

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Field Junior School

Watford Field Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 0AZ

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

Outcome

Field Junior School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They are keen to share their achievements, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils rise to the high expectations all adults have for them. The school constantly ensures pupils' needs are identified quickly and then met. Pupils benefit from the thought and care given to help them overcome any barriers to learning. This also includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Through targeted support from skilled staff, all pupils secure the key knowledge needed to succeed consistently well in national assessments or from their starting points.

The school is a warm and welcoming place to learn. Pupils can be themselves and let their personalities shine through. They do so with respect and care for each other. They trust adults to help them. Pupils learn and play together harmoniously and so are ready and happy to learn.

Pupils enjoy school visits and residential. They vote for team captains, reading ambassadors and school parliamentarians. There is a range of clubs to choose from, including football, drama and Spanish. Pupils experience visits to the library, places of worship, the theatre and parkland to understand what their local area has to offer.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has remained determined that all pupils succeed, regardless of starting points or circumstance. Leaders have maintained an ambitious curriculum that reflects the school's diverse nature. Teachers adapt the curriculum well to meet the needs of their class.

Reading, writing and mathematics are made a priority from the outset. Pupils have any misconceptions or gaps swiftly addressed. They respond positively to the advice adults give them on how to improve their work. Pupils have time to revisit prior learning and also practise new knowledge. Teachers only move learning on when pupils are secure. This means pupils can recall and apply core skills well. For pupils needing additional support, timely interventions help them to quickly catch up.

Pupils also build their knowledge logically in the wider curriculum. However, in a few foundation subjects, some work set does not provide pupils the opportunity to gain the detailed knowledge leaders intend. Therefore, some pupils are not consistently acquiring or remembering in-depth knowledge in these particular subjects.

All pupils enjoy reading, including pupils with SEND. The school follows a systematic reading programme to support less confident readers develop fluency. This works well. Pupils who previously found reading tricky are soon able to access texts they should be able to for their age. All pupils read frequently and have a reading book matched to their ability.

Pupils with SEND have specific targets linked to their support plans. These are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective. Pupils with high needs are very well supported to access personalised learning and meet their individual targets.

Pupils learn in calm classrooms. They take an active part in lessons. They do so with consideration for the school rules. Pupils demonstrate self-control even when they think an adult may not be looking. They are not worried about discriminatory behaviour as this is rare, and pupils know adults will sort it. Pupils come to school regularly and leaders are prompt to follow up any drops in attendance.

Pupils learn about the different cultures, beliefs and religions represented in their school and wider society. They are taught about respect and equality and learn that discrimination is wrong. They are developing a deeper understanding of these key fundamental British values and how it will prepare them for modern life. Pupils learn how to be safe online and about other risks they may face as they get older.

Many governors are new to their role. However, they have worked quickly to get up to speed with school improvement priorities and their statutory duties, including safeguarding. Governors do have the expertise needed to hold leaders to account. Staff well-being is carefully considered, which staff appreciate. Governors are in the process of updating their strategic plan for the school to ensure it remains robust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, there are some inconsistencies in how well pupils secure detailed knowledge. This means some pupils are not achieving in the same depth as they are in most other subjects. The school needs to ensure that in these few subjects the curriculum content explicitly outlines the depth of knowledge pupils need to know. The school must then check staff are confident in how to support pupils to retain and apply this in-depth knowledge over time.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in November 2017.

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	117160
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10294963
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Allen Talbot
Headteacher	Jeannette Brooks
Website	www.fieldjm.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The inspection in October 2020 was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures at that time for visiting schools while routine inspections were temporarily suspended during the pandemic.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and support staff.

- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing board, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector had a telephone meeting with the school's local authority advisor.
- The lead inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: English and mathematics; religious education, art and history. For each group of subjects, the lead inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also reviewed documentation provided by the school, including the school development plan, its self-evaluation document, and notes of visit from the local authority advisor.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- The lead inspector spoke with several groups of pupils from all year groups and observed their behaviour in lessons and at play time.
- The lead inspector met with a group of staff and considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View and from talking to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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