

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Hartsfield Junior Mixed and Infant School

Clothall Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 6PB

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 January 2025

Outcome

Hartsfield Junior Mixed and Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this happy school. They appreciate and benefit from positive relationships with staff and each other. Pupils are confident that they are listened to and helped with any worries or concerns. This helps them to feel safe. Pupils pride themselves on making everyone feel welcome in their school.

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils happily rise to meet these expectations. Overall, they make strong progress through the curriculum.

Pupils' conduct embodies the school values of 'care for learning, learning to care'. This begins as soon as children start school. In the early years, children quickly learn to take turns and to listen carefully to others. Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. Staff support pupils effectively to meet the school's high expectations of their behaviour.

Pupils benefit from the many extra-curricular activities that bring the curriculum to life. They enjoy the close links with the local community. Pupils are proud of the contributions they make to help improve the school. They feel well prepared for their next steps.

Most parents and carers spoke positively about the school and would recommend it to others. Pupils thrive at this caring, supportive school.

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

The school has designed an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. It has considered what it wants pupils to learn and when. This is particularly the case in mathematics and reading. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in these areas.

The school has identified writing as a focus area and has introduced clear, detailed plans. Over time, pupils develop their understanding of writing for different purposes. These initiatives are in their infancy, and the impact is not yet fully evident in pupils' work. Some older pupils need further support to independently apply their knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar in their writing across the curriculum.

Teachers explain new learning to pupils clearly. There is a focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. Generally, teachers establish what pupils know and where there might be gaps in their understanding. However, in some cases, teachers do not identify specific gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that, sometimes, teachers are not as informed as they could be in shaping the next steps that pupils should take. This prevents some pupils from learning as well as they could.

Children learn to read as soon as they start school. Teachers identify pupils who are struggling with their reading. When pupils fall behind, teachers provide support so that they catch up quickly. The school has carefully selected texts encouraging pupils to learn about different ways of life. Pupils enjoy reading an increasingly wide range of texts.

In Reception, children settle quickly into school routines. Relationships are strong and children play well together. Children are provided with the encouragement they need to become independent. They learn the school's values through meaningful activities, such as by taking turns and being responsible. The school provides children with a learning environment in which they practise what they have learned. Children enjoy exploring the school's inspiring outdoor area and learn how to take safe risks in their play. Learning is purposeful and supports children in making a strong start to their education.

The school is determined that all its pupils benefit from the full breadth of the curriculum, so it reviews its support for pupils with SEND carefully. Staff have the information they need to support pupils with SEND. Parents appreciate the thoughtful support that their children receive. Systems are being refined to identify these pupils' additional needs.

The school has ensured that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school draws on local expertise to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious and cultural beliefs. Pupils understand that everyone should be treated with respect, regardless of their differences. A wide range of trips, visits and visitors enhance pupils' wider development. Pupils explore their local area to develop their understanding of life in the past and present. They understand the importance of keeping fit and eating healthy foods. They learn how to build positive relationships with others and how to stay safe, including online.

The school understands what it does well and which aspects it can improve further. Governors hold leaders accountable for the school's performance effectively. The school carries out its statutory responsibilities well. Staff value the support they receive. Leaders are mindful of staff's workload and well-being and take steps to support them in these areas. Staff enjoy their work and are committed to doing their best for pupils.

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 subjects, the school has not ensured that the curriculum and its teaching by staff help pupils to produce high-quality writing. Some older pupils have gaps in their understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The school should ensure that teachers have the curriculum and skills to support pupils to develop the quality of their writing across the full range of genres and purposes.
- Sometimes, the school does not make sure that teachers identify well where pupils have gaps in their learning. At these times, teachers are not as informed as they could be when shaping pupils' future learning. This weakness hinders some pupils from learning all that they could. The school should support teachers well to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding accurately.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2016.

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	117376
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10366648
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sian Chrimes
Headteacher	Philippa Smith
Website	www.hartsfield.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- A before- and after-school club operates on the school premises. This is managed by an external company and is inspected separately by Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector conducted further meetings with staff regarding safeguarding, special educational needs provision, behaviour, attendance and pupils' personal development.

- 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 pupil survey and Ofsted's staff survey. He considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Simon Eardley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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