Inspection of Picklenash Junior School

Ross Road, Newent, Gloucestershire GL18 1BG

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
The quality of education	**Requires improvement**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Requires improvement**
Personal development	**Requires improvement**
Leadership and management	**Requires improvement**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Since the previous inspection, pupils' experience of school has been negatively impacted by several changes, including to staffing and leadership. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school, under new leadership, is determined that all pupils will learn well and be successful.

Relationships between adults and children are warm and nurturing. Many pupils understand the new school promises of 'show respect, be kind and show courage'. In classrooms, they behave and engage in learning. Sports coaches help pupils to play structured games, like basketball or tag at lunchtimes. However, sometimes pupils are not kind or respectful. On occasion, when bullying happens, the school deals with it swiftly but this does not stop it completely. This causes some pupils to be unhappy at school.

Pupils enjoy extra-curricular clubs like football, dance and gymnastics. They relish events such as the Young Voices choral event in Birmingham. Educational visits help pupils to connect their learning and bring the curriculum to life. For example, Pupils visit the Caerleon Roman site to understand Roman architecture first hand. Older pupils experience the life of evacuees in the Second World War on a visit to a local railway station.

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

The school curriculum identifies the key knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should learn it. This ensures pupils build on prior learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils in Year 3 use their knowledge of numbers to order fractions. Older pupils solve problems with fractions and multiplication. In geography, pupils in Year 6 use their prior knowledge of climate zones to compare geographical regions.

The curriculum is designed well. However, the school does not ensure that the quality of how it is delivered is consistent. Although staff make checks on what pupils know and remember, sometimes the learning activities they select do not deepen pupils' learning. Over time, pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. Furthermore, the school's oversight of some subjects is not precise enough. The school is developing this oversight. However, the school does not have a secure view of how effectively the curriculum is being implemented.

Reading is prioritised. Lower key stage 2 pupils read books that match the sounds that they know. Regular phonics practise helps pupils to develop the knowledge and skills that they need to learn to read. However, too many older pupils have not secured enough basic phonics knowledge. This impacts on their reading fluency and enjoyment of reading. Some pupils do not show a love of reading.

The school swiftly identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff use this information to plan adaptations to the curriculum, so pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers.

Generally, the school promotes positive behaviour. However, the behaviour policy is not applied consistently well. Pupils know the importance of respect and tolerance for others. However, at times pupils do not demonstrate this through their actions. Additionally, the school does not track incidents of poor behaviour well enough. This makes it challenging for the school and governors to determine the effectiveness of the behaviour policy.

New leadership has raised expectations of attendance. New processes in place are improving pupils' attendance.

The personal development provision helps pupils learn how to be responsible citizens. Pupils raise money for local charities and take part in singing events in the community. They learn about life in a diverse modern Britain, including about different religions. Pupils take on leadership roles, such as school councillors or sports leaders. These are newly implemented. They require further development so that pupils can fully benefit from having these responsibilities.

Most parents and carers appreciate the way the school considers their children's personal development. However, some parents do not understand changes and improvements in the school. Some parents feel that communication with home could be timelier and more effective.

New leaders have brought additional capacity and a renewed sense of stability and direction. Governors fulfil their statutory duties. They know what the school needs to do to improve. Most staff enjoy working at the school. They appreciate that change is required. Well-being is considered. However, staff recognise that, while workload is high, this will bring about much-needed improvements to the school.

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 parts of the curriculum, the school's agreed teaching strategies are not used consistently. This prevents pupils from deepening their understanding of important knowledge as effectively as they should. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and support they need to understand how the school's agreed teaching approaches can be used effectively to build on and deepen learning for pupils.
- The school has not ensured that there is a rigorous and consistent approach to the development of pupils' reading, including phonics. This means pupils who need help to catch up are not supported quickly to become fluent readers. Furthermore, some older pupils do not show a love of reading. The school must prioritise support for pupils not reading at an age-appropriate level so they can catch up with their peers and foster a love of reading.

- The behaviour policy is not consistently applied by all staff. Therefore, some pupils do not always live up to the school's expectations for behaviour or how to respect each other in the playground. The school should ensure that there is a consistent approach when applying the agreed behaviour systems, including how bullying is dealt with.
- The school is in the early stages of implementing new systems to check the effectiveness of its work. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of how well pupils learn across the curriculum. The school should sharpen its oversight of how well pupils learn in all subjects so that it can act quickly when improvements are needed.
- Some parents raise concerns that the school does not communicate with them well enough. As a result, some parents do not understand changes and improvements that are being made. The school needs to improve its communication with parents, so they feel fully informed and engage well with school life.

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	115733
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10344521
Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gary Bottomley
Headteacher	Michelle Kelly (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.glebeinfantschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Glebe Infant School, which shares the same site, and Pauntley Church of England Primary School.
- The executive headteacher took up her role in September 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. 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 the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, school staff, parents and pupils. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governors and other members of the governing board. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and geography. 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. Inspectors also met with curriculum leaders and looked at pupils' work in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime. In addition, inspectors met with pupils to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lorna Buchanan	Ofsted Inspector

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