

# Inspection of a good school: Plaistow Hill Infant and Nursery School

Roman Way, Higher St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon PL5 2DT

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Inspection date: 28 April 2022

## **Outcome**

Plaistow Hill Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy at Plaistow Hill Infant and Nursery School. From Nursery to Year 2, leaders ensure that pupils enjoy an interesting curriculum. This is enhanced by a variety of after-school activities, such as recorder club and a range of sports. Staff expect pupils to behave well and work hard, and they do.

Children in early years, including two-year-olds, settle quickly and follow teachers' instructions carefully. Pupils in key stage 1 are confident, listen to each other, share and take turns. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils are keen to learn and collaborate well together. Staff are kind, calm and encouraging. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and, when it does occur, teachers sort it out quickly. Consequently, children build positive relationships with one another and with the adults around them.

Parents and carers praise the work of the school. Staff are trained well to help pupils manage their feelings. They take great pride in their work to support pupils' social and emotional well-being. One parent expressed the views of many with the comment, 'The atmosphere and attitude of all the staff is incredible.'

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

Leaders are determined that all pupils will experience a strong start to their education. Since September 2021, leaders have welcomed two-year-olds into the Nursery. These children learn well alongside their older peers, but also have important one-to-one time with their key worker. They flourish in an environment of genuine warmth and care.

Subject leaders have organised the curriculum well. Starting in early years, they have identified the precise knowledge they want children to learn and when. Assessment procedures are thorough and link to pupils' learning targets. Teachers make suitable checks on what pupils know and understand. Occasionally, they have not used these checks to make the adjustments required to help pupils remember important concepts. For example, pupils' use of knowledge organisers in history is not helping them to

understand the passing of time or to widen their vocabulary as well as leaders had expected.

Teachers and teaching assistants have received intensive training in the school's chosen phonics programme and follow it closely. Staff provide expert support for those pupils who need extra help to improve their communication and language. Children read regularly across a wide range of genres. They also enjoy listening to adults read to them. During the inspection, Nursery-age children, including two-year-olds, enjoyed listening to their teacher reading a story about dinosaurs. It brought their current learning theme to life.

Leaders know that the quality of some pupils' handwriting has slipped due to increased absences related to COVID-19. They have adapted the curriculum to give extra attention to helping pupils form letters accurately. Consequently, most pupils are catching up. However, staff have not identified another weakness in pupils' writing as swiftly. Pupils learn spelling patterns and rules well in phonics sessions. However, they do not apply this knowledge routinely when they write in their literacy books. Teachers do not identify pupils' spelling errors well enough. Consequently, for some pupils, spelling misconceptions and mistakes persist.

In mathematics, pupils learn to understand number and counting quickly. Children in early years enjoy a stimulating environment and benefit from a range of mathematical resources, which they choose independently and treat with respect. The outdoor learning environment is used effectively to help children to cooperate with each other and practise their number knowledge and skills. There is a careful balance of activities that are led by adults and those selected by children. Consequently, children leave the Reception class well prepared for the mathematics curriculum in Year 1.

Staff identify pupils who need additional support quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need to catch up receive specialist teaching to meet their individual needs. This ensures that they achieve success. Pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties receive appropriate support and learn well alongside their peers. Pupils behave well and learning is rarely disrupted.

Leaders provide a wide range of activities to help pupils develop an understanding of life outside school. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of spirituality through the religious education curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 are keen to share what they have learned about the Five Pillars of Islam. Pupils' character development is also well considered. They discuss with maturity how staff help them to take care of themselves and each other.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are supervised effectively, and the learning environment is well organised and safe. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular and up-to-date training. Several staff in early years are trained in paediatric first aid.

Systems and procedures for staff recruitment are fit for purpose. Staff know what to do to keep pupils safe and they follow the school's processes to report, record or escalate any worries. They are vigilant in checking for potential signs of abuse. Leaders work with a range of other agencies to support pupils and families.

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

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

- Teachers equip pupils with the important knowledge that they need to spell accurately, such as spelling rules and patterns. However, some pupils do not use this knowledge in their extended writing. Too often, they spell words incorrectly and teachers do not address this swiftly. This means that pupils go through school with a growing number of misconceptions in their spelling. Leaders need to assure themselves that there is a high-quality writing curriculum in place, so that pupils learn to spell correctly.
- The curriculum is implemented in every subject. However, some aspects need refinement to ensure that knowledge sticks as well as leaders intend. Some ideas, such as the use of knowledge organisers in history, are not having the desired impact in improving pupils' understanding. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use the insights they have gained from assessments to make suitable adaptations to the curriculum.

## **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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This was the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Plaistow Hill Infant and Nursery School, to be good in March 2013.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145655
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10231296
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	129
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Stuart Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Burnett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.plaistowhill.org.uk">www.plaistowhill.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Horizon Multi Academy Trust in April 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school extended its Nursery provision to accept two-year-olds from September 2021.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 did deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. This included discussions with subject leaders, lesson visits, looking at examples of work, discussions with teachers, discussions with pupils and listening to pupils read to an adult.
- Inspectors held meetings with the head of school, executive headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs leader, and staff and governors, including members of the local governing board.
- The lead inspector spoke with a trustee and the trust's chief executive officer.

- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors examined safeguarding records, checked staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 29 free-text comments. They also took into consideration responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Sue Costello, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Burgess

Ofsted Inspector

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