

Hunsdon Junior Mixed and Infant School

High Street, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 8NT

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The passion and commitment of governors, leaders and staff for the welfare and education of children ensure that pupils thrive.
- Children gain a firm foundation in Reception, which enables them to excel and make outstanding progress through the school. As a result, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is high across English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is consistently skilful and highly effective. Pupils have excellent tuition and support from their class teacher, teaching assistants and some subject-specialist teachers.
- Pupils benefit from the continuity of teaching and care brought about by a stable staff group. Teachers know the pupils and their families well.
- The school constantly reviews and plans for the needs of all its pupils. It is highly inclusive and, as a result, pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make very strong progress.
- Leaders responded rapidly to the areas for improvement in the short inspection that took place in June 2018. Outstanding outcomes and the high level of care for pupils also demonstrate that the school has highly effective leadership and the capacity to improve further.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. Pupils display great enthusiasm for learning. They and their parents and carers are exceptionally positive about all aspects of the school.
- Teachers are alert to the need to stay up to date with teaching requirements. They ensure that they understand the standards for pupils' assessment through moderating work with other schools.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are a high priority. The school provides a broad, interesting and highly engaging curriculum that ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- The headteacher and staff are starting to arrange opportunities to share ideas, knowledge and planning with teachers from other local schools.
- Pupils enjoy a rich curriculum that introduces them to languages, humanities, and musical, scientific and mathematical knowledge. Leaders recognise that the next step is to identify essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to acquire in the long term for success.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the curriculum, by sharpening the focus of staff on the essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to acquire in the long term, within and across different subjects and topics.
- Develop opportunities for teachers to interact with and share ideas and knowledge with others in different schools.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher has earned the trust and respect of staff, pupils and parents. He, with governors, works relentlessly to ensure excellent provision across the school.
- Subject leaders train staff to teach their subjects well and check the quality of teaching through a range of useful monitoring activity. For example, subject leaders for English and mathematics were able to explain how the small number of classes enables them to observe teaching of their subject across the whole school in the time allocated to their role. They closely monitor the progress of pupils in their subjects and ensure that all groups of pupils make progress across the curriculum.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The inspector observed pupils learning about music, religious education, art, physical education (PE), science, mathematics and English. Pupils were able to tell the inspector about their recent work linked to keeping safe through a fire safety talk and fire service visit. They also talked about how English was brought alive through the recent visit of an author.
- There are many extra-curricular opportunities extending pupils' skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities. Given such a small number of staff, the range of extra activities is extensive and includes: the French club, the music club, the sports club, the dance club, football clubs, netball clubs, the choir and the 'alphabake' club. Pupils were very enthusiastic about the tech club, which is returning after Christmas.
- Staff at all levels are continually striving to improve the school, and their recent track record gives confidence in their capacity to continue doing so. Following the short inspection in June 2018, leaders quickly implemented plans to combine writing across all subjects into one book. This small change has helped to improve the quality of writing significantly. This is because pupils are taking more care and teachers are applying common high expectations for writing across all subjects.
- As a result of the constant review of how things are done and the pursuit of excellence, the school now has a track record of pupils attaining and progressing significantly above the national average by the end of key stage 2. The school strives for high achievement in all subject areas. In sport, for example, the school has achieved a School Games Mark gold award, and is now working towards similar external accreditation for its science provision.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate and reflects the deep understanding that governors and the headteacher have of their school and its many strengths and possible areas for improvement.
- Teachers are appreciative of the headteacher's care for their well-being. One commented, 'Anything we are asked to do is always in the interest of the children.'
- The pupil premium is used very well to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders carefully identify the barriers for learning for each individual and put in appropriate support to enable them to have an excellent experience in school.
- The PE and sport premium is used very effectively to drive up standards in PE and ensure that pupils enjoy the subject and achieve well. The money partly funds a sports

coach, who works very effectively with teachers to raise pupils' skills in PE. As a result, in addition to high levels of participation in sporting activity, all pupils exercise daily through participating in either 'the daily mile' or teacher-led dance sessions.

- Leaders ensure that spending to support pupils with SEND is used very effectively. They constantly review and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions. Teachers' careful planning ensures that their teaching meets the specific needs of individual pupils. Teaching assistants are assigned to support where they are most needed and can have most impact.
- The school promotes equality and diversity very well and there have been no cases of prejudice-related incidents. All groups of pupils are integrated well into all activities, as was demonstrated in various lessons where the needs of individual pupils with different learning needs were planned for very well. As a result, all groups of pupils make excellent progress.
- The proportion of parents responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, was very high, and the positivity of responses demonstrates the excellent links between the school and home. Parents, pupils and staff responding to the inspection surveys were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school, including its leadership. All parents responding would recommend the school. A typical comment was, 'Hunsdon is a fantastic school and both of my children are very lucky and privileged to attend. The staff are fantastic, and the range of activities is excellent. As parents we feel like we have landed on our feet with this school.'
- Leaders make a positive contribution to the wider education system. For example, the headteacher is the treasurer of the local 'cluster' of schools. Currently, staff meet to moderate standards, but further opportunities for them to plan and develop approaches to teaching are being developed.
- Pupils gain knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. However, teachers recognise that they do not yet identify and check that pupils have the key building blocks of knowledge and understanding that they will need to ensure long-term success in different subjects.

