

Inspection of Pinchmill Primary School

The Old Road, Felmersham, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 7JD

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Pinchmill Primary are confident, respectful and enthusiastic. They wholeheartedly embrace the school's values of 'respect, responsible and ready', demonstrating positive attitudes and taking pride in their work. They collaborate effectively, eager to share ideas and support one another.

From the early years, children develop a strong base for future learning. Staff set high expectations, helping children to expand their experiences and knowledge. Younger pupils benefit from the improved curriculum the school has put in place. However, older pupils are not achieving as well as they could because they have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils exhibit positive behaviour and are eager to learn. The school celebrates achievements, fostering a culture of encouragement. Staff model positive attitudes, helping pupils build resilience, independence and strength of character. Pupils support each other and demonstrate kindness in how they interact.

The school is deeply committed to pupils' well-being, nurturing strong and trusting relationships between staff and children. Pupils feel safe and secure, knowing they can rely on adults for support with any concerns. This caring environment enables them to thrive and enjoy their time at school. Pupils embrace a range of extra-curricular activities that further enhance their skills and talents.

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

The school has developed a new curriculum over the last two years. Pupils embrace this offer and try hard in lessons. In some subjects, the curriculum is designed effectively so that pupils develop knowledge securely over time. However, in other areas of the curriculum, pupils' starting points have not been appropriately considered. This means that staff do not adapt the learning to meet pupils' needs consistently well. Equally, sometimes, other pupils are not challenged to build deep knowledge and achieve as highly as possible. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge that still exist from content that was not learned well before. Although staff are dedicated to helping pupils to catch up, this work is not always effective as staff do not have a clear understanding of what pupils do, and do not, know and understand.

The school has been committed to ensure that teacher stability exists. This has benefited the pupils greatly with more consistency and quality in lessons. However, staff have not received sufficient training in what to teach, when to teach it and the best methods to use. As a result, content is often presented in an illogical order or taught in a way that confuses pupils.

Some pupils struggle to catch up on the knowledge they have missed, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is deeply committed to supporting these pupils and identifying their needs early on. Staff provide encouragement and tailored guidance to pupils with SEND. This helps these pupils to

access more of the curriculum, gaining the confidence and knowledge they need to achieve well.

Many pupils talk fondly about the books they have read. The school has worked to ensure that every child has a love of reading. Support for the weakest readers is well suited to the pupils' needs, and the school uses assessment effectively to track how well pupils are doing. With renewed constancy in the phonics programme, the school is now refining this to ensure that pupils with SEND are supported effectively and that there is a sharp focus on reading from the start.

The early years curriculum lays a strong foundation for children's education. From the start, children are encouraged to be independent and respectful. Children are happy, curious and confidently interact with adults and peers. Clear routines help children to understand expectations and focus very well on their learning as a result. Adults provide ample support, using carefully planned resources to support children's learning. The school provides an environment where language development is of great importance. High-quality communication between staff and children is frequent. New vocabulary is modelled well by adults.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of experiences that enhance their character and awareness of the world around them. The school's ambitions of 'Excite, Inspire, Engage and Achieve' encourage pupils to participate in a range of clubs. Trips, leadership opportunities, community projects and themed days enrich the curriculum. 'WOW' days help pupils explore different topic areas and deepen understanding of the diverse world. The school prioritises personal development, ensuring all pupils benefit from opportunities beyond the academic offer.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, with minimal disruptions. They show respect towards staff and peers, embrace challenges and demonstrate resilience when facing difficulties.

The school and governors have made improvements to aspects of the school. The changes have come at a sensible pace, meaning that staff have had time to learn and apply their training. Governors keep a close eye on the improvements and ensure the right resources are available to the school to keep making progress. While there is still more to do to achieve their aims, leaders are well placed to secure the necessary improvements. Staff feel valued, with their well-being and workload carefully managed. Parents and carers appreciate the school's commitment to supporting their children and are highly positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum design does not sufficiently take into account the starting points of pupils. This means that some pupils struggle to catch up and to learn new knowledge. The school should ensure that the curriculum is designed sufficiently well so that staff know how to adapt learning and support pupils to achieve highly.
- Sometimes, staff do not use assessment strategies as effectively as they could. As a result, some pupils have gaps in knowledge that are not addressed. The school should support staff to check pupils' understanding systematically and address misconceptions swiftly.

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	109451
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10345083
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Harris
Headteacher	Victoria Bailey
Website	www.pinchmill.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average primary school.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, attendance records, pupil records, records of governing body meetings, school development plans and school self-evaluation documents.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View and conversations held during the inspection.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector also spoke with representatives of the local authority's school improvement team.

Inspection team

Louise Cooper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jessie Linsley

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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