

Inspection of a good school: Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School

Peascroft Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 8ER

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are positive about their learning. They like getting praise from their teachers and being rewarded with team points for their efforts. Pupils proudly wear badges for 'star handwriter'. They are excited to get the weekly class teacher award. Pupils know that they must work hard to impress their teachers. They have fun as they take part in times tables and spelling challenges.

Pupils value how much adults care about them. They are respectful to adults in return. Pupils listen well in class. Most pupils play well together. They like having access to lots of outdoor play areas and equipment. Pupils say that if anyone does not follow the school rules or is unkind, adults sort it out immediately. Pupils appreciate that everyone is treated fairly. They have confidence in trusted adults to help them with any worries. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe.

All year groups benefit from trips and visits that bring the curriculum to life. Pupils regularly experience new things, such as going on a train or boat, visiting the seaside, seeing London landmarks and cooking for themselves.

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

Leaders have designed a comprehensive curriculum. They have decided the order in which knowledge needs to be taught from Nursery through to Year 6. They have provided effective training for new subject leaders. Leaders and teachers have good subject knowledge. However, in some foundation subjects, leaders have not ensured that there is enough precision as to what knowledge is the most important for pupils to learn. This means that teachers do not cover in enough depth the vital knowledge that pupils must know in these subjects.

Teachers know their pupils well. They successfully adapt activities to meet pupils' needs, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers

address pupils' misconceptions effectively. Leaders ensure that pupils with more complex needs are well supported to access the curriculum.

Reading is prioritised. Well-trained adults ensure that pupils learn to read quickly from as soon as they start school. Pupils learn the sounds they need to know methodically and they practise them regularly. Pupils have reading books that are matched accurately to their reading ability. Leaders have ensured that pupils from Nursery onwards read high-quality books to develop their vocabulary. Adults regularly check how well pupils are reading. They quickly put in place any additional support. As a result, most pupils who find reading tricky do catch up. Older pupils read with fluency and understand what they are reading. Pupils like the school library, which has lots of books to choose from.

Pupils achieve the expectations of the work given by their teachers. In some areas, pupils learn and achieve very well, such as in spelling, grammar and punctuation and times tables. However, some teachers do not ensure that activities help pupils to apply their learning in more complex ways. This includes for children in the Nursery and Reception classes in the outdoor area. As a result, some pupils complete work given to them in lessons quickly and without using their knowledge to solve more complex problems. These pupils do not learn and achieve as highly as they could.

Pupils engage well with their learning. Children in early years can share and take turns. All teachers ensure that lessons are calm so pupils can concentrate. Pupils know and follow learning routines so that no time is wasted in getting on with their work. Leaders are effective in providing support for pupils who need additional help in making appropriate behaviour choices.

Pupils take an active part in school life. They are encouraged to take on roles within the school council and can become 'well-being' and sports leaders. This develops their understanding of responsibility. Pupils are taught about how to respect others, and incidents of prejudicial behaviour are rare. They understand about healthy relationships. Pupils develop a broad understanding of other religions and cultures. They have visits from a range of religious leaders. Pupils develop their interests in extra-curricular clubs, which many take part in.

Staff are very dedicated. They value their close teamwork and enjoy their job. Most staff feel that leaders have reduced unnecessary administrative work so they can focus on their core role.

Governors know the school well. They hold leaders to account. Leaders, including governors, have been mindful of improving partnerships with parents and carers. A small but significant minority of parents feel that there is a lack of positive communication from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They understand how to stay safe online. Lessons in school by teachers and visits from external visitors teach pupils how to speak out and share concerns. Leaders provide safe spaces for pupils who want to talk about any worries. Pupils are confident in staff to look after them.

Staff and governors have up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff know how to report concerns about pupils or adults. Leaders respond promptly and with tenacity to these concerns.

Leaders ensure that all adults in school have undergone the required pre-employment checks. Governors provide effective oversight of safeguarding.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not identified precisely the most important knowledge that teachers need to teach. This means pupils are not securing key knowledge in enough depth in these subjects. Leaders need to decide the most important knowledge they want pupils to know and signpost this clearly in the curriculum. Teachers need to check that pupils have secured this key knowledge before moving their learning on.
- Some pupils across the school are not always set work that meets the ambitious aims of the curriculum. This means some pupils complete work without drawing sufficiently on their knowledge. In order for all pupils to fully achieve what they are capable of teachers need to ensure that work set consistently meets the high expectations of their curriculum.
- Some parents and carers do not feel well informed about school decisions and actions. They feel that leaders do not communicate well with them. Leaders, including governors, need to continue their work in building positive working relationships with parents and carers so that these stakeholders feel confident in leadership and governance communication.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2014.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 117368 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10288459 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 461 |
| Appropriate authority | Local authority |
| Chair of governing body | Stuart Upson |
| Headteacher | Richard Haynes |
| Website | hobbshillwood.herts.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 February 2018 under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school runs its own before- and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and some support staff. The inspector also met representatives from the governing body and from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff. The inspector also heard a selection of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector also looked at a selection of pupils' work across the curriculum and spoke to several subject leaders.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including minutes of meetings of the governing board and the school's self-evaluation document.
- The inspector looked at the arrangements for safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks. The inspector spoke with leaders and staff about the systems and processes to support safeguarding and about the safeguarding ethos in the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 107 free-text comments. The inspector also considered the 36 responses to the staff survey. There were 168 responses to the pupil survey. The inspector also spoke to many pupils across the school during the inspection.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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