

# Inspection of Pen Mill Infant and Nursery Academy

St Michael's Avenue, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 4LD

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Pen Mill is a Nursery and Infant school where children and pupils arrive every day happy and smiling. Parents told inspectors they appreciate the family atmosphere and how their children love coming to school.

Leaders and staff are designing a carefully thought out and ambitious curriculum. Early reading and phonics are a strength. Changes made by leaders in the teaching of early reading are paying off. However, in some subjects, leaders have not mapped out in sufficient detail how pupils' knowledge should build over time. Consequently, in some subjects, such as mathematics and history, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils' behaviour is positive. Leaders have high expectations of the behaviour and attitudes of pupils. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Children learn quickly in Nursery and Reception the difference between right and wrong. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and during playtimes. They play happily together and enjoy social times. Bullying is extremely rare. Staff sort out any issues rapidly.

Leaders place a high priority on pupils' personal development. Adults know each pupil well. They are quick to spot any changes in their well-being and take swift action. Pupils are safe and well looked after.

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

Leaders work hard to provide the very best education and care for children and pupils who attend Pen Mill. However, changes in leadership and the impact of COVID-19 have delayed the development of some subjects in the curriculum. Early reading and phonics are well developed throughout the school. In other subjects, pupils do not cover the depth of knowledge they should. For instance, in mathematics, pupils experience all areas of the key stage 1 curriculum. However, there are occasions where content choice and sequencing are disjointed. This means they do not build up their fluency in number well enough.

Assessment information on how well pupils remember the knowledge they have been taught lacks consistency. This means that pupils' recall of prior learning is often patchy.

Adults told us they love working at Pen Mill. They appreciate all leaders do to develop their skills and the training they receive. Leaders are conscious of staff workload and consider ways to help them manage this.

Adults in the school are rightly proud of the nurture and care they provide. This is seen from the moment children arrive on the playground. Parents and children are greeted with a smile and warm welcome by leaders. 'I really want to commend

them' and 'brilliant, lovely little school' were typical comments made by parents. Pupils are safe, well looked after and enjoy their time at Pen Mill.

Leaders and adults expect every child to become a fluent reader by the time they leave the school. Older children in Nursery are introduced to phonics to ensure they are school ready. Children begin learning phonics as soon as they start in Reception. They use this knowledge well when they read. All staff receive high-quality training in the teaching of phonics and early reading. Leaders provides regular support and guidance. Staff appreciate this supportive approach; it gives them the knowledge and confidence to teach early reading with skill. Pupils who struggle are swiftly identified. Staff provide these 'spotlight' pupils with additional help and support to enable them to catch up.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum content and experience the same opportunities as their classmates. Leaders identify and assess their needs quickly. In classrooms, pupils with SEND are well cared for. Environmental adaptations and supportive aids are in place for individual pupils. Pupils can explain how these aids help them. However, learning is not always adapted to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, some pupils are unable to fully access all their learning.

Staff carefully weave pupils' spiritual, moral and social education throughout the curriculum. Pupils learn about other cultures, faiths and backgrounds. They understand the importance of respect and tolerance. For example, every year pupils make wreaths in memory of fallen soldiers who lived in their community. Pupils are also taught to be kind and considerate. They told inspectors, 'We should never be horrible to anyone'.

Pupils like to involve themselves in all that the school has to offer. They take on extra responsibilities with pride. For example, pupils enjoy the election process of being voted onto the school council. They talk enthusiastically about the many trips and activities they go on. Trips to the farm and the outdoor centre are firm favourites.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including trustees, have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained to notice and report any signs of concern. Leaders respond swiftly to support pupils and families in need of help. They do not hesitate to escalate concerns when required. Staff carry out the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with young children and pupils. Leaders provide a curriculum that teaches pupils to understand age-appropriate risks, including internet safety and healthy relationships. Pupils know that adults will listen to them if they have any concerns, and help.

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

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

- In some subjects, leaders are not clear enough about the key knowledge and skills they want pupils to know. As a result, pupils do not build a deep understanding of these subjects. Leaders must ensure that all subjects identify the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils need to learn as they progress through the school.
- Leaders have not established rigorous systems to assess how well pupils remember the knowledge they have been taught. Pupils' recall of prior learning is often patchy. Leaders need to ensure that staff use assessment effectively to check what pupils know and remember across all subjects.
- The curriculum is not always adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils are unable to fully access all their learning. Leaders should ensure that staff consistently adapt the curriculum to precisely meet pupils' needs.

### 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138849
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241240
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery/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>	167
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Iain Crabtree
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracy Manning
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.penmillinfants.co.uk">www.penmillinfants.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Pen Mill Infant and Nursery Academy converted to a stand-alone academy in 2012.
- The school runs a Nursery, which includes provision for two-year olds.
- Since the last inspection, a substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, other school staff and three trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. 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. An inspector also considered the history curriculum.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to an adult. Story time was visited in Reception Year and key stage 1.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including the safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding leader acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and trustees about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the alternative provision used by the school.
- The lead inspector considered key documentation, including school self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. An inspector met with the headteacher and the parent and families support adviser to discuss how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text replies. Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jo Hicks

Ofsted Inspector

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