

Inspection of a good school: Plymouth Grove Primary School

Plymouth Grove West, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ardwick M13 0AQ

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

Outcome

Plymouth Grove Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have created a culture of high expectation and ambition for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders and staff expect all pupils, and children in the early years, to behave and learn well. Pupils try to live up to these expectations. They achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils are aware of their responsibilities to respect the rights of others. They show great empathy towards one another. Pupils learn to be upstanders, and not bystanders, to unkindness and injustice.

Pupils know that staff care for them. Staff swiftly deal with any incidents of bullying. Pupils who are new to the country are supported to settle in quickly. Pupils are happy to come to school every day. They feel safe.

There are many opportunities that broaden pupils' experiences. For example, pupils learn to play a variety of musical instruments, including the violin and keyboard. They represent their peers in the school parliament. Pupils celebrate different festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Eid. They visit art galleries, air raid shelters and mills, and take trips to the beach. Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular clubs on offer, such as 'boomwhacker club' and 'debate mate'. They like learning in the outside woodland area.

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

All pupils, including those with SEND, have access to a rich and broad curriculum. The curriculum is logically designed to build pupils' knowledge, from the early years to Year 6.

A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Leaders manage this well by prioritising these pupils' personal and social development. Leaders have ensured that staff are trained well to help international new arrivals. This helps these pupils to acquire the language skills that they need to feel part of the Plymouth Grove learning community. Children in the early years improve their vocabulary and develop their

communication skills well. This helps them to access their learning, and prepares them well for the demands of Year 1.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They explain new concepts clearly to pupils. In the main, teachers use assessment strategies successfully to check what pupils know and remember. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers do not check whether pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on to new learning. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support that they need to learn effectively. Pupils with SEND are involved in all aspects of school life.

Leaders are well into the process of implementing a new phonics programme. Children in the early years learn phonics from the day that they start school. Leaders ensure that pupils read books that match the sounds that they have learned. Although staff have had some training, there is an inconsistency in how well the phonics programme is delivered. On occasion, some staff do not identify quickly enough when pupils have not secured a sound. This hinders how well one or two pupils learn phonics.

Pupils spoke excitedly about their favourite books. They told the inspector that they enjoy acting out the stories. Pupils have access to a diverse range of texts in the school library. Staff provide effective support for pupils who are weaker readers. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly and read fluently.

Staff and pupils share a common language when talking about behaviour. In lessons, pupils behave well because they understand the importance of focusing on their learning. Pupils accept that everyone has the right to learn. Leaders and staff use effective strategies to enable pupils to manage their emotions and behaviour. Learning is rarely disturbed by low-level disruption.

Leaders extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom. Pupils are involved in a myriad of experiences that prepare them well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn about the importance of democracy. They find out about keeping healthy, including the importance of dental health. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way.

Staff morale is high. Leaders consider staff's workload and make sure that it is manageable. Governors have a clear overview of the strengths and areas for development in relation to the quality of education. They carry out their statutory duties effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a vigilant culture of safeguarding. They ensure that staff receive the most up-to-date safeguarding training. Leaders check that staff have understood this training.

Staff know how to raise any concerns that they may have about a pupil's welfare. Leaders evaluate safeguarding referrals to check that staff know how to spot the signs of potential abuse and neglect. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils receive timely help from external agencies when necessary.

Pupils are clear about whom to go to if they have a concern. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few staff do not deliver the phonics programme consistently well. This means that one or two pupils do not acquire phonic knowledge as quickly as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff are suitably trained to deliver the phonics programme effectively so that pupils can secure their phonic knowledge.
- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies carefully enough to check how well pupils have learned the essential knowledge in the curriculum. Consequently, in some subjects, some pupils develop small gaps in their learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers in all subjects use assessment strategies well, to check that pupils' knowledge is secure before introducing new learning.

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 school to be good in July 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	105443
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10240823
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Abdi Muse
Headteacher	Michael Cooke
Website	www.plymouthgrove.net
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make any use of alternative provision.

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.
- As part of the inspection, the inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, music and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and looked at pupils' work, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning. They also observed some pupils reading to members of staff.
- The inspector spoke to subject leaders and teachers about the curriculum and assessment in other subjects.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. She spoke with the designated safeguarding lead, and spoke with staff about their understanding of how to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to staff about workload and well-being.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector considered the views of parents on Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

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