

Inspection of Polehampton Church of England Junior School

Kibblewhite Crescent, Twyford, Reading, Berkshire RG10 9AX

Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The co-headteachers of the 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 (CEO), 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud and happy to be members of this warm and friendly school. They value being part of the close school community where newcomers quickly make friends. Pupils know and live out the school's values through their positive behaviour across the school. They understand the importance of working together and willingly help others when they can. This is evident when pupils invite others to join their games at playtime.

The school's ambition is for every pupil to achieve the very best they can. Pupils respond well to the encouragement of staff. In lessons, this helps them to tackle more challenging learning with greater confidence. Pupils typically complete learning activities purposefully. They act quickly to make improvements that are identified by teachers. This positive learning ethos supports all pupils to learn well.

Pupils value the range of wider opportunities provided by the school. They happily share the experiences gained through trips and residential. The school champions pupils' successes. They enjoy receiving 'house points' for their effort and day-to-day achievements. Each week, pupils keenly anticipate the celebration assembly to find out whether their 'house' leads the competition. This recognition supports pupils to feel valued.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils. Across all subjects, the important knowledge that pupils need to learn is carefully organised. However, in some subjects in the wider curriculum, the approaches used to check how well pupils learn important knowledge over time lack focus. As a result, these checks do not identify where pupils have incorrect understanding. Consequently, future teaching does not address these issues, and pupils can continue to have misconceptions. This is not the case in core subjects, where teachers identify and correct any knowledge gaps.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure across subjects. They draw on this well when teaching new ideas. The teaching approaches used by most teachers support pupils to develop secure understanding. Typically, these include giving clear explanations and asking questions to check understanding. In a few cases, teachers use these strategies less effectively. Where this happens, pupils do not always develop a clear understanding of the key ideas. As a result, they can progress on to new learning with gaps in their knowledge.

Teachers carefully adapt learning activities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps them to progress well through the planned curriculum. Teaching assistants provide high-quality support for pupils who need more specialist support.

The school prioritises reading. Through the school's reading curriculum, pupils develop strong reading skills, benefiting from a wide range of challenging texts. For pupils who are

at the earlier stages of reading, additional support helps them to catch up quickly and develop into confident readers.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and respectful. They know the rules and learn why these are important. In lessons, pupils respond promptly to and follow the instructions of staff. If pupils lose focus, teachers typically direct them back to learning activities quickly. Around the school, pupils' conduct is safe and considerate. They follow clear routines and take opportunities to help each other.

The school purposefully develops pupils' character. They learn how to become more independent, including how to stay safe. Through a range of leadership roles, including being on the school council, pupils learn how to handle responsibility. They take great pride in contributing to the school through these. The school promotes the importance of diversity. Pupils explore a wide range of different cultures and beliefs. These help pupils to develop respectful attitudes and to value differences.

The school accurately identifies and drives forward further improvements. Staff feel valued and enthusiastically contribute to achieving these. They appreciate efforts to reduce their workload so that they can focus on teaching well. Governors track the impact of changes on pupils' achievement closely. They, along with the trust, provide appropriate challenge and support for the school, which helps sustain changes.

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 cases, some of the strategies used by teachers do not support pupils to learn new knowledge well. This means pupils can have errors in their understanding of new ideas. The school needs to ensure that all teachers use teaching strategies that support pupils to develop a secure understanding of what they are studying.
- In some foundation subjects, methods of checking pupils' learning over time do not identify whether they understand important knowledge well. This means that pupils can continue to have misconceptions. The school needs to ensure approaches to checking pupils' learning support teachers to address and fill knowledge gaps across all subjects.

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	147580
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10322038
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Horrocks
CEO of the trust	Hester Wooller
Headteacher	Philip Sherwood (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.polehampton.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Keys Academy Trust.
- Polehampton Church of England Junior School converted to become an academy school in September 2020. When its predecessor school, Polehampton Church of England Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2012, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The local governing board oversees daily breakfast provision.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxford. The school's last section 48 inspection was in March 2018.

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 executive headteacher, assistant headteacher, co-headteachers of school, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust, including the local governing body, chair of trustees and CEO. He also spoke with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, and art. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 inspectors also looked at the curriculum in writing and geography.
- The inspectors observed playtime activities.
- 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 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school. They considered the school's development plan.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the additional free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with some parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Phillip Blagg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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