

Inspection of Gaddesden Row JMI School

Gaddesden Row, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 6HG

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils treasure their small and happy school. Everybody cares for each other, and this makes the school feel 'like a family'. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe. Older pupils are patient and nurturing towards the younger pupils. At lunchtime, for example, Year 6 pupils kindly attempt to explain the rules of chess to children in Reception.

Pupils learn the importance of respecting diversity. They embrace this. Pupils know a lot about different cultures and faiths. For example, they remembered details about Diwali and made connections to the fireworks they saw at home during the festival.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, they behave well and work hard. Pupils follow teachers' instructions carefully. They learn well across a broad range of subjects. Pupils benefit from how lessons draw them in. Teachers use clear explanations and instructions that build on what pupils already know.

Pupils like completing various activities as a whole school. They enjoyed recent trips to the zoo and a museum in London. Pupils also enjoy a range of after-school activities. These include football and a relaxation club.

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

The school has made significant changes to the curriculum since the last inspection.

The school prioritises teaching pupils to read. As a result, the new approach is well embedded. Leaders have constructed a well-sequenced phonics curriculum, which ensures that children learn sounds quickly. This starts in the early years, where children get off to a good start with phonics. Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to support pupils to learn to read. Rigorous checking identifies any pupil who is falling behind. Additional teaching, including tutoring, supports them to catch up. As a result, pupils learn to read with confidence. Older pupils read frequently in school and at home. Teachers read to pupils daily. This helps to develop pupils' knowledge of a range of authors.

The school has ensured that the new curriculum is well thought through in all subjects. Leaders have carefully considered the challenge of the mixed-age classes. Pupils learn the same core knowledge, but activities vary according to their chronological age. For example, children in the Reception class and Year 1 learned about the life of Mary Seacole together. Afterwards, children in Year 1 accurately ordered events from her life, while children in Reception engaged in role play. Both activities allowed pupils to show what they had remembered from the lesson.

Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum. The school provides them with effective training. Pupils learn and progress through the different curriculum subjects well. However, where leaders have not made their expectations

clear enough to staff, the quality of pupils' work is too variable. Poor presentation in mathematics, for example, leads to inaccuracy in how pupils set out calculations.

The school has high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers adapt their teaching for pupils with SEND effectively. These adaptations address pupils' specific needs well. For example, scribing helps pupils to express their ideas. The school ensures that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum alongside their peers.

Pupils behave well in lessons. There is little disruption to learning. Pupils quickly and independently settle to tasks as directed by the teacher. This enables teachers to direct inputs to the different ages of pupils within a class. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 read sensibly and independently while the teacher works with Year 4.

The school has rightly identified the need to improve pupils' attendance. Leaders identify pupils with poor attendance. They meet with parents to explore what is causing this so that the school may respond. They provide high-quality pastoral support for pupils who feel anxious about attending school. Attendance is improving from a low starting point. However, there is still more work to do to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

The school caters well for pupils' personal development. Older pupils undertake a variety of leadership roles within school. Pupils elect school councillors and team captains. They see these roles as important. This is because the school council makes decisions that have a direct impact upon the pupils. For example, the school council recently selected some additional playground equipment.

The governing body knows the school well. It has a good grasp of its statutory and broader responsibilities. The governing body acts as custodians of the school and plays an active role in school life.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, leaders and staff do not have high enough expectations. Checks on pupils' recorded work can lack rigour. As a result, some pupils are not set up for success, leading to pupils making avoidable mistakes. Leaders should ensure that staff insist that pupils realise the high aims of the school curriculum through the appropriate completion of the activities.
- Though attendance is improving, there remains a proportion of pupils who do not attend school frequently enough. This creates gaps in pupils' knowledge and

understanding. The school should ensure that the timely support and challenge offered to pupils and their families quickly leads to improved attendance.

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	117101
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10287094
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kathryn Sagers
Headteacher	David Merriman
Website	www.gaddesdenrow.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers before-school childcare for its pupils, which is run by school staff and managed by the governing body.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school arranges pupils into three mixed-age classes: the Reception class and Year 1; Years 2 and 3; and Years 4, 5 and 6.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 leaders, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, scrutinised curriculum documentation, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To further inspect the curriculum, inspectors met with headteacher and deputy headteacher to look at geography and science. They reviewed curriculum documentation and sampled pupils' work.
- The inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at safeguarding records, staff training logs and the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school development plan, self-evaluation form and reports to the governing body.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, including in lessons and during breaktimes. Inspectors also reviewed the 30 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To gather the views of staff, the inspectors took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and held discussions with several of them.
- The inspectors considered the 27 responses, including 22 free-text responses, to the Parent survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Mark Sim, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Laura Hower	Ofsted Inspector

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