

Inspection of an outstanding school: Jenyns First School and Nursery

Uplands, Braughing, Ware, Hertfordshire SG11 2QJ

Inspection date:

28 February 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from being part of a caring and considerate community. They are clear about the expectations for them to be kind to others and to make good choices. Pupils know that incidents such as bullying are rare. They are happy and feel safe. Pupils trust adults in school, who they can go to for any help they might need.

Pupils at each stage of learning access lots of exciting and carefully chosen books. Reading corners in classrooms and a well-stocked library help them to feel excited and interested in reading. Pupils engage well in the curriculum, which reflects high expectations for their achievement. In addition to the knowledge pupils learn, they are encouraged to develop strong values and important attitudes. This includes their learning 'super-powers', which support them to develop the motivation to 'have a go' and to persevere.

The wider world is explored through the range of experiences pupils access. They have the chance to celebrate other cultures through special events, such as 'international day'. Pupils gain empathy for others by visiting places of worship and exploring relevant issues, such as immigration. These experiences help pupils to develop mature attitudes. They learn to value equality and people's differences.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have carefully redesigned the curriculum. They have made sure that it is relevant and ambitious for all pupils. A drive to expose pupils to a wide range of interesting books and stories is at the heart of the curriculum. These texts give pupils a wider understanding of world cultures and experiences.

Typically, curriculum plans set out the knowledge that pupils will gain, in manageable steps, from the moment they start school. This includes the important phonics knowledge that pupils need to secure in order to start reading. However, in a small number of plans, it is not always clear how knowledge in the early years links to the learning pupils will do in Year 1 and beyond.

Teachers draw on a range of skills and knowledge to deliver the planned curriculum. Leaders invest in quality training to enable teachers to help pupils to learn effectively. As a result, in many subjects, teachers use resources well in presenting new knowledge to pupils. This is seen in phonics, where effective teaching supports pupils to make good progress with their early reading. In a few subjects, teachers have less secure expertise. Where this is the case, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Younger pupils read books that match their ability. This helps them to gain fluency in their reading. Skilled adults also provide high-quality targeted reading support in school, where this is needed. Consequently, pupils who are at risk of falling behind are supported to keep up. The focus on reading starts as soon as pupils join Nursery. Children are exposed to sounds, rhythms and rhymes that help them to feel confident to practise speaking aloud and to share their ideas. Children in the early years are well cared for and their developmental needs are well understood.

All pupils are known well by staff. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Strong relationships help to make sure pupils with SEND are engaged in all learning activities. However, the plans used to detail the support these pupils should access are not sufficiently precise. This makes it difficult for leaders to check the support provided is having the intended impact. Consequently, pupils with SEND do not always learn as much as they could.

Leaders place a high importance on pupils' wider development. This is embodied in the range of clubs pupils can attend at lunchtime and after school. Clubs provide pupils with a chance to try new talents, like singing in a choir or gardening. Pupils demonstrate responsibility through their conduct in the school. They are respectful and cooperate well together. Pupils are encouraged to be open about their worries and feelings. There is a regular 'feelings club' where there are structured activities that help pupils to express themselves. Pupils also have the chance to demonstrate leadership qualities through important roles, such as 'values ambassadors' and eco-committee members.

Leaders in the school are supported through high-quality governance. Skilled governors have a wide range of experience and are committed to ensuring that pupils in the school get a high-quality education. They carefully monitor developments and challenge leaders to make sure changes have impact. Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the strengths and improvement priorities. They use clear planning to ensure that improvements are carefully tracked and sustainable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established robust and reliable systems for safeguarding pupils. This includes fulfilling mandatory requirements to complete vetting checks on staff. Leaders use the electronic system for recording information effectively, making sure that all staff share any concerns that arise. They action all concerns rapidly and provide effective support.

Assemblies offer specific guidance of how pupils can make safe choices. This includes the chance to listen to advice from respected visitors, such as the police and fire service. There is a clearly structured curriculum for pupils to learn about staying safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few areas of the curriculum there are not clear enough links between the knowledge children learn in the early years and their subsequent learning. In these instances, pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for the demands of learning in Year 1. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans begin in the early years, explicitly setting out the knowledge that is laid as a foundation for what is taught next.
- In some curriculum areas, teachers have less secure subject expertise. In these lessons, the new knowledge being taught is not always coherently linked to what pupils already know or the bigger concept it is part of. Leaders should continue their work to develop teachers' specialist knowledge, so that pupils gain a secure body of knowledge in all the subjects they are taught.
- The plans created for pupils with SEND are not precise enough and do not identify their barriers to learning clearly. This means the purpose of actions taken and support provided are not always tailored to individual needs. Leaders must ensure that the systems in place root any support provided in pupils' specific needs. Interventions should be checked regularly for impact and designed to help pupils make progress in manageable steps.

Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 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	117087
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10268013
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jo Knott
Headteacher	Beth Billington
Website	www.jenyns.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been two headteachers since the previous inspection. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school does not currently use off-site alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and a range of other staff to explore provision across the school, including behaviour, curriculum, provision for SEND and early years.
- The lead inspector met with three representatives of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair of governors. A separate meeting was held with an improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum

documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader, the school's business manager and other staff to discuss safeguarding.
- During the inspection, inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, curriculum plans, school development plans, and safeguarding and behaviour records.
- Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons, to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. Inspectors also observed the behaviour of pupils across the school site and considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered the 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's survey for school staff.

Inspection team

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Natalie Sansom

Ofsted Inspector

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