Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Pittville School

Albert Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 3JD

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

Pittville School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high expectations of pupils. It is aspirational for what all pupils have the potential to achieve. Pupils meet these expectations. They demonstrate the values of the school, which include respect and kindness. Pupils are happy and feel safe in school. They behave well in lessons and around the school site. Most pupils achieve highly, as reflected in published outcomes.

Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular clubs. These include a well-being club, coding club and various art and sporting clubs. Pupils broaden their horizons through international trips to New York and France, as well as local trips to universities. Pupils learn about potential careers, such as the armed forces, from visitors to the school. The local police beat officer visits to talk to pupils about cyberbullying.

Many pupils proudly take on positions of responsibility at school. For example, the 'Pittville Parliament' is elected to gather the views of pupils and make positive changes to the school. They recently visited the Houses of Parliament to broaden their knowledge of government. Other pupils are elected by staff to be prefects, house captains or pupil librarians. They learn to be good listeners and confident communicators.

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

The school is committed to providing pupils with a high standard of education. With the support of governors, senior and middle leaders confidently lead the school and support the wider staff body effectively. Leaders are considerate of staff well-being. They are mindful of the workload of staff when making any changes. As a result, staff enjoy working at the school. They value the professional development opportunities that they receive.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Subject leaders thoughtfully plan the knowledge they want pupils to learn over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. The school has a clear and effective process for identifying the needs of pupils with SEND. Appropriate support is quickly put in place for these pupils. The school provides regular training for staff. This helps them to develop a confident understanding of the needs of individual pupils. Pupils with SEND are well supported in their learning.

Staff have strong subject knowledge and present information clearly to pupils. They use different approaches to check what pupils can remember. Staff use this information to plan what they teach next. Pupils produce high-quality work.

Pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read are supported appropriately. This has a positive impact on improving pupils' reading ages. As a result, they can access the wider curriculum more successfully. Across the school, there are opportunities for pupils to enjoy reading for pleasure. The school prioritises developing pupils' use of a rich and varied vocabulary. Teaching encourages pupils to use key terminology in their written and verbal responses.

The school has established a positive climate for learning. Pupils enjoy warm and respectful relationships with staff. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Low-level disruption is rare. At social times, staff are highly visible. They support pupils to manage their behaviour well. However, for a minority of pupils, the school's interventions are not supporting these pupils to improve their conduct sufficiently over time. These pupils, which include a higher proportion who are disadvantaged, receive repeated suspensions from school. Therefore, they are missing extended periods of learning. Where these pupils and others have prolonged absences from school, there are some gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

The personal development curriculum is carefully designed. The school's vision is for pupils to become safe, happy and successful citizens. They learn about important issues such as healthy relationships, knife crime, and road and rail safety. The school seeks opportunities to link learning to national events such as the general election. Diversity is celebrated through activities such as culture days. Pupils are confident that the school does not tolerate any discriminatory behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of pupils receive too many repeat suspensions. Additionally, a significant proportion of these pupils are disadvantaged. Consequently, they are missing out on

extended periods of learning so are not able to build their knowledge over time. The school should continue to explore ways to support this group of pupils to meet the school's high expectations so their number of suspensions decreases, and they remain in school to benefit from the learning on offer.

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 for overall effectiveness in 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	115772
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10344524
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	858
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Deborah Summers
Headteacher	Richard Gilpin
Website	www.pittville.gloucs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses five registered and three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the chair and other members of the local governing body, a representative from the local authority and the school's improvement partner.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to curriculum leaders, 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 considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Naylor	Ofsted Inspector

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