

Inspection of a good school: Portfields Primary School

Westbury Lane, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire MK16 8PS

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 April 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. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Portfield's pupils embody their school values of 'believe, respect, involve, dream, grow and empower'. All pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from being fully included in school life. Pupils feel safe and they trust that the adults in school want what is best for them.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils appreciate leaders' aspirations for their success and well-being that, increasingly, permeate the school. Leaders have successfully brought about many recent improvements to the curriculum. However, some subjects are not as well developed as others. As a result, some pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Not all pupils learn to read well enough.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a wide range of opportunities for leadership and personal development. Pupils take pride in their sporting activities and in the outdoor facilities, such as the new trampolines. Pupils are rightly proud of the way in which they welcome and support pupils who join the school. Pupils are knowledgeable about what bullying is. It is rare and leaders resolve any issues quickly and effectively.

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

All pupils study a broad curriculum that matches the scope and ambition of the national curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have identified and sequenced the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn and remember. This enables pupils to return to, practise and embed important ideas. However, this is not consistently the case. This means that teachers do not always know what essential learning needs to be revisited to enable pupils to connect with what they already know. As a result, in some subjects, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are not achieving well enough.

In contrast, following leaders' recent improvement work, there are strengths in the early years curriculum. Leaders have identified the key knowledge and skills that children need to learn and planned a curriculum which meets their needs and interests well. Staff use their strong knowledge of each child's learning to plan activities that build on what they already know and can do. This practice is equally strong across all the areas of learning. As a result, children in early years get off to a good start and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Early reading is not yet taught well enough in key stage 1. Leaders have thoughtfully considered the early reading curriculum and made recent revisions. They are supporting staff as they gain the knowledge and skills needed to teach the new curriculum effectively. Leaders have also ensured that books are precisely matched to pupils' stages of learning. Most pupils are already benefiting from these recent improvements. However, some pupils have fallen behind with their reading. Not all pupils have the strategies they need to enable them to learn to read fluently.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. They make sure that pupils' needs are quickly identified and that they are supported well, so that they can fully access the school's curriculum. Teachers increasingly adapt the curriculum, so that pupils' needs are met. In the core subjects, such as English and mathematics, teachers regularly check what all pupils know and remember. However, this practice is not consistent in other subjects in key stages 1 and 2. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified quickly and addressed.

Pupils behave well. They take pride in meeting leaders' high expectations. Leaders teach pupils what good behaviour looks like through the school's 'manners' curriculum. This begins in Reception where children willingly follow leaders' expectations to 'choose it, use it and put it away'. Consequently, classrooms are calm and purposeful learning environments. Pupils understand the systems for sanctions, praise and rewards, which are consistently and fairly used by staff.

Leaders make sure that wider curriculum activities give pupils experiences that build character and confidence. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is embedded well. Consequently, pupils have secure knowledge about topics, such as diversity and equality. They show genuine respect for the beliefs, opinions and views of others.

Leaders ensure that all staff feel supported and have opportunities for development. Staff recognise the school's positive culture and vision and the role they play in it. They feel appreciated and included in decision-making.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training to help them to identify when pupils may be at risk from harm. They know the procedures to follow if they have concerns. Leaders know families well and are aware of local dangers that pupils may face. Leaders work effectively with

other professionals to provide appropriate advice and support to those families who need it most. Rigorous checks are made on all adults who work with pupils in the school.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. For example, they are encouraged not to share personal information, including passwords.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Phonics is not taught consistently well in key stage 1. As a result, some pupils do not quickly become fluent readers. Leaders should make sure that staff have the subject knowledge and expertise to teach the early reading programme effectively.
- In some foundation subjects in key stages 1 and 2, leaders have not identified clearly enough the progression of learning. This means that staff do not have enough guidance to enable them to plan lessons that build on and connect well with what pupils already know. Leaders should make more explicit the most important knowledge that pupils must remember, so that teachers can implement the curriculum consistently well in all subjects.
- In the foundation subjects in key stage 1 and 2, teachers do not identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. As a result, pupils are not developing the depth of knowledge that leaders intend. Leaders should make sure that staff carefully assess what pupils know and remember and use this information to plan effectively for future 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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	131718
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10256464
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Georgina Thompson
Headteacher	Sarah Folkard
Website	www.portfieldsprimaryschool.org
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in school leadership. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2018. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher were appointed in January 2023.
- The school does not currently 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders, support staff and teachers.
- The inspection team completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, and geography. They met with subject leaders, held

discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.

- The inspection team reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising documents and records and through discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also met with an improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through meetings with them and through Ofsted's confidential online surveys. They also took account of parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector also talked with some parents at the end of the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Clare Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alison Robb-Webb

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023