Inspection of Pixmore Junior School

Rushby Mead, Letchworth, Hertfordshire SG6 1RS

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Pixmore Junior School. They know and proudly apply the school's learning powers of 'resourcefulness, reactive, resilience'. Pupils like that staff are ambitious about what they can achieve, and they are keen to learn. Pupils enjoy the different subjects they study and happily talk about what they know.

There are many different opportunities pupils have to develop their skills. This includes the chance to learn to play musical instruments such as ocarinas, recorders or glockenspiels. Pupils also like the range of school trips that they can take part in. This includes visits to a local gallery, museums and a residential trip. These experiences align to and complement the curriculum that pupils learn.

The school looks after pupils well. Pupils are confident adults in the school will deal with any incidents of bullying if it occurs. Pupils are happy to go to staff if they are struggling or have any worries about either school or home.

Pupils behave well in class. They are happy at lunchtimes and playtimes as they are well supported. There is a wide range of activities available for them to take part in. Pupils enjoy playing games such as tennis, basketball, table tennis and football together. There is a harmonious atmosphere.

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

The school has designed an interesting and well-sequenced curriculum. Learning is planned in small, manageable steps. Previous learning is reinforced, recapped and practised in class. In most subject areas, there is a clear link between the choice of task and the knowledge the pupils need to master. Teachers adapt how they teach pupils so that they meet their needs. This has led to an improvement in published outcomes in 2024. However, in a minority of lessons, the choice of work does not match pupils' ability well enough. This affects pupils' progress, as when this happens, pupils are not receiving the right opportunities to develop their understanding and skills.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to develop the skills required to be good readers. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have created a clear reading programme that builds pupils knowledge in a structured, sequential way. This starts with phonics in Year 3. It develops across the school so that pupils are fluent readers by Year 6. Staff use timely checks on pupils' learning to monitor progress. Teachers build warm, trusting relationships with the pupils. As a result, pupils are keen to please them by putting in the effort into their reading.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. A robust system is in place to identify the needs of pupils who need extra help. The range of adjustments includes the use of calm areas and movement breaks. The bespoke programmes the school plans help pupils to be successful in school. The school works with and seeks support from a wide range of external agencies.

The school has successfully improved attendance. Over the past year, the school has been effective in its work with families to improve the attendance of their children. There are effective systems for monitoring attendance. These include clear daily procedures for checking on absent pupils.

The school has high expectations for behaviour. If incidents of poor behaviour occur, the school is quick to deal with them. Staff are swift to support pupils if they lose focus.

Pupils' personal development is well promoted. Through the curriculum content, pupils enjoy opportunities to celebrate different languages and cultures. These are marked through themed days and weeks. There are high take-up rates for the many engaging activities provided by the school. These include drawing club, philosophy club and choir.

Governors are diligent in undertaking their statutory duties. They monitor the school systematically. This allows governors to have a detailed knowledge of its strengths and areas for development. Governors are critical friends who challenge the school but also provide it with support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, pupils are not consistently being given appropriate opportunities to apply their skills. This is because work is not always matched effectively to pupils' abilities and does not allow them to make progress. Leaders need to ensure that staff receive appropriate training to develop their subject knowledge so that they sequence and adapt learning to meet the needs of pupils in all subjects.

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	117259
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345182
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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Nicholson
Headteacher	Sarah Inman
Website	www.pixmore.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	6 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a change to school leadership since the previous inspection with the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders, other members of staff and the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, physical education and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke with teachers. The lead inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes. They observed their behaviour during these times. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors had informal conversations with parents at the end of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors analysed the 27 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. They also held discussions with several staff during the inspection.

Inspection team

James Adkins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ania Vaughan	Ofsted Inspector

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