

Inspection of a good school: Monkfield Park Primary School

School Lane, Cambourne, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB23 5AX

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 June 2024

Outcome

Monkfield Park Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Overwhelmingly, pupils are happy to be at Monkfield Park. They are kept safe in school and work positively with adults. Pupils get on with each other very well, and any disputes between them are quickly settled. Most behave very well in lessons and around the school. They benefit from being supported by teachers and teaching assistants, who are kind and who work very well together. Pupils learn in well-organised classrooms. They can play in attractive outdoor spaces, which are also used imaginatively for learning.

The school sets high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils quickly learn to read, do particularly well in mathematics, and their writing is improving. Although they study the full curriculum, in some other subjects standards are not quite as high. The school knows what needs to be done to address this.

Pupils can take part in a range of before- and after-school activities, including sports and musical theatre. Pupils sing enthusiastically and look forward to their end-of-year performances. Older pupils develop responsibility through roles, such as play leaders, digital leaders, and peer mediators. Leaders are working to widen pupils' experience of democracy through elections to the school and eco-councils.

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

Pupils across the school study a broad curriculum. All national curriculum subjects and areas of learning in early years are taught regularly, ensuring that all required themes and topics are covered. The school's plans set out the order in which these are to be learned. In some subjects, more detailed planning plots pupils' learning journey from the pre-school to Year 6. In other areas, curriculum planning between the early years and the main school is not as detailed or well joined up. This means that the work done by children in the pre-school and Reception is not always connected strongly to, and sometimes replicates, the work that pupils do in Years 1 and 2.

Strategies for developing language and teaching pupils to read are well established and effective. The school has been using the same phonics scheme, successfully, for some years. Staff are well trained. Most apply the principles of teaching phonics consistently and imaginatively. Most pupils are fluent and confident readers by the end of Year 2. Older pupils read regularly. Pupils have access to a very good range of fiction and non-fiction texts, both in classrooms and in the school library.

Teachers have a good command of knowledge across different subjects, presenting it confidently and clearly. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together, as teams, to make sure that activities are adapted in a way that fully includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps pupils with SEND achieve as well as their peers. Improving the quality of pupils' writing has been a key area of focus for the school. Older pupils produce some good examples of extended writing in English and in other subjects. However, sometimes the emphasis on completing written tasks comes at the expense of developing other important skills. More attention is given to pupils describing practical activities than on doing them to the highest standards. For example, pupils write about how they would design a model in technology rather than spending time ensuring that the design is accurate. In a few instances, the work given to pupils could be more demanding. This all means that pupils do not develop some important wider skills as well as they could.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance has improved. Fewer pupils are absent frequently. This is, in part, due to improved work helping and supporting families, including in getting pupils to school on time. The behaviour of most pupils in lessons is positive. They show great enthusiasm for tasks that require them to think hard and apply their knowledge. When pupils struggle to control themselves, staff employ a firm but understanding approach that helps them return to learning quickly. The good manners and thoughtfulness of many pupils reflect how adults treat them.

The school follows a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education. This gives pupils age-appropriate understanding of important issues, including how to form positive relationships. Pupils study a wide range of beliefs and cultures through religious education and other areas of the curriculum.

Staff are very positive about working at Monkfield Park. They are appreciative of the care taken about their workload, including through changes to the school's assessment policies and time given for lesson preparation. The sense of unity and teamwork among staff is a distinctive feature of 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 a few subjects, planning beyond long-term objectives and particularly between the pre-school, Reception and key stage 1, is not as detailed as it could be. This means that teaching does not always consider what pupils have already learned or does not always prepare children for their next steps. The school should ensure that all subjects are planned in sufficient detail for pupils to make good progress, including from the pre-school through to key stage 1.
- In a few subjects, an overemphasis on written work takes away time and focus on developing other important types of knowledge. Sometimes, work in these subjects is not demanding enough. This means that the standards achieved by pupils are not as high as they could be. The school should review the way that the curriculum is taught in different areas, giving staff the strategies needed to build pupils' practical skills as well as their reading and writing skills.

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 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2015.

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

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| Unique reference number | 131996 |
| Local authority | Cambridgeshire |
| Inspection number | 10345280 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 417 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Jane Crowden and Melanie Webster, co-chairs |
| Headteacher | Annie Howell |
| Website | www.monkfieldpark.cambs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The headteacher was permanently appointed to her post in September 2021, following a short period as acting headteacher.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The pre-school is managed by the governing body, operating from a separate building on the same site as the main school.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also discussed other aspects of the curriculum with leaders, looked at pupils' work, and visited classrooms in some other subjects.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. He also met with the co-chairs and other members of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector met with a group of staff, and with pupils from across the school. He took account of 87 responses to Ofsted's inspection survey for pupils, 31 responses to Ofsted's inspection survey for school staff, and 179 responses to Ofsted's survey of parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Mark Phillips, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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