

Inspection of a good school: Pentland Field School

Pentland Way, Ickenham, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB10 8TS

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

Pentland Field School continues to be a good school.

The head of this school is Ivan Talbott. This school is part of The Eden Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Susan Douglas, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Barry Nolan. There is also an executive head of school, Perdy Buchanan-Barrow, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

In all parts of the school, from the early years to the sixth form, it is clear to see how much pupils enjoy being here. This is a happy, friendly school where each and every pupil is valued and cared for. Pupils build strong and trusting relationships with staff. This helps them to feel safe and secure. Whatever their method of communication, pupils' views, feelings and ideas are listened to and understood.

Staff are well trained to support pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use their expertise very effectively to work out what each pupil needs and when. Everyone is focused on helping pupils to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence they need for the future. Staff, including the school's team of therapists, do whatever it takes to enable each pupil to flourish and succeed. These high expectations allow pupils to make great strides in achieving their individual goals.

Pupils learn to understand themselves and others. Pupils are given all the help they need to manage their feelings and emotions. They behave well. Students in the sixth form remembered the importance of the words 'strive' and 'compromise'. Younger pupils said how much they look forward to becoming 'school reward champions' for being kind and gentle to others.

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

The school has grown over the past few years. It now has more pupils and a popular sixth form. Trustees, together with leaders at all levels, have worked effectively over this period to maintain the good quality of education that pupils receive.

The school's curriculum has been designed effectively to meet pupils' different needs. The 'formal' and 'semi-formal' pathways, for example, ensure that pupils get the right level of support in order to learn and make progress. The curriculum includes a strong emphasis on building pupils' communication and interaction skills. It involves a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn things that will help them in their everyday lives, including outside school. For example, when pupils are ready they are taught how to use public transport safely and how to manage different social situations, such as asking for help or going shopping for items in the supermarket.

Staff are ambitious for all pupils. No ceiling is put on what pupils can or might achieve. In all subjects, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. This helps pupils to recap what they have been taught before and be ready for what they will learn next. Staff know pupils really well. Much effort goes into setting precise and aspirational targets for each pupil. Parents and staff, including therapists, all come together to discuss pupils' next steps. In a few subjects, the school is still working out the best way to check if pupils have learned the knowledge they need.

Staff know how to adjust teaching so that pupils can take part and learn well, such as through the use of pictures, symbols or signing. Pupils get the chance to transfer what they learn in the classroom to different scenarios. For example, pupils enjoyed going on a 'word hunt' in the playground while older pupils practised their mathematics and life skills by running the school's tuck shop. Children in the early years learned about different colours by adding food dyes to water. They enjoyed pressing their fingers into 'paint bags' to make numbers and letters. Occasionally, however, teachers set tasks or activities that do not help pupils learn the curriculum as well as they might. When this happens, some pupils get confused or they misunderstand things.

Pupils show respect and kindness to others. When situations get tricky or if pupils become anxious, staff know exactly how to help them get back on track. Learning is rarely disrupted.

Pupils enjoy reading. Students in the sixth form are excellent reading buddies to the younger pupils. Pupils enjoyed 'the masked reader' where they had to guess which teacher was reading the story while hiding behind the mask. Older pupils planned and recorded podcasts for pupils in the primary phase to enjoy. Staff teach pupils to read well. The school makes sure that pupils are given age-appropriate texts which allow them to build up their reading knowledge and skills.

A strength of the school is the way in which everyone is focused on preparing pupils for adulthood. The school has increased the number of courses and qualifications pupils can study in Years 10 and 11. This is built upon well in the sixth form, where students have personalised learning plans. These enable students to study for appropriate qualifications, experience the world of work and take part in enrichment opportunities. The school's careers programme is woven skilfully through the curriculum. This makes it meaningful and relevant for pupils. Pupils benefit from regular, expert advice about their future plans.

The school promotes pupils' social and cultural development well. For example, pupils hear from special visitors and go on trips into the local area, and students in the sixth

form volunteer at food banks and libraries. Pupils enjoy music and sports activities. They get the chance to compose and produce music with the help of trained musicians. Some of the older pupils graduate as cricket coaches and enjoy teaching others.

Staff feel well supported to do their jobs effectively. The school considers staff well-being. For example, the school's marking and assessment policies have been revised following feedback from staff. The trust provides staff with the opportunity to seek help and advice from a range of professionals onsite, including the 'creative therapy' team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, approaches for checking what pupils know, remember and can do are still being finalised. This means that, in these subjects, staff do not have a clear picture about whether pupils have learned and remembered the intended curriculum. The school should continue its work to establish approaches to check what pupils know and remember in these subjects.
- Occasionally, teachers choose activities or present tasks in ways which do not help pupils to learn the intended curriculum as well as they might. When this happens, it sometimes confuses pupils or does not allow them to show what they know. The school should ensure that teachers consider carefully the activities they choose so that these benefit all pupils and allow them to show what they know, remember and can do.

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 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141606
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10268768
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	29
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Barry Nolan
Headteacher	Ivan Talbott (Head of School) Perdy Buchanan-Barrow (Executive Head of School)
Website	www.pentlandfieldschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Pentland Field School is part of The Eden Academy Trust. It caters for pupils with a range of SEND, including autism and severe learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased and the school now has pupils in the sixth form and early years.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the representatives of the trust, the executive head of school and the head of school. Inspectors held meetings with other senior members of staff, including the assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects, including science, history, computing and physical education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff. They evaluated the responses to the online staff survey. Inspectors held meetings with pupils and spoke to them informally during social times. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Georgina Herry

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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