

Inspection of a good school: Minchinhampton Primary Academy

School Road, Minchinhampton, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 9BP

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 October 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.

The headteacher of this school is Nick Moss. This school is part of the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rachel Howie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tim Brock.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Minchinhampton Primary Academy are safe and happy. The school has recently focused on resetting expectations and processes to manage pupils' behaviour and additional needs. Pupils are clear about these systems, which they feel are used fairly and consistently. Pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour for themselves are supported well.

However, the quality of education provided by the school sometimes lacks rigour and challenge. Where this is the case, adults do not have high enough expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils' attention dips and they lack motivation. This is the same in the early years, where not enough is expected of children.

Staff provide strong pastoral support for pupils. Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff and with one another. Training for staff ensures that all staff know how to keep pupils safe. Staff have a good understanding of how to support all pupils' needs, including those who have social, emotional or mental health needs.

Pupils enjoy a range of clubs and enrichment activities. These help them to develop social skills as they mix with different ages across the school. Older pupils are proud of the responsibilities they take on.

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

The school's work on the curriculum has had varied results. Where the curriculum is more secure, pupils achieve well. For example, in art and design, pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to produce high-quality pieces of work. These are based on inspiration from a diverse range of artists. However, in other subjects, such as reading, the school has been slow to make improvements. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well as they should in these subjects.

The school's approach to teaching reading is not well implemented. Staff do not all have secure subject knowledge because they have not received appropriate training. Pupils sometimes struggle to keep up, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils do not receive the precise support they need to help them to catch up.

The transition between learning phonics and the reading programme is not rigorous enough. This means that pupils do not build on the decoding they know and can do. This hinders them when they come to reading a wider range of texts.

The delivery of the mathematics curriculum for younger pupils is not challenging enough. This means that some pupils are not securing the important knowledge they need for later learning. Nevertheless, pupils enjoy mathematics. Older pupils enjoy the 'twist it' and 'explore it' elements of the curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND, regularly apply their mathematical knowledge to reasoning and problem-solving.

Children in the early years are happy and have their personal needs met well. Staff are warm and encouraging with children. As a result, children learn to share resources and have a go at new activities. However, expectations remain too low. For example, assessment is not used well enough to help children make the most of learning through play, both in the classroom and when outside. There is too little urgency to help children to begin to read. As a result, children are not as well prepared to move into key stage 1 as they could be.

The school is passionate about developing pupils' appreciation of the wider world. The school has identified four threads, for example environmental activism, which are woven through the curriculum. These offer opportunities for pupils to be curious about, and grapple with, concepts and themes that prepare them for life as local and global citizens of the future.

The trust has an accurate view of the quality of education provided by the school. It plays a key role in challenging and supporting the school to develop a more precise understanding of its provision. Recent changes to the governing body mean that it is fully engaged with the trust and committed to bringing about the improvements needed. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel supported to manage the changes needed. They work well as a team and appreciate the ways in which their well-being and workload are considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The early reading curriculum is not implemented well. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they should. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum is implemented rigorously, and that pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers.
- Pupils in key stage 1 and Reception do not learn as well as they should. This means that sometimes pupils do not gain the knowledge they need to succeed. The school must ensure that expectations are high and that there is greater ambition for pupils so that they make better progress.
- The school has an overly generous view of its own effectiveness. The trust has provided useful guidance to ensure this view is more accurate. However, this has not led to the improvements that are needed. The school should make better use of the guidance provided to improve the quality of education for all pupils.

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 September 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	141547
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10256766
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	296
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tim Brock
CEO of the trust	Rachel Howie
Headteacher	Nick Moss
Website	www.minchacademy.net
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England primary academy in the Diocese of Gloucester. It was last inspected under section 48 in June 2017, when it was graded outstanding.
- The school has provision for two- and three-year-olds on site.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, teaching and support staff, the chair of the trust board, members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, and the deputy chief executive officer.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. In addition, she met with pupils informally and formally to hear their views.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. She also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school.

Inspection team

Angela Folland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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