

Inspection of a good school: Pinchmill Primary School

The Old Road, Felmersham, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 7JD

Inspection date:

1 November 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 school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and their parents, appreciate the school's nurturing environment. Pupils live up to the school's values of 'Respect, Responsible and Ready'. They learn to be considerate of other's needs. The caring ethos evident throughout the school ensures that pupils feel safe. They willingly take responsibility for themselves, their peers and the school. Pupils feel proud to take up leadership positions, such as in the school council.

Starting in nursery, pupils take learning seriously. They sustain concentration for extended periods and focus on their studies. Pupils work well together and encourage each other to succeed. They are articulate and listen well to others during discussions. However, after a period of staff turbulence, the school's curriculum is underdeveloped. This has led to pupils not achieving as well as they could.

Pupils benefit from the school's wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities. These enable pupils to develop new talents and interests while broadening their understanding of the curriculum. During play time and in clubs, pupils take advantage of the impressive opportunities to enhance their learning in physical education (PE). Pupils proudly speak of their many successes in sporting competitions against other schools.

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

The school's curriculum is currently being redesigned. Curriculum plans are at an early stage of development. They do not provide sufficient guidance for staff to know exactly what pupils must know and understand for each subject. As a result, teachers do not teach all of the key knowledge pupils need and sometimes arrange activities that lack

purpose. Consequently, pupils do not gain a secure grasp of important knowledge over time.

Staff check what pupils know and understand with varying effectiveness. This leads to pupils falling behind. Where curriculum plans contain sufficient detail about what pupils must know, teachers check pupils' knowledge more precisely.

The school, with the support of specialists from the local authority, have improved how well staff identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, the school has not ensured that staff have the guidance to support many pupils with SEND well. The current guidance is too often generic and not well matched to pupils' needs. This leads to teachers not providing support for these pupils' needs with consistent effectiveness. Leaders are now in the process of writing the guidance staff need to plan support that matches the exact needs of these pupils. However, for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, the school provides effective support. These pupils learn to manage their emotions and behaviour effectively.

Starting in the nursery, pupils are encouraged to enjoy reading. They make good use of the well-stocked library. The school ensures that children in the nursery develop sophisticated use of language and are ready to learn the basics of reading. The school ensures that most pupils learn to read fluently. However, when pupils find learning to read difficult, the school does not provide pupils with the right levels of support or practice. The school does not routinely give texts that accurately match pupils' reading abilities. As a result, these pupils do not get enough practice in the areas they find difficult so do not catch up quickly. Similarly, these pupils' access to the curriculum is limited because the texts given to them are too hard.

The school recently redesigned the behaviour policy. Staff and pupils understand the school's expectations and its approach to rewards and sanctions. Staff manage behaviour effectively and fairly. A pleasant and purposeful atmosphere is maintained throughout the school day.

Provision for pupils' broader development is strong. Pupils are well prepared to live alongside people with diverse beliefs and lifestyles.

After a period of staff change, the school is developing leadership at all levels. With support from the local authority, governance has improved. Governors require leaders to provide them with the information needed to understand the quality of the school's provision. Governors now challenge leaders to ensure that the school makes the necessary improvements.

Staff and parents are positive about the school. All staff are proud of and enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported. Parents are noticing the changes taking place. Many commented on how much the school has improved this academic year.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

At the start of this academic year, leaders and governors responded to a complaint raised against the school by commissioning an external audit of safeguarding practices. This led to the redesign of safeguarding policies and procedures.

Staff are well trained and are vigilant to signs of potential harm. When concerns arise, staff act swiftly and in line with school expectations. The school works effectively with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need. The school also has effective measures in place when dealing with allegations about the conduct of staff or volunteers at school.

Inspectors found minor administrative errors on the single central record. These indicated that leaders and governors were unclear about some national requirements. The necessary changes were made during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not provide teachers with enough information about exactly what pupils must know and understand in each subject. Teachers do not consistently teach key knowledge or provide relevant learning activities. They are not well placed to check exactly what pupils know and understand. As a result, pupils do not learn what leaders expect. The school must ensure that curriculum plans clarify precisely what pupils must know and understand in each subject.
- The school does not ensure that pupils who find reading difficult are provided with texts that match their reading abilities. Consequently, these pupils do not get sufficient practice to master what they find hard and do not access the curriculum as effectively as they could. The school must provide texts that match weaker readers' reading abilities.
- The school does not provide staff with the information they need to arrange support that matches the specific needs of some pupils with SEND. As a result, staff do not give these pupils the support they need to learn as well as they could. The school must provide staff with the guidance they need to support these pupils effectively.

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 September 2014.

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 SEND; pupils who meet the [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	109451
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10311152
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Paul Harris
Headteacher	Victoria Bailey
Website	www.pinchmill.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in September 2023.
- The school has nursery provision for two-year-olds.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school operates its own before- and after-school care.

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 spoke with governors, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, teachers, members of support staff, and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PE. 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, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 observed behaviour of pupils in lessons and during play time.
- Inspectors looked at relevant documents, considered pupils work and held discussions with leaders, staff and pupils about the provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered the 10 staff's responses and the 33 parents' responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Al Mistrano, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

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