

Inspection of a good school: The Giles Infant and Nursery School

Durham Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 4JQ

Inspection dates:

25–26 February 2020

Outcome

The Giles Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone is proud of this school. Parents have nothing but praise for the 'amazing staff', 'welcoming environment' and 'exciting experiences' organised for their children. Pupils love learning because of the 'fun activities and interesting things to do'.

Every pupil is valued in the school's calm and nurturing environment. Pupils are very kind to each other. They told me, 'We are all friendly and we like to be helpful.' Everyone expects pupils to behave well. Pupils respond eagerly; their behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Bullying is very rare. Pupils have every confidence that staff sort out any concerns quickly and effectively. They are sure that, 'If you are worried about anything, just go and tell any grown-up and they will help you.'

There are plenty of clubs for pupils to join and enjoy, such as science, mathematics, poetry, storytelling, art and street dance. These clubs help pupils to explore new interests and develop their talents.

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

Leaders support teachers to plan a well-organised curriculum, which is both enriching and demanding. Many children start in Nursery with skills and abilities well below their age. Leaders and teachers go above and beyond to ensure that pupils learn to read, write and understand numbers quickly. Pupils learn successfully across the curriculum.

Leaders make sure that there is a consistent approach to teaching across the school. Teachers are clear about the knowledge and skills that pupils will learn as they move through the school so that they remember important information over time. In science, for example, children in Reception build models of the three little pigs' houses and think about how they are different. In Year 1, pupils learn the names and properties of different materials such as wood, plastic and glass. In Year 2 pupils learn in more detail about the

suitability of different materials. In most subjects, teaching successfully develops pupils' vocabulary and use of subject-specific language. This approach is not securely in place across the curriculum, which hinders pupils' ability to understand and remember what they have learnt.

Reading is a high priority. Books are everywhere in school. Pupils love to settle down with a book in one of the inviting reading areas. Pupils learn phonics well. Staff deliver a well-planned phonics programme that begins in Nursery, and check that pupils keep up and learn quickly. Pupils know that it is important to learn to read. They told me, 'Reading helps our brains to grow.'

All leaders and staff share high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They model this consistently throughout the school, which helps pupils to make good choices and work hard in lessons.

Leaders and staff want the best for every pupil. The curriculum is adapted very well to meet the needs of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language. Highly-trained teaching assistants give pupils precisely the right help to bridge any gaps in their learning or provide more practice so that pupils secure their skills and understanding across all subjects. Leaders have also developed very effective strategies that support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including the pupils who join the speech and language base. Staff are meticulous in adapting the curriculum and making sure that pupils achieve well. Parents of pupils with SEND are delighted with the progress their children make while at the school.

In the early years classes there is a 'buzz' of excitement. Staff design activities that stimulate children's interests, and use every available opportunity to help children listen and speak fluently. I saw, for example, a group of children eagerly touching and smelling the ingredients to make gingerbread. The teacher very effectively extended their language with words such as 'sticky', 'stretchy' and 'soft'.

Leaders and staff provide extensive enrichment opportunities that support pupils to become well-informed and confident; for example, being eco-representatives, observing a real beehive, pond-dipping in the local lake and taking part in the Stevenage Dance Festival. There are also many opportunities for pupils to learn about the wide range of faiths and cultures in modern Britain.

Staff speak warmly about how leaders consider their well-being. Morale is very high, and staff are proud of the difference that they make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All appropriate employment checks take place before adults start to work at the school. Leaders make sure that procedures for keeping pupils safe are well understood. Leaders check that staff thoroughly understand their training, and give the clear message, 'If in

doubt, shout.' Staff know how to raise concerns. Leaders take prompt and effective action. They work very effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive support when necessary.

The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about staying safe. Pupils learn about road safety and how to keep themselves safe when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified the most important subject-specific vocabulary to be taught in some foundation subjects. Pupils do not always understand the words their teachers use, and this hinders their learning. Leaders need to support teachers to make sure that pupils learn the most important vocabulary in all subjects, understand what the words mean and use them appropriately in their work.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 28–29 June 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

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| Unique reference number | 117316 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10121449 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 329 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Stephanie Stevens |
| Headteacher | Rouane Mendel |
| Website | www.gilesnurseryandinfants.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 11 May 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, and the proportion of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans are both above the national average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for children with SEND. This caters for up to 10 pupils who have identified speech, language and communication (SLCN) as a primary need. Seven pupils currently attend. The pupils are mainly integrated into classes, although some group interventions take place outside of classes. Places are reliant on pupils having an EHC plan with identified SLCN needs. Places are allocated through the local authority's provision panel.

Information about this inspection

- As part of this inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader, the deputy headteacher, who is also the pupil premium

leader, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator, the school family support worker and the office manager. I also met with a group of staff to discuss the impact of the support they receive from leaders.

- I held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and three other governors. Additionally, I met with a local authority adviser to discuss their work with the school.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. I met with curriculum leaders for these subjects, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. I also observed some pupils reading to staff and talked to pupils about their reading habits.
- I spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes to seek their views about the school.
- I scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including the school's own evaluation, improvement plans, curriculum plans and records about safeguarding children.
- I considered the 36 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 31 responses to Ofsted's free-text system. I also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. I took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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