

Inspection of a good school: Phoenix Infant and Nursery School

Phoenix Avenue, Gedling, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG4 4EL

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

Outcome

Phoenix Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this small school with its friendly and caring ethos. They respond readily to the high expectations that leaders and staff set. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and the education their children receive.

Behaviour is good. Pupils pay attention in lessons. They move around the school calmly and sensibly. They play happily in the well-equipped outdoor areas. Staff run a lunchtime games club to enhance pupils' social skills. This is helping pupils to regain positive relationships after the time spent out of school due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pupils, parents and staff agree that pupils feel safe at school. Staff respond quickly to any concerns about bullying, although these rarely occur.

Staff have made sure that pupils understand how to stay healthy. Pupils are keen to talk about the importance of eating healthy food. They know that exercise is good for them. Some said: 'It's good to make your heart beat fast and pump your blood around your body.'

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They spoke enthusiastically about a range of subjects, especially physical education and mathematics. Parents praise the remote learning provided during times when the school was not fully open.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have rewritten the curriculum. They have ensured that the curriculum sets out exactly what pupils should know, and be able to do, in all subjects. Leaders and staff have discussed the key knowledge and vocabulary pupils should learn in each subject. They have set out this content in a logical order so that pupils' knowledge and skills build progressively during their time at school. Curriculum leaders have a secure overview of their subject areas. They monitor pupils' progress and

give advice and support to staff, to ensure that there is a consistent approach across all year groups.

The mathematics curriculum, and its leadership, is strong. This has resulted in pupils knowing and remembering more over time. In lessons, pupils showed confidence when tackling new concepts or revisiting prior learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 used coins to make amounts of money up to £1.00. They worked in pairs, cooperating well to complete the tasks. Children in the early years were engrossed in an activity to practise numbers one to five. They responded enthusiastically to the teacher's challenging questions.

Leaders and staff recognise the importance of reading. They promote a love of books through class reading areas, story times and the attractive school library. Pupils in all classes receive daily phonics sessions. Leaders have recently introduced a new, more consistent phonics programme. After a period of training, staff have begun to teach the new programme from January 2022. There are early signs that this is going well. Pupils respond positively in the class sessions. They read from books that match their phonics knowledge. However, it is too soon to measure the impact on reading standards. Some pupils are still significantly behind where they should be for their age. This is partly due to the pandemic. Staff provide extra phonics sessions for pupils who need to catch up quickly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive strong support to access the full curriculum. Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well, whatever their circumstances.

Leaders and staff promote pupils' broader development well. They provide a variety of activities to celebrate a range of faiths and cultures. Staff have been creative in adapting their normal practice in the light of the COVID-19 restrictions. For example, they have brought visitors, and even farm animals, into school instead of arranging educational trips. Pupils' cultural heritage is celebrated through the regular 'around the world at Phoenix' events.

Staff spoke very positively about the support they receive for their workload and well-being. Governors discuss staff and leaders' well-being at every meeting. They take their duties seriously and have continued to meet and oversee the work of the school throughout the pandemic.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that early reading and phonics may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. Staff receive rigorous, regular training and updates. Leaders encourage staff to make a note of any concern, however small. They also spoke about having a 'strong culture' of encouraging pupils to

talk to a trusted adult if they have any worries. Leaders and the school's support worker liaise regularly with parents. They know the pupils and their families very well. This means that they can step in as required to offer support at times of pressure.

Staff provide age-appropriate teaching about online safety and the understanding of consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, the school's approach to the teaching of phonics did not best support pupils who struggle with reading. Some pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not yet fluent readers. A new systematic, synthetic phonics programme is being implemented from January 2022. Early signs indicate that this is going well. Staff deliver a consistent, confident approach and pupils read from books that are matched to their phonics knowledge. Leaders should ensure that the revised approach to reading enables pupils to develop quickly as fluent, confident readers.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2011.

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.

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.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	122532
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10211623
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sonya Hand
Headteacher	Lisa Harper
Website	www.phoenixinfant.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders and a range of staff. The inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these curriculum areas: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and reviewed samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- The inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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