

Inspection of Hazelmere Infant School and Nursery

Hawthorn Avenue, Colchester, Essex CO4 3JP

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 June 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Hazelmere Infant school. This is because the school provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for all pupils. Staff have established positive relationships with pupils. They feel safe and know that they can talk to a trusted staff member if they have any worries.

Pupils are eager to learn because lessons are interesting. They show curiosity when exploring new ideas and try hard with their work. The school sets high expectations for all pupils. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This is because staff do not check what pupils understand consistently well.

Pupils behave appropriately because they know and value the school's seven core values. They are usually respectful to one another and to staff. Staff help pupils to make good choices. This helps pupils to reflect and improve. In lessons, pupils listen carefully and are keen to contribute. They work together to achieve the school's vision of helping everyone reach their full potential.

Pupils are proud of their reading leadership roles, such as reading ambassadors and junior librarians. These responsibilities help to inspire other pupils to enjoy reading. They also build pupils' self-esteem, confidence and teamwork skills.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is appropriate for its pupils. Staff have carefully considered what pupils need to learn and when they should learn it. They have identified essential knowledge and key vocabulary across all subjects. However, some pupils still have important gaps in their knowledge. They cannot recall or connect previous learning in detail. This is because staff do not consistently check pupils' understanding. As a result, some teaching is not adapted well enough to meet pupils' needs. This prevents pupils from building knowledge securely over time.

The school uses a well-structured and sequenced phonics programme. Children begin learning to read as soon as they start in the Reception Year. When pupils find reading difficult, staff provide extra support. The reading books which pupils use match the sounds they are learning. Staff develop a love of reading by linking books to curriculum themes and topics. They also read to pupils every day. These approaches help to develop pupils' interests and enjoyment of reading. However, similarly, as with other subjects, staff do not check pupils' reading ability regularly. This means when pupils are not learning sounds securely, staff are sometimes not aware until it is too late to help them to catch up.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified promptly. The right support is then put in place for them. Staff seek appropriate advice from external professionals to meet individual pupil's needs. Staff involve parents when reviewing pupils' SEND plans. They regularly take account of parents' views. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well from their differing starting points.

Staff in the early years create a warm, welcoming environment where children feel safe and valued. Children settle quickly and follow established routines. Staff place a strong focus on developing children's spoken vocabulary. This supports children to build their communication and language skills. Staff identify gaps in children's phonics knowledge. They provide effective, extra support to help children catch up.

The school takes a pro-active and consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Staff support pupils to manage and regulate their emotions. This helps pupils to engage in learning. Although some pupils' attendance has been low in the past, leaders have acted to improve it. They work closely with families and provide help and support. Now more pupils, who were previously persistently absent, attend school more regularly.

The school's personal development programme teaches pupils how to stay safe, lead healthy lives and build positive relationships. Pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs. Staff promote this through the books they read to pupils, as well as through assemblies and themed events. Educational visits help pupils to understand the wider world and the community they live in. For example, within history, pupils experience what it was like to attend school during the Victorian period.

Governors are committed and bring a range of experience to their roles. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, governors and leaders have not rigorously checked to ensure the implementation of the curriculum is consistently of a high quality. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Governors consider staff workload. Recently, improvements have been made which have supported teachers' well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not assess what pupils know and can do frequently enough. This includes those pupils at the early stages of learning to read. Consequently, the work that pupils receive is not always adapted well enough to meet their needs. The school should ensure that staff have the appropriate knowledge and guidance to ensure that pupils are assessed frequently and accurately so that pupils' work is appropriately adapted to meet their needs.
- The school has not effectively monitored the implementation of the curriculum well enough. This has resulted in teachers not always having sufficient knowledge and support they require to teach the curriculum consistently well. The school should rigorously monitor how well the curriculum is implemented so that teachers receive the appropriate knowledge and support to teach all subjects consistently well.

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	114746
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10378449
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise O'Flaherty
Headteacher	Steven Turnbull
Website	www.hazelmere-inf.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 March 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections and a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, school leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Benjamin Axon, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mike Wade

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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