

Inspection of a good school: Okehampton Primary School and Foundation Unit

Glendale Road, Okehampton, Devon EX20 1JB

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 May 2022

Outcome

Okehampton Primary School and Foundation Unit continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have strengthened the quality of education so pupils learn an ambitious curriculum. They have high expectations that 'every minute is a learning minute'. Pupils say they are expected to work hard in lessons and try their best. Leaders provide wider experiences to enrich the curriculum, including the 'Phizzi lab', where pupils can conduct scientific experiments.

Pupils value the care they receive from their trusted adults. Staff are warm and attentive towards pupils' needs. Leaders ensure there is additional support, such as a nurture group and counselling, for pupils who need it. This helps pupils to be happy in school and feel safe.

Pupils, for the most part, meet the very high expectations staff have of their behaviour. Staff help pupils to learn from their mistakes. Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and to their peers. Manners are commonplace. Pupils are adamant that bullying is extremely rare and trust adults to act on any problems quickly.

Pupils have many responsibilities, including 'tech wizards', science ambassadors, writing the school newsletter and the 'OPS squad', which they appreciate. They know this helps them to be good role models and do the right thing. Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular opportunities that have restarted, including clubs, which were hampered by COVID-19.

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

Leaders have recently strengthened the reading curriculum. They have an unwavering focus on supporting all pupils to learn, and love, to read. Therefore, staff teach children to read as soon as they start school. Pupils have books that are well matched to the sounds they know. Staff regularly check what pupils remember and use this to support pupils to

close any gaps they have. More recently, leaders have introduced a range of books for adults to read to pupils. This helps pupils to experience a diverse range of authors and stories. Pupils become fluent readers who practise their reading in all curriculum subjects.

For some subjects, the curriculum is new. Leaders have carefully ordered, and made links between, learning. Pupils are already benefiting from this and remember what they have learned. For example, in history, pupils know about different types of government and 20th-century conflicts. Pupils make thoughtful contributions to lessons, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff identify and correct any misconceptions quickly. However, leaders have not considered carefully enough how they find out what pupils remember. This means that some pupils do not build quickly enough on what they already know.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils enjoy learning. They use what they have already learned to participate fully in class discussions. Staff in the communication and interaction resource base prioritise language so pupils can communicate their needs effectively. Pupils follow established routines which help them to learn well. Despite this, for some pupils with SEND, the support they need is not pinpointed exactly. Leaders recognise this and are taking steps to make improvements.

Staff present learning clearly, including in the Nursery and Reception Years. The youngest children learn through a range of carefully planned activities that help them to become independent. They practise their reading, writing and mathematics regularly. For example, children use the sounds they know to write sentences about a class story. Staff skilfully talk with children to develop their vocabulary and confidence. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils behave with respect and empathy towards others. They recognise that everyone has different needs. This is a result of leaders' work to provide pupils with a personal, social and health education curriculum that supports their broader development well. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how people may live. They discuss different religious beliefs and cultures. Pupils make links with what they have learned in other subjects to the ways in which they should live. For example, through learning about leaders in history pupils know that laws are important and should be followed. Consequently, pupils are well prepared to be responsible citizens.

Leaders consider the workload and well-being of staff. Staff value the support they receive, particularly the regular staff nominations and 'shout-outs'. Leaders use what they know to make improvements. This has had a positive impact on teaching and the support pupils receive. Leaders now plan to share this more widely with parents and carers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding are robust. They instil a culture of 'it could happen here'. Staff report concerns effectively and receive regular training. As a result, pupils are kept safe. Leaders engage with a range of external agencies to get help for pupils and families. The multi-academy trust makes the appropriate checks when new members of staff start at the school.

Leaders invite visitors, such as national charities, the fire service and police, to provide pupils with an understanding of being safe inside and outside of school. Pupils know how to use technology responsibly and safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The use of assessment is not as well developed as it could be in some subjects. As a result, what some pupils learn is not always well matched to what they already know. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively in all subjects so pupils know and remember more.
- Pupils with SEND learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Despite this, some pupils with SEND do not consistently benefit from precise, targeted support that meets their needs. A small minority of parents also expressed concerns about this. Leaders should ensure that targeted support is exact, so that all pupils with SEND learn as well as they could.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Okehampton Primary School and Foundation Unit, to be good in July 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

Unique reference number	145334
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10227682
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	614
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tania Skeaping
Principals	Sally Huxen and Martin Evely
Website	www.okehampton-pri.devon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 July 2013

Information about this school

- The school is part of Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school has co-principals, one for the infants and one for the juniors.
- There is a nursery for two-, three- and four-year-old children.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club provision for pupils in the Reception Year and above.
- There is a communication and interaction resource base for up to eight pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also considered curriculum information and visited a sample of lessons for reading in key stage 2.

- The inspectors held meetings with the co-principals, the special educational needs coordinator, trust curriculum leaders, school curriculum leaders, teaching staff and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer, the chair of trustees, one other trustee and one member of the local stakeholder board. The lead inspector also considered a written statement from one member of the local stakeholder board.
- The lead inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding leaders to discuss the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. She considered the school's recruitment procedures, staff induction and training, records of concern and engagement with external agencies. The inspectors spoke with staff and pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. One inspector also spoke with parents on the school playground. The lead inspector took into consideration responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Donna Briggs, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Lees

Ofsted Inspector

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