

Inspection of a good school: Flamstead Village School

Trowley Hill Road, Flamstead, 59 Trowley Hill Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 8DL

Inspection date: 30 June 2023

Outcome

Flamstead Village School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy at Flamstead Village School. They love seeing their friends and teachers. Pupils are kind to each other. Older pupils play well with younger children. There is a positive feeling of community spirit. Pupils form good relationships with adults in the school. Pupils are well cared for. They know that they have someone to talk to if they need to. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to go on trips. A recent theatre trip to London, for example, was very popular.

Staff have high expectations for all pupils, including those in the early years. Pupils benefit from lessons that normally engage them. They find the work tricky sometimes. However, they enjoy this because they know they are supported to do well. Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults. Classrooms are calm and well managed. This means it is easy for pupils to concentrate and to do their work without being distracted. Pupils behave well around the site and during playtime.

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

Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is carefully planned to support them to do well in their mixed-age classes. In most areas, teachers are skilled at using their prior knowledge of what pupils know and can do to plan learning effectively. In mathematics, for example, when pupils were learning about bar models, teachers were confident to group pupils based on what they already knew. They then planned activities which allowed pupils to develop their understanding based on their different starting points. Teachers use well-chosen resources to help all pupils to learn.

In a minority of subjects, curriculum plans and staff training are not precise enough to ensure that teachers and pupils are clear about how new knowledge and skills build on prior learning. In these areas, there is some inconsistency in how well teachers use the most appropriate resources to support pupils to learn the intended curriculum. As a result, pupils sometimes do not learn as much as they should.

Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. Clear support plans are used appropriately by adults to help pupils with SEND to do well. Leaders liaise closely with external agencies to secure additional help when it is needed.

All pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from calm classrooms where there is very little low-level disruption. From the early years, adults teach children appropriate routines. Children are shown how to manage their own behaviour. Staff's high expectations ensure a positive and welcoming environment throughout the school.

Leaders have ensured that children in the early stages of learning to read are well supported to develop their fluency. They have introduced a new phonics programme which staff are confident in delivering. This is effective in supporting pupils to improve their reading skills and confidence. Pupils who struggle to keep up with their reading are given additional support. Adults read with them more frequently and this helps pupils to get better. Pupils enjoy the wide range of books that they can choose from. They speak enthusiastically about the stories they enjoy.

Leaders have ensured that pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values such as the rule of law, respect and tolerance. Pupils are able to make informed comparisons between their experiences here in Britain and other countries. They have a good, age-appropriate understanding of how people can be different. They are respectful of others. There are opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles and older pupils speak confidently about how they have enjoyed these additional responsibilities. They are proud to contribute positively to the school community.

Leaders, including governors, have taken effective action to make sure that recent changes in staffing have not impacted negatively on the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders work closely with external colleagues and the local authority to make sure that staff and pupils are well supported. Parents are positive about their children's experiences at school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to support pupils who may be at risk of harm. Governors check that safeguarding systems are followed appropriately. Leaders keep accurate and timely records of safeguarding actions. They make contact with external agencies where appropriate, and they are robust in chasing up external help if it is needed. Leaders have ensured that appropriate safeguarding checks are carried out on adults before they start work at the school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe both online and offline.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not as well planned as in other areas. Where this happens, pupils do not develop their skills and knowledge as deeply as they should. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are equally well planned and ambitious for all pupils.
- Teachers do not always select the most appropriate teaching strategies or materials to support pupils to learn the intended content, including for children in the early years. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could in some aspects of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that staff are sufficiently well trained to support pupils to achieve well in all subjects.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

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	117100
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10288450
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Carson
Headteacher	Allan Maher
Website	www.flamsteadjmi.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently makes use of one registered 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the staff responsible for the administration of the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They also met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the arrangements that are in place to safeguard pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and spoke with governors about safeguarding.

- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experience of school, including clubs, behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's curriculum plans for pupils' personal development and looked at a range of books in different subjects.
- Inspectors met with governors and scrutinised documents relating to school improvement.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil or staff surveys. Inspectors took account of 36 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 26 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tessa Holledge

His Majesty's Inspector

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