

Inspection of Polegate Primary School

Oakleaf Drive, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6PT

Inspection dates: 15–16 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The vision for what pupils can achieve at Polegate is limitless. There is an infectious appetite of high expectations, complemented by the care and consideration shown for the whole school community. This ensures that the experience for every pupil is the very best that it can be.

Pupils are cheerful, kind and welcoming. One pupil said: 'It's really easy to make friends at Polegate.' Staff use many different approaches to help develop a real sense of belonging. For example, Year 6 pupils are buddied with Year R children through writing letters and playing together regularly. This helps the youngest children to feel part of the school.

By being 'curious, not furious' adults help pupils understand their behaviour and develop self-control. Clear expectations and routines mean the school is very calm and supportive. Bullying is remarkably rare. If there is an incident, leaders ensure that robust but sensitive action is taken.

Pupils are extremely proud of their school and all of the opportunities they are given. They have a very strong awareness of justice, believing that everyone has the right to be respected and treated well. One pupil said: 'It's simple. If you respect them, they will respect you.'

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

Each and every moment of the day reflects the leaders' ambition for irresistible learning. The curriculum is well thought out and connected across the year groups. Within the different topics that the pupils consider, teachers ensure that the knowledge and skills of each subject are learned and understood. Developing rich vocabulary is prioritised, so that pupils can describe and explain. Teachers create classroom environments that help to deepen the understanding of the topics studied. Because of all of this, pupils achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum.

Reading is at the heart of learning. Adults and pupils talk passionately about the books that they read. The teaching of phonics begins in Nursery and is taught in key stage 1 by highly trained staff. Pupils therefore read confidently and fluently for their age and beyond. Anyone who finds reading more difficult gets the expert help they need to catch up. Leaders believe the whole community has a role in helping pupils to read. Reading breakfasts, 'Reading Heroes' and a weekly film of a bedtime story for parents to listen to with their children are examples of this.

The school is deeply inclusive and nurturing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are welcomed and get the right support from a very early age. Staff are highly trained and have strong relationships with the families of these

pupils. Staff use their skills and knowledge successfully to ensure that all pupils get the same learning opportunities, regardless of their needs.

Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils to participate and behave well. All pupils are expected to be ready if they are called on for their point of view. Their responses demonstrate how focused and keen they are to do well. Pupils show real determination in their learning. They are not put off by difficulties and enjoy being challenged by their teachers and their friends.

Staff take the personal development of the pupils very seriously. They develop confident, successful young people who are ready for life at secondary school and in the wider world. Pupils are encouraged to talk and reflect throughout the school day with their talk partners. They discuss a range of topics and are encouraged to think deeply about their place in the world. This includes considering philosophical questions that are posed at the dining tables every lunchtime.

Leaders and adults in the early years ensure that they know the children in Nursery and Reception extremely well. The nurturing environment is warm and welcoming and children settle quickly. Learning is planned around interesting and exciting themes that promote the creativity and curiosity of the children. Careful consideration is given to the two- and three-year-olds in Nursery so that they make the best possible start to their education. As children move into Year R, there are increased opportunities for them to explore numbers and letters. Because the learning is so engaging, the children are attentive and always want to find out more.

'Learning without Limits', the school's motto, underpins every action leaders take. The headteacher and governors provide an exceptional education. They listen carefully to the views of pupils, staff, and parents and carers and provide high-quality training and support. This excellent training now supports other schools and early years providers to improve the quality of learning across the local area.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Thorough procedures are in place that all staff follow. These consider the needs of all, including the children in the nursery. Staff know about potential risks and can skilfully spot where pupils may need help. Leaders are persistent in making sure pupils and families get specialist support if required. All record-keeping is accurate and in place.

Pupils can confidently explain how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They are able to report any worries they may have because they always have a trusted adult to talk to.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

School details

Unique reference number	114435
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10088175
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	584
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Meyer and Martin Faulkner
Headteacher	Claire Martin-O'Donoghue
Website	www.polegateschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Polegate Primary School is currently in the middle of expansion and increasing the number of pupils in all year groups.
- The school runs its own early-morning and after-school provision for pupils.
- There is a nursery at the school which has children from age two to four.
- The school is a designated teaching school and works closely with other providers in the local area to provide support and training.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, geography and physical education. We discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- We visited the early years provision, including the nursery.

- We met with senior leaders, staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body, including the co-chairs. An inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority by phone.
- An inspector met with newly qualified teachers to evaluate their induction to the school and the support given.
- We considered the 132 responses to the pupil survey and the 43 responses to the confidential staff survey. We talked to parents before the school day and took account of the 76 responses to Ofsted’s Parent View questionnaire.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, we viewed the school’s website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding leader, spoke with pupils and staff, checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with governors.

Inspection team

Aimee Floyd, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Hilary Macdonald	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Chris Donovan	Ofsted Inspector

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