

Inspection of Poolsbrook Primary Academy

Cottage Close, Poolsbrook, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S43 3LF

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Louise Tate. This school is part of Flying High Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Chris Wheatley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Neil Robinson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They routinely talk about the importance of showing respect for one another. They are in no doubt that everyone deserves to be treated well. Pupils say, 'Everyone is welcome here.' Kindness is modelled well in every aspect of school life by staff and pupils.

Expectations of what pupils can achieve both academically and personally have increased significantly. An improved curriculum has been at the front and centre of this work. The school's motto, 'Fuelling young minds for a brighter future', exemplifies the school's ambition that all pupils can succeed.

Pupils behave well because there are clear and simple school rules. These rules are 'aim high, be safe, show respect'. Pupils enjoy rewards when they stick to the rules. Everyone wants to earn a reward point. Pupils agree that these rules help their school to be a happy and safe place.

Pupils delight in taking on positions of responsibility in school. The head boy and head girl are role models for other pupils. The school council represents the voice of pupils. Play leaders spot pupils who need a friend to play with at social times and organise games that include everyone.

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

With the support of the trust, the school has established a detailed and ambitious curriculum. This has been developed to meet the needs of all pupils. It is underpinned by key principles that run through every subject. These 'golden threads' are identified as: wisdom, inclusivity, rich vocabulary and experiential. Curriculum plans set out precisely what pupils should learn from the Nursery Year to Year 6. Knowledge is built up step by step in a logical order.

Teachers ensure that pupils revisit prior learning before moving on to new content. Pupils talk about the importance of 'pulling knowledge out of your long-term memory'. In history, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils recall prior learning about the Montgolfier brothers, who invented the first hot air balloon. They add this historical event to their class timeline. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils use subject-specific vocabulary, such as 'Neolithic', 'Palaeolithic' and 'Mesolithic', as they discuss the Stone Age. In many subjects, the curriculum is relatively new. While early signs are positive, there is more to do to check that it is supporting pupils to know more and remember more in these subjects.

Reading is a key priority for the school. A systematic and rigorous approach to the teaching of early reading is well embedded. In the Nursery Year, children develop pre-phonetic skills. In the Reception Year, children learn phonics from the start. Pupils acquire the sounds they need to decode words. Teachers check that pupils are remembering new sounds. Pupils who need further support revisit key sounds so they can keep up.

The school is at a developing stage of promoting a love of reading. Not all pupils talk about reading with enthusiasm. Not enough pupils are choosing to read for their own enjoyment.

The school makes every effort to remove barriers so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can learn from the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers use well-considered adaptations for pupils with SEND. Pupils who struggle to manage their feelings can take time out in 'The Sanctuary'. This helps them regulate their emotions and return to class ready to learn.

While pupils are clear about how the school expects them to behave, a small number of pupils do not yet demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their learning. A few children in early years need support to engage with the learning activities sensibly. Other pupils do not join in with their lessons to the same high standard as the majority of other pupils.

The school's offer for pupils' personal development is well thought out. Pupils access a range of experiences and opportunities. They participate in creative writing and fire safety workshops. They visit the theatre, a farm and a wildlife park. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils attend a residential visit. Extra-curricular clubs are open to everyone. All pupils are welcome to attend the school's 'soft start' session before school. This helps their school day to begin in a positive way.

With the help of the trust, the school has gone from strength to strength. Alongside governors, the trust has kept a close eye on the impact of the changes the school has made to improve pupils' life chances. All staff are aspirational for pupils' futures. Parents say that they are beginning to see a positive difference in the school and comment on recent improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for the foundation subjects is at an early stage of implementation. Leaders are refining the design to enable pupils to know more and remember more. The school should check that the curriculum is well embedded and that pupils are successfully developing a deeper understanding of these subjects over time.
- A minority of pupils do not demonstrate high levels of engagement in their learning. This has potential to slow the progress that they make. The school must insist that all pupils engage fully in their learning and give of their very best in lessons.

- A love of reading is not fully promoted for all pupils. Some pupils do not choose to read for pleasure and are unable to talk about their favourite books and authors. The school must strategically plan activities and opportunities for pupils to read to learn and to read for their own enjoyment.

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	148427
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10288392
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Robinson
CEO of the trust	Chris Wheatley
Headteacher	Louise Tate
Website	www.poolsbrook.academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Flying High Trust in January 2021. When its predecessor school, also known as Poolsbrook Primary Academy, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 headteacher, the school’s senior leadership team and representatives of the trust, including the CEO. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and one other governor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading; mathematics; history; and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils about the lessons visited and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a member of staff.
- 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 met with pupils from different year groups to talk about their learning and experiences at school.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons, in assembly, at social times and around the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses.

Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Kelly Royle

Ofsted Inspector

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