

Inspection of a good school: Pencombe CofE Primary School

Pencombe, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4SH

Inspection date: 10 April 2024

Outcome

Pencombe CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils, their parents and the staff agree that Pencombe Church of England Primary School is like one big family. There is a strong sense of community and belonging here; pupils don't just attend 'this' school, they attend 'their' school.

Pupils behave well in class and during playtimes. They are kind and considerate towards others and social times are harmonious. Pupils of all ages play nicely together and older pupils relish helping their younger friends. Pupils say that incidences of unkindness or poor behaviour are very rare. They have complete trust in the adults to sort out any issues and to keep them safe. This is a very happy, inclusive place to learn. Pupils are rarely absent because the school works hard to encourage high attendance.

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils work hard to meet these, enjoying their learning along the way. Despite the school being very small and geographically isolated, pupils receive a wealth of opportunities and cultural experiences in this outward-looking school. They are well prepared for their next school and for later life.

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

The school has put in place a curriculum in all subjects, which is carefully organised to build pupils' knowledge over time. Teachers present information clearly and they have good subject knowledge. They use questioning effectively to ensure all pupils are involved and to develop pupils' thinking. Teachers skilfully adapt learning to make sure all pupils can access the curriculum. They quickly identify if pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide additional support.

The school has ensured that key learning is revisited regularly so that pupils develop a secure understanding. For example, in history they revisit key concepts, such as cause and consequence. This means pupils gain a deeper understanding of the periods of

history they study. Older pupils, for example, are able to explain in detail how and why the Second World War started.

In mathematics, teachers provide short revision sessions at the start of each day. This helps clear up pupils' misconceptions. Pupils become confident, successful mathematicians who love a challenge. They are skilled at talking about their mathematical reasoning.

Younger pupils enjoy learning phonics in daily lessons. Each lesson revisits sounds pupils have learned before so, over time, pupils become secure in their phonic knowledge. Pupils read at home regularly to their parents and the school supports parents well to make this effective. Staff who teach phonics have good knowledge of the school's approach. However, the school has not been explicit enough about how adults hear pupils read and this is inconsistent. As a result, weaker readers do not get the quality of reading practise they need to develop fluency as quickly as they could.

There is a strong culture of reading at Pencombe. Teachers regularly read aloud to pupils to introduce them to high-quality literature. Pupils enjoy reading widely and are enthusiastic about sharing their recommendations with others. Reading even continues in the playground, helped by 'Susan' the pink 'book wheelbarrow'.

The curriculum beyond the academic is extensive, despite the size of this school. Pupils take on active leadership roles, such as becoming school councillors and reading ambassadors. They play an active role during collective worship at the local church and organise charitable events. They even attend community coffee mornings. The school has been careful to ensure that pupils learn about diversity and equality. The school makes deliberate decisions to challenge stereotypes. These include such things as the books pupils are read and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum which the school follows. As a result, pupils are understanding and respectful of difference, being well prepared to become active citizens in modern Britain.

The school has been proactive and effective in making use of close links with a group of local schools. This collaboration has brought many valuable opportunities to the school. For instance, teachers can share expertise with colleagues from other settings. Also, pupils benefit from taking part in a range of inter-school activities, including sporting competitions.

Parents have high regard for this school. The school has been successful in engaging and working alongside parents in the best interests of their children. Parents appreciate the information they receive and the dedication of school staff. Governors and leaders are mindful of staff workload and well-being. Staff feel valued, are very proud to work here and to be a part of the Pencombe family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The way in which adults listen to pupils read is inconsistent and does not always focus closely enough on pupils' decoding, blending and comprehension. As a result, pupils who struggle with early reading are not developing fluency as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that there is a consistent effective approach to hearing pupils read so that they develop into fluent readers as soon as they can.

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 October 2013.

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	116907
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10322754
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keith Lawton
Headteacher	Elizabeth Orton
Website	www.pencombe.hmfa.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school runs after-school care.
- The school began to admit nursery pupils in September 2023.
- The school is subject to inspections under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school was inspected in March 2023. The next inspection will be within five years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school works collaboratively with Hereford Marches Federation of Academies.

Information about this inspection

- 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 leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to members of school staff.
- An inspector held a meeting with members of the board of governors.
- An inspector spoke with an officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school's website.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gary Richards

Ofsted Inspector

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