

Inspection of a good school: Fowlmere Primary School

The Butts, Fowlmere, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 7SL

Inspection date: 28 February 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and appreciate the good relationships they have with adults at Fowlmere Primary. They enjoy coming to school and being with their friends and teachers. Pupils agree that bullying is rare, but if it happens, adults deal with it quickly and effectively. At playtime, pupils enjoy playing with their friends and they get along well with their peers.

In the majority of lessons, pupils behave well. This allows them to learn effectively and enjoy their lessons. Sometimes, particularly when learning is not well matched to pupils' needs, they can get distracted. Adults are quick to address this, and pupils are supported to refocus on their learning.

Due in part to changes in staffing and leadership, expectations of what pupils can achieve have been too low. This is beginning to be addressed effectively, notably in mathematics and early reading, where there are higher expectations now of what pupils should achieve.

Pupils benefit from the opportunities they are given to develop their leadership skills. They value the opportunity to be school ambassadors in a range of areas, such as in subjects and at playtime. They enjoy helping others.

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

Where it works well, the curriculum is planned and implemented effectively. Leaders have a good understanding of what pupils need to know and be able to do, and so the curriculum supports pupils to get better at the subject. In mathematics, for example, appropriate sequencing of topics helps pupils to build on prior knowledge, which supports them to do well. Lessons are well planned, and teachers are confident to teach the subject content.

In some other subjects, the curriculum is not as effective in ensuring that pupils do as well as they should. In these areas, leaders have not checked that the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to know are clearly mapped out. Teachers are, therefore, not clear about what pupils need to be able to do. They do not consistently give pupils sufficient opportunities to practise and learn key concepts, and so they do not remember some aspects of their prior learning.

While improving, assessment is not used well across all subjects. In the weaker areas, assessment does not identify gaps in pupils' understanding effectively and is not used in the most helpful way to help pupils to achieve well.

Since September, leaders have prioritised early reading. From the Reception Year, children are taught phonics and are positive about reading. They read books that match the sounds they know. They read regularly at home. Assessment is used well to identify any gaps. Pupils are generally well supported to catch up if they fall behind. However, there are some inconsistencies in the teaching of the phonics programme which means not all pupils are as confident in reading as they should be.

Older readers enjoy their daily reading sessions and are positive about books. However, leaders have not ensured the reading curriculum is sufficiently well planned to broaden and deepen the range of books pupils read over time. This impacts negatively on pupils' readiness for their next stage of education.

Leaders have ensured that an appropriate curriculum is in place for early years. Children are supported to develop key skills, for example in their language and communication. They interact well with their Year 1 classmates.

Low-level disruption does occur in lessons, but it is not common. Sometimes, teachers do not use effective teaching strategies to help pupils do well. When this is the case, pupils can become restless.

Leaders have focused on the accurate identification of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide clear guidance, so adults know how to meet pupils' needs and how to help them to access the curriculum. However, teachers are inconsistent in how well they use the guidance and strategies offered. This means that some pupils with SEND do not do as well as they should.

Leaders have prioritised providing pupils with personal development opportunities. This ensures that pupils develop their spiritual life as well as pride in their environment and a sense of responsibility. Pupils speak positively about the trips they experience and the music and sport clubs that they take part in.

Governors and leaders are clear about the strengths and challenges faced by the school, including the high staff turnover. The majority of staff and parents are positive about the provision and the current leadership.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are sufficiently well trained to identify and raise any concerns they have about pupils' safety via the online reporting system. Leaders are confident to liaise with external agencies, if appropriate, to ensure pupils get the necessary help.

Pupils learn how to stay safe. They know about online safety as well as being secure in the community. They speak confidently about relevant issues, such as road safety.

Adults receive appropriate safeguarding checks before they start work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders have not ensured that important components of knowledge are carefully mapped out and broken down across different subjects. Teachers are therefore not clear what the essential knowledge is that pupils must learn before they move on. Leaders should make sure that what pupils need to learn is clearly set out for teachers.
- Teachers' pedagogical knowledge, including their use of assessment, is not sufficiently strong in all subjects. This means that not all pupils, including those with SEND, are supported to learn as much as they should. Leaders must check that all teachers have the training they need, and are appropriately equipped, to support all pupils to achieve well across the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	110607
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10268524
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Phil Butterworth and Hayley Woods
Headteacher	Suki Hinton
Website	www.fowlmere.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An interim headteacher joined in September 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also scrutinised the mathematics and early years curriculum.
- Inspectors met with staff responsible for the administration of the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They also met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the arrangements that are in place to safeguard pupils. The inspectors

scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and spoke to governors regarding safeguarding.

- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experience of school, including clubs, behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss pupils' personal development and enrichment opportunities, as well as behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors met with the school's special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector met with governors and scrutinised a range of documents.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey. Inspectors took account of 42 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including 35 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered 12 responses to Ofsted's survey for school staff.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Al Mistrano

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 2023