

# Inspection of Polehampton Church of England Infant School

Hermitage Drive, Twyford, Reading, Berkshire RG10 9HS

---

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The co-heads of school are Elizabeth Castell and Helen Medcalf. This school is part of The Keys Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Hester Wooller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Horrocks. There is also an executive headteacher, Philip Sherwood, who is responsible for this school and two others.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Polehampton Church of England Infant School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive in this inclusive school community. They embrace the school vision of 'let your light shine' and have high ambitions for themselves and each other. Staff have high expectations for pupils' achievement and effort. Pupils enjoy celebrating when they rise to this challenge and demonstrate positive learning behaviours. They know what it means to be a 'resilient rhino' or a 'creative chameleon', and they know why these behaviours are important for their learning.

The school environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils greet each other, staff and visitors politely as they go about their daily routines. They cooperate and share well during social times. Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful, warm and kind. Pupils feel safe and happy at Polehampton. They know that staff will listen to them and help them with any worries.

Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures. They have a deep understanding of fairness and equality. Pupils value differences in other people and the opportunity to learn from them. They appreciate the extra opportunities that bring their learning to life, such as visits to the aeroplane museum and the use of the forest school. Pupils also enjoy the clubs on offer, where they explore 'magical maths', science or learn French.

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

The school has an ambitious and broad curriculum. This is planned carefully to meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Reading is woven through the school, with careful consideration given to how to build opportunities to read into all subjects. Thoughtful cross-curricular learning builds pupils' curiosity and love of learning.

Children flourish in the early years. The school has identified precisely what children will learn and in what order. Staff are skilled in supporting children to understand and remember their learning to gradually build knowledge over time. Activities are chosen deliberately to develop children's knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. Interactions between staff and children are of a consistently high quality, which means children develop strong language and communication skills. This prepares children extremely well for their future learning.

Staff have expert subject knowledge. They use this to explain new content clearly. Teachers routinely revisit important vocabulary or knowledge. However, at times, the work that pupils are given does not always enable them to build secure knowledge for use in later learning. When this happens, pupils are not able to explain what they know in the depth that leaders intend.

Pupils achieve well here. Pupils with SEND receive highly effective support, which means they achieve well and follow the same challenging curriculum as their peers.

Reading is a particular strength of the school, and pupils learn to read quickly. From the start of Reception, staff use an ambitious phonics programme to develop children's knowledge of sounds. Struggling readers are supported effectively. Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds they have learned. This enables them to develop confidence and fluency. Older readers develop a love of reading and enjoy visiting the exciting library to borrow and read books.

The vast majority of pupils behave well, both socially and in lessons. They respect each other's right to learn. When pupils are less focused, staff sensitively address this. However, there is a small minority of pupils who continue to struggle to focus in lessons. This means they do not benefit from the rich learning opportunities as much as they could. The school is already working with these children to make sure that they improve their concentration and participate in lessons fully.

Pupils' wider development and pastoral support are at the heart of the school. They enjoy the leadership roles, such as school councillor or 'planet protectors' in the eco-team. Pupils proudly wear badges that show their roles and responsibilities. However, some pupils would like to have a bigger impact on the school through these roles. The school chooses visitors and visits carefully to add value to pupils' learning and wider development. For example, visits from the police help pupils to understand the rule of law and the importance of keeping safe.

The trust takes its responsibilities seriously and knows the school well. Trustees take into account workload and the well-being of staff. Trust leaders have been crucial in ensuring the school maintained high standards of education during some changes in leadership. There is a clear vision for the school, which all leaders understand and are eager to drive forward. The trust is refining some systems to ensure that oversight on a local level is always purposeful and supports the school's improvement priorities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some tasks pupils complete do not always provide pupils with the opportunity to reinforce or deepen their understanding. Consequently, pupils do not have as secure an understanding of specific subjects as they could, which means they sometimes struggle to use what they know. The school should continue its work to ensure that the delivery of the ambitious curriculum helps pupils remember and connect subject-specific knowledge.
- A small minority of pupils do not always engage with their learning as fully as they could. This means they do not make the most of the learning opportunities

in lessons. The school should continue to work with these pupils to help them regulate their behaviour.

- Those responsible for local governance have not always had a thorough or precise oversight of the school. This means they have not provided the school with as much challenge as they could have. The trust should continue to embed the new systems in place for training and monitoring local governance to ensure there is appropriate challenge and knowledge at all levels of leadership.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147556
<b>Local authority</b>	Wokingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288089
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Horrocks
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Hester Wooller
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Philip Sherwood
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.polehampton.org.uk">www.polehampton.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Keys Academy Trust.
- Polehampton Church of England Infant School converted to become an academy school in September 2020. When its predecessor school, Polehampton Church of England Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2011, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in March 2016.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff, pupils and representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair. The lead inspector also spoke with the chief executive officer and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and geography. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also discussed the curriculum for writing with leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff questionnaire, as well as the views of pupils that were gathered throughout the inspection and through the pupil questionnaire.
- 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.

### **Inspection team**

Ally Aldridge-Gibbons, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Zoe Harris	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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023