

Paxcroft Primary School

Ashton Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 7EB

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and provide determined leadership. This has led to significant improvements over the past year, ensuring that teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Leaders regularly monitor teaching and its impact on the progress of different groups of pupils. They follow their checks with helpful advice and training for teachers to increase their effectiveness.
- Governors receive detailed reports from leaders about pupils' achievement and hold leaders to account with increasing rigour. Sometimes, the information they receive is not evaluated sharply enough to enable them to have a clear overview of how well the school is doing.
- Teachers have high expectations and plan learning that is both challenging and interesting. All groups of pupils, including the most able, make good progress. Occasionally, some pupils find the work too difficult, especially in writing in key stage 1, and this slows progress.
- The curriculum is designed to be exciting and engaging. Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide variety of learning opportunities that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills well.
- The needs of disadvantaged pupils are well catered for, enabling them to make good and sometimes better progress than their peers.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because they receive effective, well-planned support.
- Children in the early years settle quickly and confidently into school routines. They are taught well and make good progress. At times, teaching is not planned precisely enough to challenge the most able children to achieve as well as they might.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in the school. They are polite, friendly and proud of their school and their achievements.
- Parents and carers praise the work of the school, especially the care that staff provide to keep their children happy and secure.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine leadership systems so that leaders and governors are clearer about the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Ensure that teachers consistently take account of the needs of all pupils when planning learning, especially in writing in key stage 1.
- Strengthen teaching in the early years, by ensuring that the most able children are challenged effectively to maximise their progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors are ambitious for pupils and are determined that they receive the best education possible. They have dealt with the areas for improvement from the previous inspection successfully. They have taken firm action to ensure that teaching is effective and that pupils achieve well.
- Over the past year, the headteacher has galvanised the staff team to increase the pace of improvement. Staff members have undertaken a range of training to enhance their skills and effectiveness as leaders and teachers. Morale is high, and staff are fully supportive of what leaders are trying to achieve.
- Improvement plans are sharply focused, with clear targets and timescales to ensure that they have the required impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Leaders, including governors, monitor plans regularly and adjust actions to increase the effectiveness of their work. Sometimes, their evaluations lack the sharpness that would give them a clear overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Middle leaders have implemented successful strategies to improve teaching, particularly in writing and mathematics. Together with senior leaders, they check frequently on teaching, providing teachers with precise and helpful feedback to improve their effectiveness. They follow up their checks with timely support and guidance.
- The school's curriculum is interesting and varied and motivates pupils to succeed. Carefully designed topics promote British values well, such as democracy through studying the women's suffragette movement. Pupils' aspirations are raised through a wide range of enrichment activities and events. For example, they take great pride in performing in the school's musical productions, such as 'Oliver!'
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills well. It is particularly effective in the development of pupils' skills of collaboration and cooperation, preparing them to become responsible citizens.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles any discrimination effectively. Well-targeted support for pupils with SEND is successful in promoting good progress.
- Leaders use the pupil premium fund wisely to ensure that disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, are successful both academically and socially. Good provision for pupils' emotional development increases their engagement with the school and has improved their attendance.
- The sport premium is used effectively to increase pupils' physical activity and their fitness. Pupils enjoy participating in tournaments and festivals such as those for dance, rugby and athletics. Staff are able to increase their teaching skills by working alongside professional sports coaches.
- Parents are positive about the work of the school. They appreciate the approachability of staff and the care they provide for their children. They praise the calm, structured learning environment that promotes good behaviour.

- Helpful support from the local authority adviser and other external consultants has enabled leaders to validate their judgements, check the accuracy of teachers' assessments and provide training for staff.

