

Inspection of a good school: Potten End Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Potten End, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4 2QY

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 March 2022

Outcome

Potten End Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Potten End Primary School is a place where pupils are valued and well cared for. Pupils enjoy coming to school and being part of this happy community.

On the playground, pupils enjoy each other's company, following the school's values of 'friendship' and 'respect'. Children in early years play confidently in the extensive outdoor area. Pupils have faith that staff will deal with any issue or disagreement if it were to occur. Reports of bullying, for example, are taken seriously. Pupils trust staff to sort it out so everyone gets along.

Pupils say that their learning is rarely disrupted by other children. Classrooms are calm places. Poor behaviour does not happen regularly. Staff deal with it effectively when it does. Pupils use a range of strategies, taught to them by staff, to stop themselves getting cross or upset.

Pupils take part in a range of after-school clubs, including for sports such as football and basketball. They talk excitedly about how visitors come into the school and help bring their curriculum to life. Pupils told the inspector how the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum helped them understand the wider world. It teaches them how to stay safe online and what to do if something worries them.

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

Since the headteacher joined the school, she and her team have evaluated and improved the school's curriculum. With support from the governing body and local authority, leaders have reviewed each curriculum area to ensure that the plans in place support pupils' learning.

Across much of the school's curriculum, subject plans are clear and identify what pupils need to know. Key knowledge is arranged in a logical order starting from early years and ending in Year 6. Pupils build their understanding gradually as they moved through the

school. In history, for example, by Year 5, pupils have learned about a range of ancient civilisations such as the Mayans, Romans and Ancient Greeks. Pupils have the knowledge to make detailed comparisons between them using terms such as 'invasion'.

Many subject plans support pupils' learning well. In a small number of subjects, however, some of the important knowledge is not clear, nor sequenced as well as in the stronger subjects. Pupils make progress, but not as much as they should. Leaders' plans to address this issue are still in development.

For much of the curriculum, pupils build on and practise their learning. In mathematics, for example, younger children are taught important number skills to prepare them for Year 1. Pupils are then taught about mathematical methods to help them with their sums. Older pupils know and use these models confidently to help them to solve tricky mathematical problems.

Teachers know their subjects well. They work with leaders to check pupils' knowledge. Lessons are adjusted appropriately to address gaps in pupils' understanding, particularly as a result of missed learning due to the pandemic. Across a wide range of subjects, pupils achieve well. In a small number of subjects where knowledge is not as clear, assessment is not tightly linked to the knowledge learned. Teachers find it harder to spot gaps in learning and pupils do not achieve as well.

Leaders have recently changed their reading curriculum. Starting in early years, a well-sequenced reading curriculum supports pupils to learn to read. Adults are well trained to help pupils who find reading tricky. Pupils' books match the sounds they are learning. Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. They can describe how teachers make reading exciting and read them a range of stories.

Across the school, teachers use what they know about pupils to make helpful adjustments to their lessons to make them accessible for everyone. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), for example, access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff give pupils with SEND the help they need to succeed as well as everyone else.

The PSHE education curriculum teaches pupils about a range of different issues in an age-appropriate way. For example, pupils learn about how others may be different from themselves. From early years to Year 6, pupils treat each other with respect and tolerance.

The school's thoughtful approach to dealing with behaviour is a strength. Staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave. Pupils enjoy their time at school and are focused on their learning. A small number of pupils are given effective extra support to keep their behaviour on track.

The changes to the curriculum have been well managed. Leaders are mindful about how these changes could increase staff workload. Staff say that this is not the case and that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Across the school, all staff are well trained to spot whether a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders have created clear processes for staff to report safeguarding concerns. Records of safeguarding concerns are maintained well. They are detailed and show prompt and appropriate actions in response to safeguarding worries. Leaders work with a range of different agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the help they need.

Staff teach pupils how to keep safe in different scenarios, for example in the community or when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of curriculum plans are still being developed. In these plans, key knowledge is not as clearly laid out as it is in the more developed subjects. Consequently, for these subjects, assessment is not as useful as it could be. Leaders need to make sure that all curriculum plans sequence knowledge in a logical order and have assessment that is closely linked to the knowledge taught.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2010.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	117414
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10193986
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robert Dale
Headteacher	Denise Kennedy
Website	www.pottenend.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 May 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in 2019
- The school has a nursery. The nursery is due to close in September 2022.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school's most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (section 48) inspection was in January 2016.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- The inspector also viewed curriculum plans and pupils' work in science and art.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector looked closely at safeguarding procedures and processes. He talked to governors, leaders, other staff and a range of pupils about safeguarding in the school.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspector met with a range of pupils from different year groups to talk about their experiences of the school.
- The inspector considered the 82 responses made by parents and carers to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 39 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 19 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 66 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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