

Inspection of a good school: Hobletts Manor Junior School

Adeyfield Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 5JS

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

Hobletts Manor Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at Hobletts Manor Junior School. They celebrate diversity and know that they are all special and unique. The school provides an inclusive environment in which pupils flourish. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Learning is valued and pupils work hard to meet teachers' high expectations. Pupils achieve well in most areas of the curriculum. They learn about resilience and perseverance. They understand how important these qualities will be as they move through life. Older pupils are prepared effectively for the move to secondary school.

This is a supportive community. Pupils are kind and they behave well. The playground is a harmonious place, thanks to the leadership skills of Year 6 pupils who run activities for their younger peers. Pupils say bullying does not happen and if it did the adults would sort it out.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of sports, including more unusual ones, such as lacrosse. Inspirational visitors help to prepare them for their future lives. These include an author, a chiropractor, a science teacher from the nearby secondary school, and a physically impaired musician. Pupils learn that there are no limits to what they can achieve.

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

Over a period of time, leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. It sets out the order of teaching and breaks learning down into small steps. These build towards end points that leaders have identified for each subject and year group.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They present information well and explain new concepts clearly, using a range of methods to check pupils' understanding. These include

'exit tickets' at the end of each lesson, which allow staff to identify gaps in pupils' learning. If pupils need extra help, this is put in place quickly.

Pupils know the routines and expectations of behaviour. Learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils take pride in their work. They remember what they have learned and use this effectively when tackling new concepts. This is particularly true in mathematics, which is a strength in the school. In Year 5, for example, pupils use their knowledge of multiplication facts to find percentages of numbers.

In subjects such as geography and history, curriculum plans identify the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn, specific to each subject. Leaders want pupils to understand, for example, what makes a good geographer or a good historian. Pupils can recall the content they have learned and use appropriate vocabulary. However, their ability to talk about subject-specific knowledge and skills, such as interpreting historical events, is still developing.

Leaders prioritise and promote a love of reading. Pupils visit the well-stocked library once a week to choose their reading books. These are carefully matched to their reading stage. Daily reading lessons expose pupils to high-quality texts and teach them essential reading skills. Older pupils still in the early stages of reading are identified quickly. They get extra help with phonics, so they become more fluent readers.

Provision for pupils with SEND is designed with their specific needs in mind. Sometimes, their needs are complex. Leaders ensure that staff are trained to support these pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged take part in all aspects of school life.

There are many opportunities for pupils to thrive outside the classroom. Visits to the theatre, a Hindu temple and London Zoo are among the trips offered. Pupils can sing, dance, act, or play a range of sports at extra-curricular clubs after school, or at lunchtime. The 'sunshine club' offers pupils the option of a calmer breaktime, away from the busy playground.

Staff are motivated and proud to work at the school. Senior leaders look after staff well-being and always consider workload when planning changes. The relatively new governors are committed to their role. They share the leadership team's desire for continuous improvement. They visit the school regularly, so they are well known and to check leaders are carrying out their vision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's systems for ensuring the safety of pupils are robust. Staff are trained to know what to look out for and what to do if they have a concern. Leaders keep thorough records and act swiftly when a concern is raised. All staff are vigilant to the signs of potential risk. Leaders ensure that the necessary checks on adults working at the school are carried out.

Pupils are aware of the risks involved in working or playing online. They learn about personal safety and know to speak out if they have any worries about themselves or their friends.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The way the curriculum is delivered in a small number of subjects does not always make subject-specific aspects of the learning explicit. Consequently, pupils do not always understand and remember the knowledge and skills specific to these subjects that teachers expect them to. Leaders should continue to support teachers to refine their methods of delivery of the curriculum to ensure pupils build secure, subject-specific knowledge in each area.

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 June 2013.

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

Unique reference number	117097
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255249
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs of governing body	Daniel Taylor and Rajinder Rall
Headteacher	Sally Short
Website	www.hoblettsjm.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides before- and after-school childcare, run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- At the time of the inspection, school leaders were not using any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils

read to a familiar adult. She also looked at curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work for geography.

- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a deputy DSL to review records. She scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. She also spoke with governors, staff, pupils and parents.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan, external reviews of the school and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone to discuss her work with the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with pupils from different year groups during lessons and at lunchtime. There were 177 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.
- To gather parents' views, the lead inspector reviewed the 57 responses and 34 free text responses submitted to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- The lead inspector gathered the views of staff by speaking with several of them and reviewing the 23 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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