Governance of the school

- Governors play a key role in the school's success. They have balanced the academic success of the school with its community character as its performance and reputation have risen.
- Governors support the headteacher and staff, but are also rigorous in challenging the reports brought to them, for example in examining the reasons for the dip in published data in key stage 2 writing in 2018. They investigated and were rightly satisfied with the individual explanations.
- Governors check that all levels of staff are rewarded through pay increases that reflect the achievement of their targets. They bring professional expertise to this activity.
- Governors are proactive in succession planning, ensuring that there is the capacity to support members of staff to develop their full potential.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors and leaders are rigorous in ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective. Governors bring relevant professional expertise to this area of the school's work.
- Attention to pupil safety and well-being permeates the school. Teachers know their pupils well and are quick to bring any anxieties about pupil welfare to the attention of leaders. Carefully written records reflect the care and concern of staff.
- Records of the school's contact with other agencies and schools are well maintained to enable ease of checking and demonstrate how tenaciously safeguarding leaders follow up concerns.
- Pupils feel safe. All of the very high number of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, believed their child is safe in school. Pupils and staff agreed.
- E-safety policy guidance and teaching result in pupils being well aware of the potential dangers when online.
- 'Prevent' duty training has enabled all staff to feel confident to challenge any views or behaviour from pupils were they ever to cause concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils of all abilities feel very well supported by teachers who care greatly about their progress.
- Teachers have very secure subject knowledge that lends confidence to their teaching; this is true across a wide range of subjects. For example, in a Year 1 and Year 2 music lesson, pupils clearly enjoyed singing. Their singing ability was developed well through expert modelling by the teacher and carefully planned activities designed to develop specific skills using a variety of musical equipment.
- Clear and established routines enable lessons to run smoothly. The brisk transitions between different classroom activities makes the most of learning time. Classrooms are exciting and vibrant, yet calm and purposeful places in which pupils can learn.
- Teachers plan lessons taking into account pupils' prior learning. The evidence of effective planning is seen in the way lessons are adapted to meet the needs and interests of specific pupils in the class. Teaching assistants are highly effective and work well with pupils to improve their learning.
- Class teachers have very high expectations of pupils. Teachers use questioning very well to ensure that pupils make the most of their learning opportunities. The inspector saw how staff skilfully checked pupils' knowledge and understanding, involving a range of pupils with precise questioning that challenged and developed their thinking.

- Leaders and teachers carefully monitor the progress of pupils and give extra help as soon as any pupil is identified as falling behind. The impact of any extra provision is monitored carefully and adapted as necessary to ensure that pupils catch up.
- Teachers have devised a marking system that avoids an excessive workload. Pupils find the precise guidance from their teachers extremely helpful, so that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve. Pupils also value the checks that they often carry out on each other's work.
- Parents and pupils are positive about the nature of homework. Staff have worked with parents to ensure that homework is supported and appropriate to the needs of the pupils.
- Teachers plan effectively for the two-year groups within each class, ensuring that work is clearly planned, so that all pupils are challenged and able to fulfil their potential.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils develop a very strong understanding of different cultures around the world. For example, the school sponsors two named children who come from the Dalit people of southern India. A resident living in Hunsdon regularly visits the children and brings back photographs, videos and letters to share with the pupils.
- Through the curriculum and assemblies, pupils develop a secure understanding of different faiths and cultures in modern Britain.
- Pupils learn to look out for the needs of others both in and out of school. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility for looking after younger children in the school.
- Pupils are very respectful of one another and accept differences. Values of democracy, tolerance and respect for the rule of law are modelled well. For example, in their artwork and in the planting of trees to commemorate the end of the First World War, pupils recognised those from the village who had participated in the war.
- Circle-time sessions reinforce the need to respect each other and the importance of listening to the views and opinions of others. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and understand the consequences of their own and other's actions.
- Pupils have a deep understanding of what does and what does not constitute bullying. They are aware of its different forms. They are confident that if it were to occur, it would be dealt with well. They know whom to approach and how to draw attention to any concerns.
- Pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to learning and take great pride in their work. Pupils are very keen learners who engage in tasks and class discussion with great enthusiasm. Teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils present work neatly and take pride in their work in all subjects.
- The curriculum and the interactions between pupils and adults ensure that pupils feel safe. For example, the recent visit from the fire service taught pupils about fire hazards

