

Inspection of a good school: Penns Primary School

Berwood Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B72 1BS

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 October 2021

Outcome

Penns Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Penns are happy, healthy, motivated learners. They take advantage of all that the school has to offer. Pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy playing together. They take on positions of responsibility willingly and support and encourage each other.

Leaders and staff work as a team to ensure pupils are 'SMART: Safe, Mindful, Accepting, Resilient and Together.' They thread these school values through every moment of every day. Staff have the highest expectations of pupils. They support pupils to be the best they can be in everything they do.

Pupils are very polite and well mannered. They show respect and tolerance to those around them. They understand that everyone has a right to an opinion. Pupils say that bullying does not really happen as everyone tries to be kind. Pupils trust adults to help sort out any falling out. Teachers are quick to deal with any low-level interruption or unacceptable behaviour.

Leaders, staff and governors work hard to ensure that pupils' personal development is carefully considered and planned for. Trips, visits and sporting activities are used to develop character, resilience and raise aspirations. For example, pupils develop independence and life skills on the residential visit to Malvern.

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

The new headteacher has rightly focused on the quality of education and what pupils are learning through the curriculum. Curriculum plans have been reviewed and subject leaders empowered to develop their subject area. Plans in subjects such as phonics, mathematics and physical education (PE) set out exactly what pupils need to learn at each point. In other subjects, such as art, plans are less precise in identifying the knowledge that pupils need to learn. They do not make clear what pupils should know

and remember. This makes it harder for teachers to check how well pupils are doing. Leaders are improving these curriculum plans.

Mathematics and PE teaching have been transformed. Staff are very clear about what to teach, when and how to teach it. Leaders ensure that staff have training and development opportunities. Staff appreciate the chance to develop their skills and deepen their subject knowledge. Some subject leaders support this by working alongside and coaching staff. This is not yet the case across the whole curriculum. Leaders have a comprehensive training calendar in place to ensure all staff feel confident to teach every subject.

When needed, teachers make adaptations to the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, in mathematics, additional adults support the learning so that all pupils are included. In Reception, support is instant so that no child falls behind.

Skilful adults ensure that pupils quickly learn phonics from the start of Reception and read books, which match the sounds that they know. Sharp, focused support is quickly provided to any pupil who struggles. The library is at the heart of key stage 2. New books have been purchased and reading appears on the timetable every day. Pupils enjoy reading. They describe their favourite books and characters with enthusiasm. Older pupils describe themselves as 'decent readers'. Parents attend 'Tuesday Tales' sessions so that they can read with their child. A strong reading culture is evident in the school community.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills. This focus on language and vocabulary starts in Reception and continues throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to have a voice, develop opinions and share the reasons behind them. Weekly 'talking points' help pupils develop the skills and knowledge to consider life in modern Britain.

Pupils get a good start to school. They quickly learn the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their independent play. For example, pupils eagerly use their number knowledge and phonics to write birthday cards to 'Crispin the Crow'. They take delight in exploring the world around them through stories and in the outdoor area.

Adults show pupils how to work together and help them develop confidence. Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Because of this their learning is rarely disrupted. Attitudes to learning are very positive.

Pupils have lots of chances to widen their learning beyond the classroom. They participate in after school clubs, such as cheerleading, ultimate frisbee and gymnastics. They develop leadership skills as an eco rep, a diversity ambassador or by running the school gym. The careful consideration leaders give to pupils' personal development ensures that it is a real strength of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff work as an effective team to keep pupils safe. They are well trained and know exactly what to do, who to talk to and how to record any concern. Leaders act quickly to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families. New systems and processes for dealing with concerns have further strengthened the culture of safeguarding.

Leaders maintain a focus on mental health and well-being. They ensure that pupils learn about peer-on-peer abuse and how to develop a positive body image. Pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe when using the internet or social media platforms.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all of the foundation subjects are coherently planned and sequenced yet. Leaders should continue to identify the essential knowledge they want all pupils to learn in subjects, such as art and music, so that learning builds on what pupils know and can already do.
- Leaders provide continuing professional development for all staff. Leaders should continue to help subject leaders develop their expertise so that they can fully support teachers to put the curriculum into practice.

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 24 January 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	103356
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10200154
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Clemson
Headteacher	Helen Lowe
Website	www.pennsji.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in January 2021. Three days later the third national lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic began. Pupils did not fully return to school until 8 March 2021.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of staff and the school business manager. The inspector held a meeting with four governors, including the chair of governors.
- Deep dives in reading, mathematics and PE were carried out. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. The inspector also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects and listened to pupils read.

- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school, curriculum plans and the school website. Minutes of governor meetings and reports from an external advisor were also checked.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the inspector considered the school's procedures for recruiting staff, the quality of staff training and the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. She considered the 50 responses, including the 48 free-text comments, to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector considered the 16 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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