

Inspection of a good school: Ferndale Primary School & Nursery

Wiltshire Avenue, Wiltshire Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1NX

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Outcome

Ferndale Primary School & Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Ferndale Primary school are welcoming and friendly. Members of the school community have selected the values they believe are important to know and follow. These include friendship, empathy and resilience. Pupils are rewarded for demonstrating these values consistently. They know why these are important to their learning and development as individuals.

Pupils attend well because they enjoy school. They have a thirst to learn new things. Pupils' positive learning behaviours are evident from Nursery to Year 6. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere that pervades the school. Pupils are safe. They know staff will help them if they have any worries.

Pupils develop citizenship through their involvement in the local community. For example, they routinely participate in events at the local church. School prefects support younger children by organising games at playtime. Through such opportunities they develop leadership skills.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of opportunities to inspire and foster their talents and interests through playing sport and developing musical skills. They make visits to places of interest. For example, pupils enhance their knowledge of science and geography through visiting Westonbirt Arboretum. The school ensures that there are no barriers to pupils participating in these.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum with the development of pupils' language at its heart. The important knowledge that pupils need to know is broken down into small components that build in a logical sequence. Staff ensure that all pupils understand subject-specific vocabulary. In mathematics, pupils refer to 'scale' and 'axes' when interpreting data, for instance.

In the strongest subjects, teachers make regular checks on pupils' understanding. Their misconceptions are remedied. Consequently, pupils build knowledge securely over time. For example, in geography, pupils' knowledge of tectonic plates helps them to understand how volcanoes are formed. However, in some subjects, teachers' use of assessment does not inform subsequent teaching. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their learning.

Children in Nursery make a strong start. The curriculum supports children to develop in all areas of their learning. Practical opportunities engage children and provide practice in applying knowledge. Children learn animal habitats through exploring the school grounds, for instance. Staff skilfully weave high-quality conversations into all aspects of children's learning. Through these, children develop important language and communication skills.

The school emphasises the importance of reading. As soon as they start school, children follow a well-planned phonics curriculum to help them to learn to read. Staff check that pupils remember the new sounds they are taught. They support pupils who fall behind to catch up quickly. As a result, pupils become fluent, confident readers. Carefully selected books support pupils to read widely and broaden their tastes. Pupils are keen to read for pleasure.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school considers and meets the varying needs of individual pupils with SEND. Staff know pupils' needs well and carefully consider the support they require. The school works with external agencies to provide this support. Consequently, pupils progress successfully and participate fully in school life.

The personal, social and health education curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' personal development. Through the curriculum, assemblies and wider opportunities, pupils develop a thorough understanding of British values, such as individual liberty and the rule of law. They enjoy representing the school in debating competitions and understand the importance of respecting the opinions of others.

The school fosters an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated. Pupils learn about the many countries and cultures represented in their school community and more widely. They know that everyone should be treated fairly. Pupils learn how to stay safe when online. They understand potential risks when in the community and know not to speak to strangers. Pupils, of all ages, learn how to manage their well-being. The school places a high priority on ensuring that all pupils learn important life skills, such as cooking and road safety. This helps to prepare them for later life.

The trust and the local governing body are highly knowledgeable. They share the school's ambition and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. The school ensures that staff receive high-quality professional development. Staff continue to hone and develop their expertise. Trustees, governors and leaders engage constructively with staff to manage workload. They are very considerate of staff well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding are not used to inform subsequent teaching. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their learning. The school must ensure that teacher's use of assessment informs future teaching and curriculum design.

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 Ferndale Primary school and Nursery to be good in January 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	142546
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10344703
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	464
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pauline Miller
CEO	Gary Evans
Headteacher	Beccy Nolan
Website	www.ferndaleprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part The Blue Kite Academy Trust.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school has a nurse school for two-, three- and four-year-old children.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school runs a holiday club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, subject leaders, members of the local governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey and Parent View. The inspector also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Liz Geller, lead inspector

His Majesty's 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