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Inspection of Polesden Lacey Infant School

Oakdene Close, Great Bookham, Leatherhead, Surrey KT23 4PT

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school values of being kind, caring, resilient and courageous, underpin everything that happens in this welcoming community. Leaders and staff have high expectations. From the moment children join in Reception, they are taught to respect all people. This continues throughout their time in school. Pupils talk maturely about the importance of treating everyone equally. In Year 1, a pupil summed up the views of her peers and said, 'Just because someone looks or sounds different does not mean that we treat them different.'

Pupils know how to be a good friend. For instance, at playtimes, they make sure that no one feels left out. There is a happy atmosphere on the pirate ship, the trim trail and the willow whale. Pupils can take a quiet moment and relax in the sensory garden. They relish catching up with their friends in the wooden houses. Pupils look after the environment. Through the posters they make, pupils are raising awareness of the impact of pollution on local habitats. They routinely organise litter picks to promote their campaign.

Pupils are safe and know that they can talk to adults if they have any worries. Should any bullying occur, leaders take swift and effective action.

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

The headteacher and her talented staff bring great commitment and resolve to all aspects of their work. Staff appreciate the opportunities for professional development. There is a strong team spirit all round. Governors are proud of their school and its place in the community. They challenge and support leaders in equal measure. Governors are knowledgeable about the curriculum. They know precisely what needs to continue to improve further in the quality of education. Parents are full of praise for adults who work here. Every parent who responded to the Ofsted parent survey would recommend the school. One parent, echoing the views of many, said, 'Polesden Lacey Infants is a magical place that gives our children wings to become enthusiastic, resilient and independent learners.'

Leaders place strong emphasis on promoting a love of reading. Pupils avidly pore over a diverse and varied range of literature available in classrooms and around school. They take delight in listening to the texts staff read. Every Friday, pupils eagerly wait to hear the stories that the 'mystery readers' share. Children are introduced to phonics as soon as they start in early years. Well-trained staff support pupils to blend and segment new words successfully. The books that pupils read match the sounds they are taught. Staff efficiently support pupils who are at risk of falling behind to catch up quickly. Pupils learn to read confidently and fluently.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) early. They work closely with external agencies to provide pupils with high-quality support. Staff skilfully adapt work and resources to ensure that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils look forward to lessons. They

behave well and do not disrupt others. There is a purposeful ethos in classrooms. In early years, children talk animatedly about their work as they explore the well-organised environment. Teachers plan work that is interesting and engaging. However, occasionally, in subjects such as mathematics, they do not always make sure that pupils make links with what they have learned previously. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not build their knowledge securely and steadily.

Overall, leaders have developed a vibrant and stimulating curriculum, including in early years. They have carefully set out the technical vocabulary, trips and experiences which bring pupils' learning to life. Across most subjects, leaders have identified exactly what they want pupils to learn and the order in which it should be taught. Leaders constantly review the curriculum plans in all areas. They know that in a handful of subjects, the curriculum is not well honed. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils develop an age-appropriate awareness of the wider world, as well as their local areas. For example, pupils regularly collect donations for the food bank and charities they support. They debate topics such as fair trade, racism, and the rule of law. Pupils pursue their talents and hobbies. They enthusiastically take part in the judo, gardening, multi sports and dance clubs. Pupils appreciate opportunities to perform at musical and sporting events in the community and beyond. They wholeheartedly participate in the village fair. Through visits to places of worship, pupils learn about different religions, cultures, and festivals. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' well-being and safety is a high priority. Staff are vigilant and look out for any signs, which indicate that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They refer and record their concerns promptly. Leaders do not hesitate to seek external advice. They work effectively with other agencies to make sure pupils and their families have the help they need. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, teachers do not always help pupils make links to what they have learned previously. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that teachers consistently help pupils embed the important ideas before introducing new work.
- The curriculum in a few foundation subjects and areas of learning does not set out clearly the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and know well. As a

result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in all subjects. Leaders should continue their work to review and develop the curriculum plans in these subjects.

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	125052
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10256347
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Rogers
Headteacher	Rebecca Mole
Website	www.polesdenlaceyinfant.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 January 2010, , under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started in her post in September 2019.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair. She also spoke on the telephone with an officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and geography. For the deep dives, the lead inspector discussed the

curriculum plans with leaders. Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in the early years. They visited Reception Year to understand how curriculum plans were being implemented.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Ashcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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