevant questions. Pupils manage their conduct around the school very well. They are polite, helpful and considerate. Where needed, they help each other to meet the high expectations set by staff.

The way the school develops pupils' character is exceptional. Pupils develop a deep sense of responsibility for their own actions and strong knowledge of how they can help take care of the environment. There is a rich and varied clubs offer which is very well attended. Pupils regularly take part in sporting events and Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential trip. The school takes online safety very seriously. Pupils are taught how to manage their online profiles and interactions safely and parents and carers value the information, support and workshops provided for them. Pupils know there are adults they can speak to and are quick to report any concerns. This ensures that they feel safe at school.

The school sets high expectations for attendance and pupils attend well. The school continues to do all it can to ensure any barriers to attendance are addressed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 December 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	102303
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10323314
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Cane, Marie Smith (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Mary Shipton
Website	www.shj.havering.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	5 – 6 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out this ungraded 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. 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, modern foreign languages, design and technology. 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 inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector met with school leaders, members of the local governing body and a representative of the local authority.

- 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Polly Haste, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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