

Inspection of a good school: Penbridge Infant School & Nursery

Lincoln Road, Fratton, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO1 5BG

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 September 2022

Outcome

Penbridge Infant School & Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy attending this welcoming school. Those in the early years make a positive start to their school days, settling quickly into the routines. Even the youngest children feel safe and secure.

Caring relationships between adults and pupils are a key feature. Leaders know that pupils need the right support to be able to learn. Dedicated staff ensure that pupils' mental and physical health is a top priority.

This is a very inclusive school. Leaders have high expectations for every child. They want them to try their best in both their academic work and across the wider curriculum. Pupils are keen to do well and to please their teachers. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about how much they learn from the trips they go on, such as when visiting the animals at a local farm.

Pupils appreciate school and say it is 'like a family'. They consider that everyone gets on well. Pupils enjoy playing in the exciting playground, including the wildlife corner. There is almost no bullying. Staff deal quickly with any rare incidents. Pupils are confident that if they had any worries, they could share them with an adult at the school.

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

School leaders have thought carefully about the design of the curriculum. Subjects are developed in a step-by-step way. This enables pupils to build carefully on their existing knowledge. Parents and carers report how well the school informs them about their child's learning. For example, parents like the topic overviews which show the key vocabulary and concepts to be learned. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from the same engaging curriculum as their peers. It is carefully adapted to meet their needs.

Between early years and key stage 1, almost all subjects are carefully linked. This enables

pupils to develop their learning in a steady and effective way. However, in mathematics, this is not the case. As a result, pupils do not develop their early mathematical understanding in a logical way.

Those children who attend the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision) benefit from a well-designed, personalised curriculum. Individual needs are carefully met by caring staff. For some pupils, this also includes therapies or sensory experiences.

Teachers are keen to ensure that pupils remember information for the long term. At the beginning of each session, there is often a recap of previous learning. This is to ensure that pupils build on very firm foundations of knowledge. Teachers have high expectations of the work required of pupils. Pupils rise to this challenge and try their best in lessons. Assessment of pupils' understanding of the curriculum is effective. Pupils say how much they enjoy answering questions at the end of a topic to prove what they have learned.

From the start of Nursery, early reading skills are carefully developed. For example, there are regular opportunities for children to practise drawing letter shapes in paint or sand. Staff across the school are trained in delivering a well-structured phonics programme. This enables pupils, including those with SEND, to develop their understanding of the phonics code. Staff give pupils the confidence to tackle more challenging texts as their skills develop. Older pupils become keen readers. They enjoy the range of interesting books in the school library. Displays, for example about traditional tales such as Jack and the Beanstalk, encourage pupils to try different types of text. Pupils can talk knowledgeably about the plots of many of these tales.

Although they had only been in Nursery for a few days at the time of inspection, children, including two-year-olds, had formed a bond with their key person. Staff are caring and attentive to the needs of young children. They ensure that children have a safe and cosy place to rest if they get tired.

Leaders ensure that pupils know how to keep active. Many attend extra-curricular sports clubs. Pupils enjoy using the climbing equipment in the playground. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about the importance of eating healthily. For example, pupils are able to identify foods that contain a lot of sugar. The school provides numerous cultural experiences. Recently, pupils took part in arts week. They enjoyed developing their musical, dance, drama and photographic skills. Singing skills are carefully developed for those who belong to the school choir. Recently, they performed at a major Portsmouth occasion.

Leaders, and those responsible for governance, have regular engagement with staff. They all share a common aim, which is to ensure that pupils will 'love learning for their whole life'. Staff are highly supportive of leaders. They consider that their workload is appropriate.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive frequent safeguarding training. Welfare concerns are handled quickly. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding carry out their roles effectively.

Staff have a good understanding of local safeguarding issues. Leaders have made sure staff act quickly if they spot any signs which indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders do not shy away from having difficult conversations with parents. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure pupils get the help that they need. The curriculum is tailored around keeping pupils safe in situations both in and out of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not develop their early knowledge of mathematics in a logical way. This is because the curriculum between early years and key stage 1 is not well sequenced. Leaders in the early years need to decide on the end points they want children to reach so that there is a seamless continuity of learning from early years to key stage 1.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Penhale Infant School and Nursery, to be good in September 2017.

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.

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	145659
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10238330
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gerard Newman
Headteacher	Anna Webb (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.penbridgeschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Penbridge Infant School and Nursery converted to become an academy in April 2018. When its predecessor school, Penhale Infant School and Nursery, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust. The executive headteacher holds her post across this school and Penbridge Junior School.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for 18 pupils with a primary need of cognition and learning. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils are aged between four and nine.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, a representative of the board, the trust's director of education for Portsmouth and three members of the regional governing body, the executive headteacher, the head of school and senior leaders, parents, staff and pupils.
- Early reading, mathematics and geography were considered as deep dives for this inspection. The inspector met with the subject leaders of these curriculum areas, visited lessons across the school and met with pupils and class teachers. The inspector also looked at pupils' work and heard pupils reading.
- Arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed by scrutinising safeguarding policies, processes and written records, staff's recruitment checks and training records. The inspector also talked to a range of staff and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed by 27 staff and 14 parents, including seven free-text comments, through Ofsted's online surveys. There was also a conversation with a number of parents at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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