

Inspection of Piper's Vale Primary – A Paradigm Academy

Raeburn Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 0EW

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Piper's Vale is a unique school where everyone is greeted by their first name. There is a sense of ambition and belonging. One pupil said, 'Teachers support us, and we rely on them.'

Throughout the day the school is a hive of activity, with music, singing and physical education activities going on. This is alongside the focused attention seen in the other curriculum areas.

Pupils behave well. They show respect for one another, and for staff and visitors. If pupils do fall out, they are supported to understand the feelings of everyone involved.

Pupils said that name-calling does happen, and there has been some bullying in the past. Pupils think that leaders are now quick to pick up on these things and pupils feel happy about this. Pupils reported that they feel safe, and parents agree.

Pupils show delight at the variety of clubs, trips and visitors to the school. Pupils talk fondly about going to the local library, the museum and the zoo. These events are part of the trust's chosen 'Hinterland' curriculum, and are memorable for the pupils.

Another pupil said, 'It is a kind place, where we can express what we want to do.'

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

Leaders have designed a well-thought-out, well-sequenced curriculum. It is ambitious in terms of the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn. Leaders have woven practical experiences into the curriculum. This contributes to pupils' developing sense of aspiration, including for the most disadvantaged pupils. For example, they visit the local university and go to the library every four weeks.

All areas of the curriculum help pupils to gain important information, step by step, across subjects. Music, science, history and geography are strengths throughout the school. These are firmly embedded. The newest curriculum subject of French is taught well, and pupils are fully engaged and remember what they have learned.

The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Children begin to learn letter names and sounds from the moment they start school. In Nursery, staff use singing and rhyme to help children remember days of the week and initial sounds. Leaders have high expectations, and ensure that all pupils in school are able to read fluently. The vast majority are able to do this by the end of key stage 1. The very few pupils who still need more practice are taught well. Any gaps are addressed quickly, and pupils are gaining in confidence. Books are well matched to the sounds that pupils know or are currently learning.

Older pupils enjoy participating in the shared reading across the school. Leaders have planned a curriculum that is aspirational and inspiring. One pupil said, 'Shared reading is my favourite, as you get to read the whole book and it is just wow!' Leaders go to great lengths to ensure that reading is prioritised. Pupils show a love of reading.

Leaders have recently changed the way that mathematics is planned and delivered. This is having a positive impact on most of the pupils, but there are some inconsistencies in key stage 2. Weaker teaching in the past means that older pupils are having an adapted curriculum, to help them catch up on the knowledge that they have missed learning. However, some pupils do not always have work that is suited to their abilities. Assessment and then teaching for pupils to catch up is not precise enough, particularly for the lowest-attaining pupils.

Pupils in the specialist resource base have a personalised curriculum that all adults take responsibility for implementing. The complex needs of these pupils are well understood by the adults who care for them. Pupils communicate using a combination of charts, signs and actions. Equally, other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) across the school have their needs met well. Leaders ensure that staff know how to adapt their teaching, so that pupils access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Pupils are usually very well behaved. Pupils and staff did report that, on occasion, older pupils behave less well. This is usually when familiar adults are not present. Leaders attend to this promptly. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum teaches pupils to keep themselves safe, express their emotions and understand healthy lifestyles and relationships. Pupils on the school council said, 'We need to stop parents smoking outside the gate, so we are making posters to put up.'

The trust has focused on the right priorities, and has given leaders effective support to improve the quality of education at Piper's Vale. The trust, alongside leaders from the other schools in the trust, has supported staff well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is at the top of everyone's agenda. Leaders have implemented rigorous processes and routines to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Any concerns are followed up without delay, and appropriate action taken.

Regular and up-to-date training enables staff to feel confident to talk about and act on any changes to the school policies.

Staff know pupils well. Adults know if a pupil is upset or worried and what to do about it. Pupils said that they can talk to a trusted adult, or put any concerns they have in the class worry box.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Where the delivery of the curriculum is new, for example in mathematics, it is currently inconsistent throughout the school. In this case, some pupils in key stage 2 are not catching up as quickly as they need to. Leaders must ensure that all teachers are able to correctly use assessment information and deliver the reviewed curriculum, so that it is more precisely matched to the needs of all pupils.

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	145118
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10212050
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	314
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Willis
Principal	Kimberly Morton
Website	pipersvaleacademy.paradigmtrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Piper's Vale joined the Paradigm Trust in September 2017. The principal joined the school in January 2018. Since then, there have been significant staff changes, particularly at leadership levels.
- There is a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school uses one alternative provision.
- The school has been commissioned to operate a specialist education unit for pupils with autism spectrum disorders. The unit is registered for up to 12 pupils between the ages of five and seven years old.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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 spoke with the principal, the assistant principals, the director of curriculum for the trust, the manager of the specialist education unit, staff and pupils about the school's provision.
- Inspectors spoke with the chief executive officer (CEO), the link director and two other directors from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast club, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at less structured times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, music and modern foreign languages, to evaluate the quality of education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at the curriculum plans for other subjects, and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors considered the provision for PSHE, relationships and sex education, health education and religious education.
- Inspectors met with the leader in charge of SEND and scrutinised documentation for pupils with SEND. Inspectors also observed support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour, bullying and attendance. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with directors of the trust board, the CEO, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the six free-text comments. Inspectors considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynsey Holzer	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Ayling	Ofsted Inspector

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