

Inspection of Howe Dell Primary School

The Runway, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 9AH

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at the school embody the shared values of kindness, growth and respect. They are encouraged to meet the 'Golden Expectations' and give everything a go. This is seen in the focus that pupils demonstrate when completing their classwork. They respond well to the activities teachers provide for them. They know that adults are there to help them succeed and they achieve well.

Pupils feel safe and happy coming to school. This is reflected in their high levels of attendance. Pupils who attend wraparound clubs also appreciate the care and attention that adults show. Many pupils enjoy the wide range of opportunities the school provides. These include trips, interesting clubs and a chance to hear from expert visitors. The enrichments help pupils grow as members of the school community. All pupils engage with the 'children's council' and make a positive difference to their school.

Pupils develop a mature appreciation of vocabulary and talk with interest about the new words they learn. Pupils enjoy listening to adults read to them. They appreciate the range of social issues that they explore through carefully selected texts. Pupils explore important themes, such as immigration, gender and ethnicity. Discussing these issues helps them to learn to respect and embrace others' differences.

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

Staff across the school share an ambitious vision for high-quality learning and pupils' wider experiences. The school has worked with determination to embed a detailed and broad curriculum offer. This means that pupils access an education that helps them build a rich body of knowledge and skills.

Meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a core feature of the provision. Staff have high expectations of everyone. Leaders have an expert understanding of pupils' medical needs. They work closely with staff to remove barriers, so these pupils access their lessons without restriction. Pupils with SEND achieve well. They thrive on the encouragement and targeted support that adults provide.

During lessons, teachers explain new content with accuracy. This helps pupils swiftly grasp new concepts. Teachers receive effective training to deliver the curriculum. As a result, they help pupils to connect new learning to what they have learned before. The work given to pupils enables them to put their growing knowledge into practice. On the whole, they succeed. However, there are a few occasions where pupils do not receive sufficient practise in their work tasks to help their new knowledge stick. When this is the case, pupils are a little less confident to recall and apply their knowledge in new contexts. Leaders recognise this and are working to maximise the achievement of pupils. Teachers use assessment with precision to check what pupils have remembered. Adults respond to known gaps in pupils' understanding to help them make progress through the curriculum.

Teaching of early reading supports pupils to gain the knowledge needed to read well. Pupils who are just starting to read, take home books that align closely with their current

knowledge. They practise reading every day in their class. As a result, they quickly build the confidence to read well and with expression. Targeted and effective support from staff helps pupils who are at risk of falling behind to keep up.

Inclusive learning starts from the moment children join the school. Children in Nursery and the Reception Year benefit from high-quality interactions with adults. This means that children's individual needs are understood and responded to. A sharp focus on communication and language is evident from the very start. Children are routinely exposed to new words. Explicit teaching of new vocabulary helps all children and continues to enrich their learning all the way through school.

The behaviour of pupils is positive in classrooms and at playtimes. Respectful and caring relationships between staff and pupils are commonplace. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and each other. The same quality interactions are also seen in the breakfast and Runway clubs. Where the school tackles specific issues with behaviour or attendance, this leads to improvements. In assemblies and class discussions, pupils receive helpful advice on how to keep themselves safe. This includes knowing how to look after their own well-being and how to keep safe online.

Leaders' commitment to build strong connections with the wider community is notable. Following a period of change, the school has secured high levels of trust from parents and carers. This contributes well to the culture of respect and positivity throughout the school. Governors' oversight of the school's work is effective.

Governors know their roles and responsibilities well and they evaluate the provision with accuracy. They have a secure understanding of the improvements made to improve the school over time. All governors share fully in the vision for excellence for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The work provided for pupils in a few areas of the curriculum, does not provide sufficient practise to help them all build fluency with new knowledge. Consequently, small numbers of pupils do not achieve the security needed to confidently apply knowledge in new contexts. The school should continue with its work to ensure teachers have consistently strong pedagogical expertise. This will support all pupils to have the right quantity of practise to help them remember what they learn and maximise their achievement.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	117220
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345175
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	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katie Fox
Headteacher	Tracy Prickett (Executive)
Website	www.howedell.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 July 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school club childcare provision as well as holiday playschemes.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, music and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team held meetings with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, inclusion leader, three assistant headteachers, the early years leader and a range of teaching staff.
- The inspector met with five representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. A separate discussion took place with an improvement partner from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Webb	Ofsted Inspector
Gina Bailey	Ofsted Inspector

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