

Inspection of a good school: Pepper Hill School

Kingsfold, Bradville, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK13 7BQ

Inspection date: 11 June 2024

Outcome

Pepper Hill School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pepper Hill is full of happy pupils. They want to come to school because they enjoy their learning and look forward to seeing their friends and caring adults. The breakfast club offers a fun and nutritious start to the school day for those pupils who need it.

There are high expectations set for children's behaviour and learning through the well-known 'PROUD' values. These expectations begin right from the moment children enter the school in Nursery and Reception. Across the school, pupils live up to these high expectations and behave extremely well. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and are enthusiastic and attentive learners. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, they enjoy playing with their friends. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong because they are rooted in kindness and respect. Pupils know that their caring adults will help them if they have any worries.

The school communicates well with families, and this means that they are fully informed about what and how well their children are learning. Parents and carers value feeling part of the school community and appreciate being actively involved in their child's learning. The recent family 'challenge homework' attracted a high number of creative entries.

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

The school has designed an interesting and relevant curriculum. In all subjects, the learning journey is considered from its start in Nursery and Reception. It is structured to give pupils the knowledge and skills they need to learn by the end of Year 2. As a result, most pupils are well prepared for their entry into Year 3. They benefit from extensive transition procedures through their frequent visits to the federated junior school.

The school acted quickly to prioritise the teaching of reading, following disappointing phonics outcomes in 2023. This work is making a difference to how well pupils learn to read. All staff are trained in how to teach pupils to read using the school's phonics programme. This means that there is now a more effective approach to teaching phonics,

using reading books that match the sounds pupils learn. Pupils enjoy their reading routines and join in with enthusiasm as they read with increasing fluency. Those who need extra help receive it in a highly targeted way. Pupils enjoy their regular story times and whole-school activities such as the 'Books for Breakfast' family event, as well as meeting their 'poet in residence'.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are supported well by subject leaders, both in this school and through the partnership with the federated junior school. Pupils are helped to remember and use their prior learning via regular recaps at the start of lessons. In many subjects, this means that teachers know what pupils remember and therefore need to learn next. However, in a few subjects across the wider curriculum, assessment is not used with precision to check what pupils know and remember. This means that teachers do not always address gaps and misconceptions in pupils' learning.

The school has robust systems for identifying and monitoring pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Appropriate support allows pupils with SEND to access the whole curriculum. This support often includes expertise garnered from external services, use of physical resources and specific extra help. There is strong oversight of how well pupils with SEND are learning, particularly in English and mathematics.

The school places high emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils are proud to be members of their school houses. They feel a sense of belonging as they work collaboratively towards many celebrations and rewards. Pupils enjoy opportunities to attend an interesting range of after-school clubs, including athletics, dance, and arts and crafts. The school is diligent in making sure that wider opportunities are inclusive and accessible to all. This means that disadvantaged pupils are actively encouraged and supported to take part in the school's clubs, visits and productions.

In this diverse school population, pupils have many opportunities to share their culture, traditions and experiences during 'language days'. This helps them to show empathy and understanding towards others. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding about the features that make up British values. The 'pupil parliament' representatives are democratically elected and collect the views of their classmates about daily school life. The recent 'bend the rules' day allowed pupils to reflect on the importance of having rules to ensure their school runs smoothly and is fair for all.

The governing body understands its statutory responsibilities and shares school leaders' ambition for all pupils to be prepared well for their next educational steps. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about being part of the Pepper Hill team. They appreciate the consideration given to their workload and well-being, including through recent team-building events.

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 of the wider curriculum subjects, assessment is not used with precision to check what pupils know and remember. This means that, in these subjects, pupils are not always prepared for their new learning as well as they could be. The school should ensure that assessment information allows teachers to address gaps and misconceptions in pupils' learning swiftly and successfully across the entire 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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 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	110330
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10321774
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anne Slee
Headteacher	Helen Nicholson
Website	www.pepperhillschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an above average number of pupils with SEND.
- The school has an above average number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- At this school, the number of pupils who qualify for pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The school currently uses one registered 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.
- Inspectors met with senior school leaders and representatives from the local authority and the governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- 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.
- The inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and spoke to pupils to gather their views.
- The inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views on the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the additional free-text responses. An inspector also spoke with parents at the start of the inspection.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ian Elkington

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024