

Inspection of a good school: Occold Primary School

The Street, Occold, Eye, Suffolk IP23 7PL

Inspection date: 18 January 2023

Outcome

Occold Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

As a result of high expectations, pupils' aspirations are raised and they develop a love of learning. The curriculum extends beyond the classroom to include a rich range of additional opportunities. Pupils enjoy meeting many exciting visitors, including authors, Arctic explorers and artists-in-residence.

Behaviour is calm. Pupils respond well to clear routines, resulting in little disruption to learning. Pupils say that the school is a happy community and that there is virtually no bullying. Pupils trust leaders to resolve any unkindness. In this safe atmosphere, pupils develop confidence. They become polite and articulate. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils learn to voice their needs and aspirations. All take part in the regular gatherings called 'moots'. These help to develop their leadership skills. Pupils suggest changes, such as to school lunches. They appreciate how leaders respond to their ideas. From when they start in early years, children take turns respectfully. Pupils in lessons listen to others' views. This helps them express their own well-considered opinions.

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

Leaders have provided an ambitious and broad curriculum. They have based this carefully around pupils' needs. Leaders plan what they want pupils to know to be ready for their next stages of education. Starting in early years, learning is broken down step by step. This precise planning helps teachers know what pupils should learn and when. For example, it clarifies what to teach to different pupils in mixed-age classes. The clear identification of key learning also means that pupils with SEND can access it.

Teachers receive effective training through, for instance, working with subject specialists from the trust. For the most part, this helps them deliver the curriculum well. Teachers support pupils with SEND effectively. Appropriate activities are used to implement the planned programmes of learning. For example, creative writing lessons build successfully

on the vocabulary pupils learn from their reading. Mathematical concepts are explained through real-life situations, such as shopping. This enhances pupils' confidence and independence in their learning. As a result, pupils confidently learn new content that builds on their prior learning. For instance, pupils understand the chronology of events in history. Sometimes, however, teachers do not check learning as closely as they might. This means that a few misconceptions go uncorrected, such as in spelling and number formation. As a result, pupils occasionally do not do as well as they might.

Leaders prioritise reading. They plan, in depth, how pupils should build their love and knowledge of reading during their time at the school. For example, children in Reception learn about different types of texts. This grows into a rich appreciation of literature by the end of key stage 2. The reading curriculum is broad, enriched by high-quality activities, for instance through literary festivals and book groups. Pupils with SEND read well and talk about their books with enthusiasm.

Staff are consistent in how they teach the phonics scheme. Early readers remember the sounds they are taught. Most pupils quickly learn to read with fluency. However, occasionally, they do not get the support they need when practising. Consequently, a small number of pupils sometimes struggle with blending sounds into words, or how to use their phonics knowledge for spelling.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff apply these consistently. As a result, pupils focus well in lessons. If pupils find managing their own behaviour difficult, they get the right balance of sanction and support. Consequently, behaviour improves over time.

Leaders identified pupils' mental health as being a particular concern during the pandemic. They put in place many actions to support well-being, and check carefully how effective these are. Pupils say that this help makes them feel better about themselves.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel leaders consider their workload. A palpable sense of teamwork exists between leaders and staff.

The trust supports leaders well. For instance, it ensures that leaders have the resources they need to help pupils with SEND effectively. Trustees and governors monitor the curriculum closely. They challenge leaders, where appropriate, about areas that could be improved. Governors make regular checks on safeguarding, including how well leaders support vulnerable families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders train staff effectively in how to make sure pupils are safe. Staff know how to spot and log concerns, and leaders respond to these promptly. They refer to the appropriate agencies when needed. Leaders ensure that correct recruitment procedures are followed.

Leaders take health and safety seriously. Clear and consistent processes are in place for crossing the road to the field where pupils play. Pupils learn about road safety, such as through roles as junior road safety officers. The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe. They learn in depth about online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not check learning as regularly and as effectively as they could. As a result, occasionally, pupils develop some misconceptions which are not corrected. Leaders should train teachers to check learning regularly and address misconceptions effectively, so that pupils do not base their knowledge on inaccurate learning.
- On occasion, early readers are not supported effectively to practise the sounds they know. This means that a small number of pupils do not blend sounds into words as confidently as they might. It also sometimes results in them not using their phonics knowledge to build up accuracy in spelling. Leaders need to ensure that all staff give pupils effective support when practising their phonics knowledge, so that pupils use this to blend and spell even better.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, also called Occold Primary School, to be good in March 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	146173
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10255151
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Hargrave
Executive headteacher	Paul Parslow-Williams
Website	www.occoldprimaryschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened as a new academy in September 2018.
- The predecessor school joined All Saints Schools Trust in June 2018.
- The headteacher became executive headteacher for Occold Primary School and another local primary school in September 2018. He spends two and a half days in each school. The head of school was appointed on the same date. She is based in Occold Primary School full time.
- The chair of governors was appointed in September 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 held meetings with the chair of governors, the chief executive officer of the trust, the executive headteacher and the head of school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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. In early reading, this took the form of listening to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, inspectors reviewed the school's single central record, met with the designated safeguarding lead and looked at the recording of safeguarding information.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation form and improvement plan, curriculum plans and school policies.
- Inspectors reviewed the 19 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the 13 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also considered 11 responses to the Ofsted staff survey, and the 23 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rob James

Ofsted Inspector

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