Governance of the school

- Governors share the headteacher's ambition for the school and are unwavering in their support for leaders. Since the previous inspection, they have increased their monitoring of the school's work in order to check for themselves. They receive comprehensive reports from leaders about the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement. However, sometimes these reports lack the sharpness of evaluation that would give governors a clear overview of the school's performance.
- Governors monitor the school's budget closely to ensure that funds support improvements to teaching and learning. They have a good knowledge of how additional funds are spent to help disadvantaged pupils and to develop school sport.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a strong culture where safeguarding pupils is of high priority. They check regularly that their policies and systems are followed and are effective. They also check that the school's single central record is maintained accurately. Recruitment procedures for appointing staff are thorough and follow statutory guidance. Records show that staff are up to date in their training, including on guidance to identify possible signs of harm as well as recognising the dangers of extremism and terrorism. Staff understand how to report any concerns about safeguarding promptly.
- Leaders keep a close eye on the welfare of any pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. They go to great lengths to ensure that pupils and their families receive the help and support they need. The attendance of a small number of pupils with high absence shows improvement. Leaders are tenacious in following up any absences and they work well with other professionals, such as the family support worker, to encourage regular attendance and punctuality.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subjects they teach. They inspire pupils to be successful in their learning through the careful guidance they provide. They encourage pupils to discuss their work in lessons, developing their self-assurance and confidence to take on greater challenges.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan work that is demanding yet enjoyable. Pupils quickly become absorbed in their tasks and the most able are stretched effectively. For example, the most able pupils in Year 6 were engrossed in their solving of multiplication problems in mathematics, reasoning and reflecting on their methods well.

- Teachers and teaching assistants work in close partnership to provide effective support for pupils with SEND. The extra help they give pupils ensures they are able to access the learning successfully.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, benefit from focused support. Staff help pupils manage their behaviour and feelings well, building their confidence as learners.
- Effective teaching in mathematics is evident in the high standards of achievement across the school. Number skills, in particular, are taught thoroughly, so pupils quickly develop fluency in calculating. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning skills to solve problems and to explain their methods.
- Reading is taught well. Teachers develop older pupils' comprehension skills effectively as well as promoting a love of reading. There is greater consistency in the teaching of phonics since the previous inspection, which ensures that key stage 1 pupils quickly become competent readers.
- The teaching of writing shows improvement over the past year, most noticeably in developing pupils' understanding of the structure of story writing. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their skills by writing across other subjects. For instance, Year 5 and 6 pupils used their knowledge of the 11th century to write informative reports about the Battle of Hastings. However, at times, the work set is too difficult for some pupils, particularly in key stage 1. This limits progress for these pupils in acquiring the basic skills of handwriting and sentence construction.
- On occasions, teaching in the early years is not sufficiently challenging, resulting in some children, particularly the most able, not achieving as well as they could.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop into self-assured learners through the positive relationships that exist in the school. They develop good personal and social skills, in part, because these are an integral part of the curriculum and also because they are at the heart of the school's work.
- Pupils say they are treated equally and fairly in the school. They feel safe, because staff look after them well. The pupils who completed the online survey and those who spoke to inspectors would all trust a member of staff to help them if they had any problems.
- Pupils say that bullying, derogatory behaviour and aggressive language are rare and not tolerated here. They have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying, and they are confident that any such behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Pupils undertake a range of responsibilities very seriously, for example as house captains, school councillors or playground monitors. Their achievements are celebrated well and pupils wear their badges for sporting and academic achievements with pride.

