

# Inspection of a good school: Freegrounds Infant School

Hobb Lane, Hedge End, Southampton, Hampshire SO30 0GG

---

Inspection dates:

28 February and 1 March 2023

## Outcome

Freegrounds Infant School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of this warm and vibrant school. They are safe and happy here. Leaders have adopted values based on 'Rights of the Child'. These values thread through all aspects of school life, giving pupils a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Pupils have a keen sense of equality, showing strong acceptance of people who look or sound different. Everyone is welcome here.

Staff have high expectations of both behaviour and pupils' achievement. Pupils are polite. They enjoy their learning and try hard. They are confident that unkind behaviour will not be tolerated and trust adults to help them sort out problems. Playtimes are calm and well organised. The wide range of equipment, sports and quieter activities means that all children can find something they enjoy.

Pupils appreciate the many enrichment opportunities offered at the school. Clubs, such as football, drama and coding, help develop pupils' talents and interests. Leaders provide a range of educational trips and visitors which help make the curriculum come alive for pupils. Through the school council, pupils use their democratic voice to make decisions about their environment. They are proud to take on important positions of responsibility such as playground buddy or lunch monitor.

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

Reading sits at the centre of the school's curriculum. Pupils consider reading to be very important and love taking part in the many activities run by the school. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme, improving how children are taught to read. Children learn to read and write from the start of early years. In Reception, children have many opportunities to develop their love of reading, including voting for class books. Here, staff use ambitious vocabulary which helps children's speech and language develop well. Leaders have ensured that new, online books are matched to pupils' reading ability well. However, sometimes pupils choose other books that are not at the right level. Leaders are aware of this. They are gradually replacing older books to better match the

sounds that pupils know. Staff listen carefully and quickly spot any gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge, giving extra support where needed. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language quickly gain confidence in reading. While the teaching of phonics is largely effective, some staff need additional training in the delivery of the programme.

The school's curriculum is ambitious and well designed. Pupils achieve well and have strong foundations for key stage 2. In nearly all subjects, pupils develop deep, long-term knowledge. Starting in early years, the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn have been clearly identified across nearly all subjects. In Reception, skilled staff ensure that children develop their mathematical knowledge and personal skills well. Children focus on activities for sustained periods. In key stage 1, teachers make sure pupils' learning carefully builds on what they already know and can do. Staff provide activities that are well matched to pupils' needs, including pupils with SEND. However, in a few subjects, leaders have not accurately identified exactly what pupils need to know and remember each lesson. Therefore, teachers cannot check learning effectively. While pupils achieve well overall, they could do even better.

Leaders have developed a strong and effective programme for personal development. The personal, social and health education programme prepares pupils for life in modern Britain well. Pupils are taught about valuing difference, healthy relationships and keeping safe. Through learning about different cultures, languages and religions, pupils develop their understanding of others well.

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy learning. Consequently, learning is rarely interrupted. Staff manage any lapses in pupils' concentration effectively. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and productive. Well-established routines mean that pupils are clear about teachers' expectations. Pupils are delighted to be regularly rewarded for attributes such as resilience and kindness.

Governors know the strengths of the school and help leaders focus on making it even better. Mindful of staff's well-being and workload, governors make sure correct processes are in place. Staff are very positive about working in the school. There is a strong sense of teamwork, and morale is high. Staff feel valued by leaders and able to develop in their careers. Parents and carers, responding to the Ofsted Parent View survey, also strongly support the work of the school. As one parent wrote, 'Class teachers clearly care about the pupils and want to help my child to succeed.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff place high importance on pupils' welfare and safety. Clear and effective systems are in place to identify pupils who may need support. Leaders tenaciously follow up on any concerns about pupils and liaise closely with other agencies. This means that pupils and their families get the help they need. Recruitment checks of new staff are thorough. Governors monitor safeguarding practices regularly. Staff receive regular training and updates. They know that no concern is too small to report. Leaders make

sure that pupils are taught to recognise risks so they can keep themselves safe, including online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a minority of subjects, leaders have not identified the exact knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn. Therefore, pupils do not remember key ideas well enough. Leaders should ensure that the specific knowledge and vocabulary that they want pupils to know and use is precisely identified.
- In early reading, some staff have less strong subject knowledge. This limits how well pupils achieve. Leaders should continue to provide training to develop staff's expertise to deliver the early reading curriculum successfully.

## **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 November 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115918
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256437
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	219
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Gill Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nikki Riches
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.freegrounds-inf.hants.sch.uk">www.freegrounds-inf.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2017

## Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since 2011.
- The school provides a before-school and after-school club. These are held at the neighbouring junior school.
- The school does not currently 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 leaders and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other school leaders, teaching and support staff and groups of pupils.
- The inspector met with four members of the governing board and spoke to a representative from Hampshire local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at

samples of pupils' work. The inspector heard pupils read aloud to a known adult.

- The inspector checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. She also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare of pupils. The inspector spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the additional free-text responses. She also considered email correspondence from a parent.

### **Inspection team**

Maria Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023