

Inspection of Highover Junior Mixed and Infant School

Cambridge Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 0JP

Inspection dates:	28 and 29 January 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of this cheerful and welcoming school. They embrace every educational opportunity, in part because of the staff's enthusiasm for learning. Additionally, staff foster positive relationships by caring for and understanding pupils as individuals. Pupils know this and find it reassuring.

Staff have consistently high expectations of the pupils. Teachers place great trust in the pupils to make the right choices, and generally, they do. Support is readily available for those pupils who require more guidance with this.

Pupils learn to be independent at every stage of their time at the school. This prepares them for future challenges. They also have a strong sense of self-worth and resilience. These are essential skills for when pupils complete tasks unaided, such as solving a challenging mathematics problem.

Excellent teaching and broad subject curriculums develop pupils' knowledge well. Pupils particularly enjoy explaining their views on current issues, such as the impact of climate change on coral reefs and its effects on humans and animals.

The youngest children learn important social skills, such as sharing and getting along with one another. Older pupils are positive role models. They help younger pupils with reading and play, showing them kindness and consideration.

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

The school has developed a well-thought-through and carefully considered curriculum. Teachers know what knowledge to teach and when. They have strong subject knowledge. Support for this is ongoing and effective. This means teachers can expertly explain new knowledge to pupils. Furthermore, teachers use well-chosen models to guide pupils and provide clear processes to follow. As a result, pupils can complete tasks successfully. In the early years, children also develop self-reliance through well-structured tasks that capture their interests. These tasks also develop other essential skills and, with adult support, build up children's vocabulary. Children are exceptionally well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

Staff check pupils' understanding expertly. This means they can check for gaps in pupils' knowledge and that misconceptions rarely arise. Pupils discuss their learning confidently with others. This further develops their knowledge because they must carefully consider their answers. Pupils' knowledge develops superbly well because they can provide thorough and precise explanations of essential information, verbally and in writing. This all helps pupils remember their learning exceptionally well.

The school prioritises pupils' learning to read. In the early years, children read, enjoy and share books. Staff help children to learn about rhyme and rhythm. This supports their ability to differentiate the sounds in words. Alongside this, expert staff teach a highly effective phonics programme. Any pupils who are not fluent readers receive extra

teaching from knowledgeable staff. Pupils can develop their phonics knowledge for as long as they need. This ensures that pupils become confident and fluent readers. Pupils enjoy reading books about a wide range of topics and from diverse authors. Overall, pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified accurately. Staff and parents and carers work together to create individual plans for pupils who need them. Sometimes, pupils receive more targeted support and guidance. Mostly, pupils with SEND work alongside their classmates. Skilled teachers provide tasks that enable them to access the curriculum successfully. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve highly.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Staff help pupils to learn to be independent. This includes learning how to manage their feelings and behaviour. Pupils develop highly positive attitudes to learning. In the early years, children learn the vocabulary associated with their feelings and some strategies for managing these. Older pupils learn that they can control their actions and why this is important. Pupils who find this more challenging have extra support. This means behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils' learning is rarely disturbed by the behaviour of others.

The school immerses pupils in learning about and understanding equality and diversity. Cultural events and learning about other religions are integral to the curriculum. As a result, pupils are impressively well informed. They are also proud of their uniqueness. The school's work to prepare pupils for life in modern British society is exemplary.

The school and the governors provide pupils with an excellent, well-rounded education. They provide strong leadership that ensures the school meets pupils' changing needs. The positive outcomes pupils achieve reflect this. Parents are highly positive about the school and the support their children receive. Staff feel their workload is manageable and that leaders consider their well-being. Staff appreciate the ongoing training that develops their teaching to a high standard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	117115
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10378461
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jonathan Kirby
Headteacher	Lisa Hayes
Website	www.highover.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector

met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also met with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dive in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions with leaders about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke to leaders and pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils in class, in small groups and on the playground. They also met with parents at morning drop off at school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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