

Inspection of a good school: Paxcroft Primary School

Ashton Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 7EB

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

Outcome

Paxcroft Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite and very curious. They are keen to welcome visitors and tell them about their school. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm.

Pupils feel supported when they have a worry. With the growth of the pastoral team, pupils are confident there are many adults who will help them. When there are friendship issues, they know adults will support them to resolve it.

During break times, pupils enjoy an array of activities and clubs. Older pupils help younger pupils to play well together. They plan games for pupils. Pupils take responsibility for managing the play equipment. For pupils who prefer a quieter space, the nurture room provides craft and gentler activities.

There are many ways in which pupils contribute to school life. For example, the school council actively plan for charitable events. Through their work, they enact the values of respect and democracy. All year groups give an annual performance. Pupils are proud of this. Year 3 and 4 were immensely proud to talk about their performance, 'Alice in Wonderland.' The school plans trips for all years to support their understanding of the curriculum. These include visiting the Roman baths and going to the farm.

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

A new leadership team has recently joined the school. Leaders have worked closely with staff to plan a richer and more ambitious curriculum. Subjects in the wider curriculum are carefully sequenced. The knowledge and vocabulary the school want pupils to remember are clearly identified. However, the curriculum is new. Teachers are developing their knowledge and expertise to implement the curriculum securely. The school prioritises staff training to make sure this happens well.

Teachers have the information they need to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use this to adapt and plan the curriculum when it is

relevant. Professionals provide training and updates and so staff feel well informed about the different needs of the pupils they teach.

The published outcomes for early reading and writing are low. The school has ensured the curriculum for children currently in Reception is better developed. As a result, activities for learning are now well structured. With a focus on oracy, staff make sure children and pupils hear a range of vocabulary. This helps them to rehearse their language skills. In mathematics, pupils learn how to describe the mathematical procedures they are learning. The school has strengthened the writing curriculum for younger pupils. However, the expectations for writing in the wider curriculum are not as well established. This means pupils do not develop their literacy well through other subjects, such as history.

The school has prioritised embedding a rigorous programme for teaching reading. This has led to rapid improvement in pupils' reading skills this year. Working with external partners, this programme is tightly checked. As a result, the school ensures pupils learn the sounds they need to know next to get better at reading. Pupils read books matched to the sounds they know. Support for pupils is well-matched to their needs. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to stories with their teachers.

In lessons, pupils focus on their learning. The school has raised the expectations for behaviour. Pupils understand the routines and expectations. During learning on the carpet, pupils listen and interact as their teachers expect. Pupils enjoy school and attend well. The school works hard to support pupils and their families when they don't attend well.

The school has planned a well-structured personal, social, health education (PSHE) curriculum. Through lessons, assemblies and events, pupils learn about a range of themes. Pupils recall their learning well. They know how to keep themselves safe, especially online. The school plans for external speakers to work with pupils. They explore relevant topics, such as being positive role models. Pupils learn about kindness, respect and tolerance. The school helps pupils to know how to talk about their feelings. They provide many ways for pupils to feed back to staff. Pupils learn to look after their well-being.

Governors focus on the priorities of the school. They are well informed. They have the information and knowledge they need to challenge and support the school. When new leaders joined the school, they quickly identified key areas needing rapid improvement. The local authority supports leaders in evaluating the impact of their work. Parents are positive about the school. Staff feel leaders are supportive. The school is mindful of their well-being while, at the same time, bringing about important changes. Staff are positive about the work of the school to enrich the curriculum for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Expectations for developing writing in a few foundation subjects are not embedded. As a result, pupils do not improve their writing skills quickly in these subjects. The school needs to make sure pupils develop and advance their writing across the wider curriculum.
- Some parts of the wider curriculum are recently developed. This means teachers are in the process of developing their expertise and knowledge to implement those subjects rigorously. The school needs to ensure teachers have the training and support to implement the new, more ambitious curriculum.

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 29–30 January 2019.

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	126483
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10334689
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	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dr Andrew Ross
Headteacher	Lou Rhodes
Website	www.paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school club for pupils.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2022.
- The school uses one alternative provider.

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.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors 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 discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers and staff. She also met with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to an adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. The inspector met with school leaders to review how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- 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 considered key documentation, including school development plans and minutes of governors' and trustees' meetings.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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