

Inspection of a good school: Hillborough Infant and Nursery School

Hillborough Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 5EZ

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2023

Outcome

Hillborough Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hillborough Infants is a welcoming school, where pupils feel like part of a family. Pupils are constantly kind and caring towards each other. They work together extremely well in lessons, such as when reading to each other or working on a joint computer project. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning.

Pupils look forward to breaktimes. There is plenty to do. Pupils like eating together in the friendly dining room and playing with their friends.

Pupils understand what behaviour teachers expect of them at school. They say that pupils usually make the sensible choices. They understand the consequences of making poor choices. They think this is fair and meet expectations willingly.

Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable. Most pupils say they are not aware of any bullying occurring. Pupils feel safe. They trust teachers to deal with any problems.

Pupils enjoy the wide variety of activities they do at school. Many attend clubs like gardening and reading. They like taking on responsibilities, such as arranging a bring-and-buy sale to raise funds for their year groups.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious, well-organised curriculum which clearly sets out the knowledge pupils will learn. This includes learning many new subject-specific words, which pupils enjoy using. Leaders ensure that well-ordered steps of learning in each subject help pupils learn in depth, all the way from Nursery to Year 2. This ensures pupils progress well from their starting points.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This enables them to explain learning clearly, such as how to throw a ball in physical education. Teachers carefully plan in advance how to address any new learning that pupils might find difficult. They organise lessons into

small chunks to make the learning more manageable. Teachers quickly spot anyone not on track and ensure pupils get the help they need. Teachers occasionally set tasks that are too hard for pupils because they do not have the skills and knowledge they need. For example, writing tasks are sometimes too hard for some pupils who struggle to write legibly.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Teachers work well with parents to identify and review pupils' specific needs. They adjust learning activities so pupils with SEND can access the full curriculum, including attendance at clubs.

Children make a strong start in the early years. Teachers set high expectations. They know exactly what they want children to learn to prepare them for Year 1. Teachers plan purposeful learning activities, which children often find fascinating, such as finding matching quantities when exploring mathematics equipment. Children develop positive attitudes to learning. Staff support and care for children well.

Leaders have introduced a well-planned reading curriculum. This ensures that pupils have access to a rich selection of books. Pupils love reading. Staff are experts in teaching the rigorous phonics programme. Pupils quickly learn to decode words and develop fluency. Staff carefully check pupils' progress. They provide prompt extra support and practice where needed.

The school has recently introduced a new behaviour policy which is easy for pupils to understand. As a result, pupils work hard in lessons, stick at their work and conduct themselves well when at school. Not all staff are confident yet in applying the new policy. They need more training.

Leaders enable all pupils to have access to a range of opportunities beyond the curriculum. They ensure books reflect a wide range of cultures and aspirations. They provide after-school clubs and invite in visitors, such as local religious leaders. Teachers help pupils to become tolerant citizens who celebrate each other's differences.

Teachers are very positive about the support they receive from leaders and governors. Staff enjoy being part of a close-knit team. The new governing body is effective and enthusiastic in supporting the school. Parents value the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture. All staff are vigilant for signs of harm to pupils. They know what to look for and report their concerns effectively.

Leaders repeatedly follow up concerns to ensure pupils get the help they need. They work with a range of safeguarding partners and agencies.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date. They carry out the right checks to ensure that only suitable people work in the school. Pupils are taught in lessons and assemblies how to look after themselves, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers occasionally set tasks for pupils that are too hard for them because they do not have the skills and knowledge they need to complete these. On these occasions, pupils do not make the progress teachers expect of them. Leaders should monitor curriculum delivery to ensure the small steps of learning are taught sequentially so that pupils build their knowledge over time.
- Some staff are not yet fully confident in applying the school's new behaviour policy. This means that behaviour is not always managed as consistently as it might be by all staff. Leaders should ensure that all staff fully understand the policy and are confident to apply it consistently and rigorously.

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 April 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](#)' 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	109581
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10241628
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	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Ward
Headteacher	Josephine Walter
Website	www.hillboroughinfants.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is a before- and after-school club on site. This is run by the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held discussions with three governors, including the chair. A separate discussion was held with a school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited a sample of lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector reviewed pupils' work in a further range of subjects, including English.

- The inspector met with pupils to understand their views about the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the special educational needs coordinator and carried out lesson visits together with leaders to consider the support for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of pupils during lesson visits, around the school and in the playground. The inspector looked at behaviour, bullying and attendance records, and leaders' analysis of these.
- The inspector reviewed school documentation, including school development plans and governing body minutes.
- Safeguarding records were scrutinised by the inspector, including the single central record of pre-employment checks, and the school's log of safeguarding incidents. A meeting was held with a designated safeguarding leader.
- The inspector considered 12 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and six free-text comments. The inspector spoke to parents and carers as they dropped off their children at school. The inspector also considered five responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and 23 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Judith Sumner, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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