- Online safety has a high priority. Pupils are taught how to stay safe on the internet, taking care not to reveal personal details and to report cyber-bullying if it occurs. Reception children are taught how to look out for potential risks such as broken toys and slippery surfaces in the outdoor area. This prepares them well to maintain their personal safety.
- Staff are skilled in addressing pupils' personal and emotional needs. They respond sensitively and appropriately to support pupils' specific needs, especially those considered vulnerable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Typically, pupils are courteous and friendly and considerate of others. They move around the school buildings sensibly, cooperate well in class and settle quickly to work without any fuss. They are good ambassadors for their school and show great delight when talking to visitors about their learning and achievements.
- Behaviour in lessons is characterised by a 'bubble' of learning talk as pupils quietly discuss their ideas and how to improve their work with each other. This approach helps to promote positive attitudes to learning and contributes to the good progress they make across the school.
- Pupils take increasing pride in their work, and this has become more evident over the past year. Teachers insist on tidy presentation and clear handwriting to encourage accuracy and fluency in mathematical calculation and written work across all subjects.
- Recent changes to the behaviour policy ensure that all staff have high expectations and that behaviour is managed consistently well across the school. Over the past year, incidents of poor behaviour have reduced significantly, eliminating the need for exclusion.
- Leaders take firm steps to eradicate any unnecessary absence, especially for a small minority of pupils whose attendance gave rise to concern. Attendance is broadly average and punctuality shows improvement. Nevertheless, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not quite as high as that of other pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Published data, the school's assessment information, the learning observed in lessons and the work in pupils' books show that pupils make good progress across the school in all subjects. By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, a greater number of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics than was found nationally. The number of pupils who achieved a high standard was in line with national figures. This prepares them effectively for the next stage in their education.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress as their work is consistently challenging; 'it's quite tough,' was how one pupil expressed this. They extend their thinking well by discussing their ideas together. Sometimes, the most able children in the early years are not stretched fully by the learning activities.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good and sometimes better progress than their classmates. The differences in their attainment to others nationally diminish as they move through the school and are negligible by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points, because the work is carefully structured to meet their needs. Extra help builds their confidence and resilience as learners, speeding up academic progress.
- Pupils demonstrate fluency in number skills and they are able to reason and discuss their thinking using the correct mathematical terminology. They apply their knowledge to solve problems and explain their methods with increasing competence, deepening their understanding of concepts well.
- Pupils read fluently and with good understanding. Phonics skills have improved over the past year and more pupils are on course to meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check than previously. Older pupils demonstrate good understanding across a range of demanding literature. They enjoy the wide choice of books on offer in the library, which caters well for all tastes.
- Pupils' writing is much improved over the past year. Pupils become accomplished writers as they move across the school, building their knowledge of how to write in different styles successfully. Increasingly, they use sophisticated vocabulary to express their ideas and engage the reader. However, sometimes, the work is too difficult for some pupils, particularly in key stage 1, which limits their progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is well led and managed. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the provision and where further improvement is needed to ensure all children make rapid progress. Staff work together as a cohesive team. They have regular training opportunities to develop their skills through observing effective practice in other schools and by working with external consultants.
- Parents are very positive about the arrangements for starting school. They say their children are happy to come to the school, enjoy learning and that staff are approachable and reassuring. They welcome the frequent opportunities to become involved in their children's learning.
- Leaders pay good attention to safeguarding so that children are kept safe both indoors and out. Staff supervise children closely and help them understand the safety and hygiene rules, such as washing hands before eating. Children cooperate well with staff and with each other, and their behaviour is good.
- Most children start school with the knowledge and skills broadly typical for their age, although some have lower starting points in their language and personal skills. They make good progress in all areas of learning, especially in their social development, and start Year 1 as confident learners.
- Teaching is good due to improvements made over the past year. Teachers' assessments and monitoring of children's learning is accurate so that teaching activities are usually well matched to children's needs. Children with SEND, and others considered vulnerable, are supported sensitively, enabling them to settle quickly and

become successful learners. Disadvantaged children develop their speech and language skills well by working with a specialist external consultant, followed by good support from the staff in school.

- Phonics teaching underpins the development of early reading and writing skills effectively. Children soon become proficient in writing their letters correctly and spelling everyday words, enabling them to form simple sentences.
- Mathematics development is strong and most children are effectively challenged. Children were observed during the inspection developing their understanding of number as they counted off the 'laps' they cycled on their trikes in the outdoor area.
- Children also learn from following their own interests, and staff support them skilfully to develop their language skills as they play. For example, some children were observed in the role play area, discussing and writing their 'potions' to cure their 'pets' as they played at being wizards. This extended their imagination and language skills well. However, sometimes the activities planned do not provide enough challenge for the most able children, which slows their progress.

School details

Unique reference number	126483
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10053211

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Ranger
Headteacher	Ewan Caldwell
Telephone number	01225762244
Website	www.paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2018

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are organised in 11 classes: two classes in Reception, one Year 1 class, and the others are mixed age (Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, Years 5 and 6).
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly above average and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly average.
- The school manages breakfast and after-school clubs each day.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across the school. Most observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, they made visits to classrooms, the dining hall and the playground, as well as attending an assembly.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors and school leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with an adviser from the local authority, which supports the school.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the 76 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, as well their written comments. They also took account of the 16 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and the 96 responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. They examined information on current pupils' progress, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding procedures and the plans for the use of the sports premium.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked with them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Jelley	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bragg	Ofsted Inspector

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