

Inspection of a good school: Otterham Community Primary School

Marshgate, Camelford, Cornwall PL32 9YW

Inspection date:

2 February 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Otterham Community Primary are happy and come to school ready to learn. They are polite and considerate to each other and adults. Pupils feel safe in school. They have a 'trusted adult' they can go to if they have any worries or concerns. Many parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, commented that their children receive effective support and are well looked after.

Pupils work hard in lessons. They take great pride in their work. However, the curriculum in some subjects does not clearly identify or sequence the knowledge that pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils do not have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They behave well in lessons. Pupils understand what bullying is. They say that it rarely happens and know what to do if it occurs. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils speak enthusiastically about their experiences beyond the classroom. They enjoy attending various after-school clubs, such as yoga, cookery, cricket and gardening. Pupils are developing their understanding of how they can make a positive contribution to society.

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

In some subjects, the curriculum is not well designed and sequenced. Teachers do not always build on what pupils already understand. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in

what they should know. Sometimes, they are not able to make connections with what they have previously been taught. Leaders do not ensure that the most essential knowledge is carefully introduced in a logical order to help pupils deepen their learning.

Leaders sequence the mathematics curriculum effectively to meet the needs of mixed-age classes. Children in the early years develop their knowledge of early mathematics successfully. They extend their understanding of number and mathematical vocabulary through well-planned activities. Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop their fluency and apply their knowledge in problem-solving tasks. However, their skills in mathematical reasoning are not as secure. This impacts on the depth of their learning.

Leaders ensure that reading is a priority. Staff demonstrate a high level of expertise in the teaching of phonics. Children learn their letters and sounds as soon as they start school. Teachers make frequent checks on the sounds that pupils remember. They use this information to make sure that all pupils receive the right support. Pupils discuss their favourite authors and the books they have written with enthusiasm. Teachers make sure that the books that pupils read closely match the letters and sounds they have been learning. As a result, pupils experience a good degree of success and demonstrate fluency, accuracy and enjoyment when reading books.

Teachers have a detailed understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND. Parents appreciate the individual care and attention that pupils receive from staff. Teachers make careful adaptations in lessons because they know the needs of each individual pupil. As a result, pupils with SEND learn well and experience success.

Pupils benefit from a broad and varied curriculum that extends beyond the academic subjects. Leaders invite visiting speakers to teach pupils about people who have different beliefs. These experiences broaden pupils' understanding of world religions, such as Hinduism and Sikhism. Pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe online. They know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, such as eating a balanced diet, staying hydrated and exercising regularly. Pupils enjoy finding out about the wider world through current affairs stories and discussions.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Rules and routines are firmly established. Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils recognise that people are different and that they should treat everyone with respect.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate how leaders consider their workload and well-being. Trustees understand what the school does well and where further improvements are needed. They support and challenge senior leaders effectively.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that securing a progressive curriculum across the foundation subjects and developing pupils' skills in mathematical reasoning may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture around keeping pupils safe. A comprehensive staff training programme enables early identification of pupils who may be at risk. Staff know pupils well. They are alert to the potential signs of abuse. Leaders log safeguarding concerns and follow them up swiftly.

Leaders make thorough checks when new staff join the school. The school's single central record of staff is well maintained. Leaders reach out to a range of external professionals. They ensure that pupils and their families receive support in a timely fashion.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some of the wider curriculum subjects, leaders have not mapped out the precise sequence of knowledge that pupils should learn, remember and revisit over time. As a result, pupils can struggle to make connections with prior learning and have gaps in their subject knowledge. Leaders need to make sure that the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in each subject is clear and carefully set out.
- The curriculum offer in mathematics is not enabling pupils to secure their skills in mathematical reasoning. As a result, pupils can struggle to demonstrate the depth and mastery of their learning. Leaders should ensure that teaching supports pupils to build their knowledge and ability to reason well over time.

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, Otterham Community Primary School, to be good in January 2018.

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	146391
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10256729
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lyn Davis
Headteacher	Helen Ward
Website	www.otterhamschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In October 2018, the school joined the North Cornwall Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust comprising four primary and one secondary school.
- This is a smaller-than-average primary school. Pupils are organised into three mixed-age classes.
- There is provision for childcare before school.
- 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, teaching staff and trustees, including the chair of the trustees, and the chief executive officer.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read to an adult.
- The lead inspector looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. He also met with the designated safeguarding leads. Inspectors also spoke with pupils, staff and representatives from the trust about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The lead inspector reviewed key documentation, including school action plans, trustees' minutes, headteacher evaluations and safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as the responses to the surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Neil Swait, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lizzie Lethbridge

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