

Inspection of a good school: Pennington Infant School

Priestlands Road, Pennington, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 8HX

Inspection dates:

15 September 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Friendly and confident pupils enjoy being together in this school. They are truly willing to learn. Their lively, welcoming personalities enhance the school's nurturing atmosphere.

Pupils feel safe and secure because adults work as a team to look after them. They are taught crucial values about trying hard and being resilient. They are proud of the way they get along and are kind to each other. As one pupil commented, 'No one is horrid here'. Pupils are polite and considerate. They want to show themselves at their best, especially to visitors. During this inspection, it was a pleasure to observe pupils enjoying a beautifully civilised and sociable lunch together before happily taking turns to play outside.

Until recently, some staff have not expected enough of these eager and enthusiastic pupils. Standards have not been high enough. However, since her appointment in January, the headteacher has united the staff. The whole school is now focused on what the school must do to improve.

Parents appreciate the care their children receive. In particular, many parents have expressed their gratitude and relief because the school stepped in to support them when they were struggling.

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

Following the last inspection, frequent changes in staff and school leadership led to a decline in performance. The current headteacher has set out exactly what she wants for the school and stopped its decline. Leaders and governors are justifiably proud of how far the school has come, especially the way in which staff believe in the pupils. Staff admit

that they work hard in this small school, but they know they are listened to and supported.

However, weaknesses in the quality of education are holding the pupils back. Planning for some subjects is still at an early stage, following the school's move from mixed-age classes to single year groups. So, in some topics, including in mathematics, pupils are repeating activities unnecessarily. Other pupils have not grasped what was taught previously and therefore are not ready to move on. Gaps in teachers' knowledge about some of the foundation subjects hinder pupils' learning and understanding.

In the Reception class, adults help to develop children's confidence and spoken language. However, the purpose of some activities is not always clear, especially when children are being taught as a group. Leaders know that staff working in Years 1 and 2 do not know enough about what is being covered in the Reception class. As a result, teachers are not making the most of what pupils already know and can do.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well emotionally. Leaders have improved their systems for identifying pupils' needs. However, staff do not always plan and structure activities that help pupils with SEND to participate and focus on their work.

Most pupils in the school are well motivated, with only a few needing to be reminded about listening, following instructions and doing their best. Children in the Reception class also behave well. They form strong bonds with adults and quickly get used to the daily routines.

Not enough staff are experts in early reading. The teaching of phonics is patchy. Some pupils are given phonics books that are not matched closely enough to the sounds they can actually read. In these cases, pupils repeat mistakes, resort to guesswork and lose confidence. Nevertheless, pupils love reading. They enjoy an inspiring range of poems and books in their English lessons. Thought-provoking storybooks and non-fiction captivate pupils, helping them to understand themselves and dream of different worlds. The well-stocked library is a great support for pupils who may not have many books at home.

Clubs, sporting activities, calendared events and visits enhance pupils' school life. The pandemic paused some of these, but staff are eagerly planning a full programme of activities for all pupils. Pupils' quiet pride in the school's 'HEART' values – chosen by them – is a credit to the school.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the teaching of reading, curriculum planning in the early years and progression in mathematics and the foundation subjects may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff know pupils and their families well. Staff know how to spot signs that pupils may be at risk and they report these promptly.

Leaders responded thoughtfully to Ofsted's latest findings about harmful sexual behaviour, noting that even the youngest children may encounter worrying incidents. Leaders make sure they share relevant information with the other schools and professionals in the community. Governors purposefully monitor and challenge the school's safeguarding work. Leaders are confident about pressing other agencies and children's services to provide more support for families in the area.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of early reading, including phonics, is not consistently effective. Not all staff have sufficient expertise in how pupils become fluent readers. Pupils' phonic books do not always match the sounds and words that they know and need to practise. Leaders and governors must ensure that teachers and teaching assistants are thoroughly trained in an appropriate phonics programme which includes using reading books that fully reinforce pupils' emerging phonic knowledge.
- Some aspects of the early years curriculum are not planned well. The precise purpose of some activities is not clear. Although children develop vocabulary through positive interactions with adults, their formal acquisition of phonic knowledge and number is less secure and they are not well prepared for Year 1. Leaders and staff in the early years should make sure that planning is structured around exactly what they want children to learn and that direct teaching has a clear and precise purpose.
- Teachers do not know enough about what pupils already know and remember in mathematics. As a result, some pupils are either stuck and unable to move on or have gaps in knowledge that prevent them from understanding what comes next. Leaders and teachers should ensure that their assessments of what pupils already know and can do are accurate and that these determine precisely what should be taught next.
- Subject leadership in the foundation subjects is at a very early stage and curriculum planning is underdeveloped. Staff are only just beginning to understand the need for progression from the early years curriculum through to the end of Year 2 in the foundation subjects. Leaders and governors should ensure that subject leadership and knowledge are improved in order to build an ambitious and effective curriculum in the foundation 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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 15 March 2012.

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.

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

| | |
|--|--|
| Unique reference number | 115983 |
| Local authority | Hampshire |
| Inspection number | 10200004 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 98 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Carole Burwell |
| Headteacher | Beverly Seed |
| Website | www.pennington-inf.hants.sch.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 14 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up her post in January 2021. Previously, the school was led by the deputy headteacher in an acting capacity. The substantive headteacher left the school in May 2020.
- Following a restructure of leadership roles and staffing, the previous deputy headteacher left the school. Currently, an assistant headteacher has been seconded to the school. She also is the Year 2 class teacher.
- The school has recently been restructured from four mixed-age classes to three single year group classes.
- 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 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and a group of governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also held an online meeting with two local authority advisers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to school leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, met with staff, spoke to pupils and looked at their work. Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult, visited the library with pupils and observed phonics sessions in all year groups
- Inspectors also reviewed the school's improvement plans.
- A meeting was held to discuss safeguarding with the headteacher as designated safeguarding leader (DSL), a deputy DSL and the parent support worker. The governor responsible for overseeing safeguarding also attended this meeting. Records of safeguarding incidents were discussed and scrutinised. Inspectors also spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being. The lead inspector met with pupils and staff to discuss the school's values, look at displays of work and talk about pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors observed pupils at lunchtime and spoke to them about behaviour and bullying.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Becky Greenhalgh

Ofsted 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021