

Inspection of Plaistow and Kirdford Primary School

Plaistow, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 0PX

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this nurturing school. They love the school's focus on learning in the outdoors. Staff teach pupils about life beyond the school thoughtfully, such as learning about deforestation, and how to care for nature and the environment. Staff use the school's woods and pond areas effectively to help pupils learn about topics such as plants and healthy eating. Pupils said, 'We learn how to make sure that everyone is included and how to treat people well.'

Pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and staff. The school is generally a calm and purposeful environment. During break and lunch times pupils take turns, share and play happily. Older pupils value their roles as 'buddies' for the younger ones. Staff have very positive relationships with pupils which helps to build a supportive school culture.

The school does not have high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve across the full curriculum, including in the early years. In some subject areas, including mathematics, phonics and early reading, some pupils do not develop their knowledge and understanding securely. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the end of Reception and key stage 2.

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

Pupils' achievements across the curriculum are not as strong as they should be. Although developing, the curriculum does not prepare pupils for their next stage of education as effectively as it should. Overall, the school has identified its strengths and areas for development accurately. There are some strategic improvements chosen by the school that are beginning to address weaknesses in provision, such as prioritising staff training in phonics. However, these improvements are not yet impacting on pupils' learning across the full curriculum strongly enough.

Some recent changes to the curriculum reflect the school's ambition to develop high-quality education. Some subjects in the wider curriculum are implemented consistently well. In these subjects, pupils learn well and build their knowledge and understanding securely. In physical education (PE), for example, pupils have good recall of key knowledge and can discuss ideas and key vocabulary such as describing movement patterns and rhythm in dance confidently. The school has identified the key knowledge and the skills that staff want pupil to learn. However, at times some staff do not check pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. This means pupils' misconceptions are not addressed, limiting them from reaching their potential.

The school's phonics programme is not implemented consistently well, particularly in the early years. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge and some pupils do not catch up to their peers quickly enough to become confident, fluent readers. Some aspects of the reading curriculum beyond phonics are supporting some pupils effectively. However, too many pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read are not secure in their phonics knowledge.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Generally, pupils with SEND access the curriculum successfully. Staff have genuine care and thoughtful consideration for individual pupils' needs and how to adapt learning for these pupils appropriately. However, these adaptations are not always as effective as the school intends. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should.

In the early years the curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced. Children enjoy activities such as building with bricks and wooden blocks and crates, helping them to practice movement encouragingly. They listen to songs and stories with focus and attention. However, staff are not implementing the curriculum effectively, and some activity choices do not strengthen children's learning. There is not a sharp enough focus on ensuring that children acquire a wide vocabulary. As a result, some children are not as ready for their next stage of education as they should be.

Pupils feel safe. They learn to be respectful about different faiths, beliefs and ways of life. Pupils learn about protected characteristics such as race and disability appropriately and benefit from the carefully planned programme of educational trips and visitors to the school. For example, pupils experience camping trips on the field and visits to a local farm to see sausages being made and then cooking and eating them. Pupils grow in self-confidence and learn to care for the world around them.

Staff are committed to the school and appreciate the actions that leaders take to reduce their workload. Most parents are supportive, although some recognise that the school needs to have higher expectations for what all pupils can achieve in their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the early years, staff do not implement the school's approach to teaching phonics, early reading and a broad vocabulary effectively enough. As a result, some children are not as fluent in their reading, nor have a broad enough vocabulary to ensure they are ready for Year 1. The school should ensure that children acquire the foundational knowledge they need for future success in their learning.
- At times, staff do not check what pupils know and can do effectively, including in the early years. This means that some pupils, in some subjects, carry errors and misconceptions through their lessons and do not learn as well as they should. The school needs to ensure that staff identify and address pupils' errors and misconceptions effectively so that pupils build their learning across the curriculum securely over time

- Some staff do not adapt learning systematically, and effectively for pupils with SEND. This means that some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. The school should ensure that all staff have the skills they need to adapt learning effectively so that pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.

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	125848
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10341602
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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Neil Phipps
Headteacher	Charlie King
Website	www.plaistowandkirdford.org
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision

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.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders within the school and wider staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, PE and geography. For each deep dive, where possible, 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 the views of parents shared through the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through the online staff survey, as well as through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings, local authority visit reports and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christopher Toye

Ofsted 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 2025