and keeping themselves safe. Pupils are taught about internet safety and know what to do if they are contacted online by people they do not know.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Around the school at break- and lunchtimes, pupils get on really well together. The dining hall at lunchtime is a lovely, harmonious setting. Pupils display good table manners.
- In lessons, pupils' passion for learning shines through. Any instances of teachers needing to manage poor behaviour are rare and where it is necessary, the school's policy is used quickly, quietly and effectively. Pupils, staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above the national average. Pupils are very punctual to school and to their lessons.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's indoor and outside environment stimulates learning and offers lots of activities to keep pupils enjoying their learning and their playtime together. Displays of pupils' work around the school are respected.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Children begin school in early years with broadly typical abilities. They make increasingly strong progress in Reception and key stage 1, so that by the end of key stage 2, their progress is well above average and their attainment is very high.
- Over the last three years, progress and attainment have been well above the national average. Over recent years, pupils' progress through key stage 2 in reading and writing have been consistently in the top fifth of schools nationally. In 2018, progress in reading was in the top tenth of schools. The three-year average attainment in key stage 2 in reading and in mathematics was in the top ten in 2018.
- Attainment is strong in key stage 1 where, for example, in 2018, pupils' attainment in writing was in the top ten of schools.
- The progress of current pupils seen in lessons is once again very strong. The high levels of achievement across a wide range of subjects prepare pupils exceptionally well for secondary education.
- Pupils develop highly effective strategies for reading. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is very high. As a result, pupils read fluently and greatly enjoy reading a variety of books. Younger pupils demonstrated to the inspector that they have very effective strategies for reading unfamiliar words.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than other pupils nationally with similar starting points. By the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils in the school attain just as well or better than other pupils nationally. Part of the reason for the success is that teachers ensure that pupils develop a wide vocabulary, through encouraging them to use subject-specific words naturally across the curriculum.

- Pupils with SEND make progress in line with that for all pupils. This is because their learning is very well managed. Staff use the information they are given about the specific needs of pupils to plan activities that meet these needs. A parent told the inspector, 'My child has always been given the extra support that he needs throughout his time there. They have worked with him and me to find the best way to help him learn. His teachers have made themselves available to talk to me when I have needed it.'
- The most able pupils make strong progress because they are challenged and stretched to meet teachers' high expectations.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children do very well, making at least good progress from their different starting points. There is a rising trend in outcomes which are at, or in many areas above, the national average. These outcomes are achieved quickly.
- Children only spend the end of the early years foundation stage at the school. They arrive at the school from a variety or no previous settings. Their attainment on entry is average, but with a very large range of abilities.
- The relationships that are built with children's families are exceptionally strong. This helps pupils settle very quickly into the school. Parents have pride in their children's work. For example, when the inspector asked for additional evidence, such as some examples of work from last year, within half an hour he was inundated with examples that parents rushed to bring into school.
- The early years provision is very effectively led and managed. The leader is dedicated and committed to ensuring that all children get the best start. The leader's expertise, established over many years, means they are recognised as the 'go-to' person in the local area for advice on giving children a very solid foundation to enable rapid progress as they move through primary school.
- A rich and stimulating learning environment provides a range of high-quality learning opportunities to enable children to make strong progress in all areas of learning. The written work in children's books and their learning journeys, in which staff record how well children are doing, show that all children are making strong progress from their different starting points at the beginning of Reception Year.
- At the time of the inspection, children had only been in school for a few weeks. Through the rapid development of excellent working relationships, Reception staff had already created a climate where children had adopted secure routines and expectations of behaviour and cooperated with one another. They had learned to listen well to adults and to one another with respect and to avoid interrupting.
- Children's 2017/18 learning journey folders showed a wide variety of work across a wide range of topics. They demonstrated the very strong development of basic skills in reading, writing and number, and strong personal and social development, preparing them exceptionally well for future learning.

- The inspector observed very effective teaching of phonics, successfully building the mechanics of, and strategies for, reading. The foundations for the excellent reading outcomes in Year 6 are laid in the Reception class.
- There are very good opportunities to learn about people who may be different. For example, a visitor used songs and drama to help children realise that they are all unique. Another opportunity to learn about difference was when children learned about the Jewish mezuzah, through story and song.
- Safeguarding is highly effective. Staff are regularly and well trained. Daily risk assessments, established routines and procedures ensure that children are kept safe. Staff are clear about how to record and report any concerns. Welfare is a high priority.
- Overall, the highly effective teaching results in most children meeting the expected standards by the end of their Reception Year. The progress they make in their personal development and behaviour means that all children are very well prepared for their move into key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	117117
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10067135

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Newman
Headteacher	Jonathan Millward
Telephone number	01279 842644
Website	www.hunsdon.herts.sch.uk
Email address	head@hunsdon.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 September 2014

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Reception children are taught in a single year group. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 5 to 6 are taught in paired year group classes.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is rising. The school is in the top fifth of schools nationally for those with an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- The inspector observed pupils learning in each class. These classes were seen jointly with the headteacher. The inspector observed pupils at break- and lunchtime and before and after lessons. The inspector observed the teaching of reading and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and subject leaders, a group of pupils, a group of teachers, and the chair and another member of the governing body. There was a phone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at the 85 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 62 written comments on the same questionnaire. Eight staff questionnaires were analysed.
- The inspector examined information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance, looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, read minutes of the meetings of the governing body, and scrutinised pupils' work in lessons.

Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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