

Inspection of a school judged Good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Potter Street Academy

Carters Mead, Harlow, Essex CM17 9EU

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 November 2024

Outcome

Potter Street Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of school is Neil Gladwin. This school is part of Passmores Cooperative Learning Community, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Vic Goddard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Neil Lawson. There is an executive headteacher, Emma Bloomfield.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school, where 'everyone is welcomed.' They settle quickly in the Reception class and when they are new to the school. They feel safe and happy. Staff listen to pupils and help them if they have any worries. Pupils know and use the five ways of well-being to take care of themselves.

Pupils learn how to behave well and follow the school's values. This makes the school a calm and well-ordered place to be. There are high expectations for all pupils' achievement. Pupils relish being challenged. Some would appreciate more frequent opportunities to deepen their learning further.

Pupils readily take on the many responsibilities to help each other and look after the school. They vote for team captains, reading ambassadors and 'happiness heroes'. Pupils attend clubs including art, football, choir and cheerleading. Pupils can have many experiences that they might not otherwise have. They love the visits to places of worship, museums, to see a Shakespeare play and singing at the O2.

The school works closely with families, ensuring they receive valuable support from specialists in the community, when necessary. This helps ensure that pupils are supported at each stage of their education, from before they join the school and beyond.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has remained determined that all pupils succeed, regardless of their circumstances. The school provides an ambitious education. It has recently refined the curriculum in each subject, to identify the important knowledge pupils need to learn and when. This helps pupils build increasingly complex knowledge.

By the end of Year 6, most pupils attain the expected standards in English and mathematics in national assessments. Pupils have any gaps in their learning swiftly addressed. Pupils have time to revisit prior learning and practise new knowledge and vocabulary. This means most pupils can recall and apply their learning in these subjects well. For pupils needing additional support, timely interventions help them to quickly catch up.

The school is committed to developing specific life experiences and skills in each year group. Pupils also build their knowledge logically in the foundation subjects. Exciting activities stimulate pupils' interest, such as regular practical experiments in science. In some subjects and classes, pupils are given different challenges to deepen their thinking. This, however, is not yet consistent across the school. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

Pupils enjoy reading. A typical response was, 'I like books as I look forward to the thrill and the twists.' Pupils make regular use of the many reading areas dotted around the school. The school is developing further its reading programme to support less confident readers develop fluency. As a result, pupils are able to access texts they should be able to for their age. The introduction of daily reading-for-pleasure time across the school is much appreciated by pupils.

Children get off to a flying start in the Reception Year. From the outset, through effective transition arrangements, staff get to know children and their families very well. Staff build warm and trusting relationships with the children in their care. Staff are knowledgeable about early childhood development. This helps them to identify when children need more support to be ready for Year 1.

The school is proud of its work in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The recent introduction of the school's SEND enhanced provision means that pupils can get specialised help and expertise that appropriately addresses their needs. Additional catch-up sessions for pupils in class provide effective support for a range of skills. All of this helps pupils with SEND to make strong progress through the curriculum.

Pupils learn in calm classrooms. They are not worried about unkind behaviour as this is rare. Pupils know adults will address it very quickly. The school has developed trusting

and supportive relationships with parents and carers. As a result, pupils come to school regularly.

Pupils learn about the different cultures, beliefs and religions. They are taught about respect and equality and to listen to others' opinions. Pupils learn about how to be healthy, both physically and emotionally. They learn how to be safe online and about other risks they may face as they get older.

Leaders in the school and across the trust know the school well and take their roles seriously. The adaptations made to assessment and planning have addressed staff well-being and work-life balance. This is much appreciated by staff, who are proud to work at the school and feel supported in their professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Recent changes to some areas of the curriculum, and to how teachers check on pupils' learning, are not yet fully established. This impacts on the learning of some pupils, as sometimes teaching does not deepen their understanding. The school should ensure that all pupils have consistent opportunities to deepen their learning when they are ready to do so, enabling them to attain highly.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 25 and 26 June 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	139802
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345375
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Lawson
CEO of the trust	Vic Goddard
Headteacher	Neil Gladwin, Head of School
Website	www.potterstreetacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Passmores Cooperative Learning Community.
- There have been many recent changes in the leadership of the school. An executive head teacher was appointed across all primary schools in the trust in April 2024. The head of school and deputy head started at the school in September 2024. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) left the school in August 2024. A new SENCo takes up the post in January 2025.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the chair and other members of the trust board, including the CEO, two members of the local governing body including the chair, the head of school and senior leaders.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning, listened to some pupils read, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at information about the curriculum, the school's priorities and its own self-evaluation, and examples of visits from governors and external agencies.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents on Ofsted Parent View and considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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