

Inspection of a good school: Pondhu Primary School

Penwinnick Road, St. Austell, Cornwall PL25 5DS

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 April 2023

Outcome

Pondhu Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pondhu is a welcoming and happy place for all. Pupils feel a strong sense of pride in their school. They talk warmly about how adults help to support them with their work or with any problems they might have. Pondhu is highly inclusive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those with complex needs, have adaptations made appropriately. Staff know pupils well.

Leaders have improved behaviour. They promote good behaviour through 'Golden Rules'. Pupils behave well in class. They listen well to teachers' instructions. At social times, pupils have lots of activities to choose from. They play well together. A few pupils still struggle to meet leaders' expectations around behaviour. Staff ensure they help pupils overcome these difficulties.

Leaders have placed an emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of the world around them through a wealth of trips. For example, children in the early years visit a heritage railway. Older pupils develop their independence through residential. Leaders nurture pupils' talents and interests through clubs such as street dance, art, football and yoga. Leaders use pupil premium funding well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils do not miss out on these experiences.

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

Leaders have driven the school forward with passion and determination. They have created an aspirational culture where staff do not make excuses for pupils' backgrounds or starting points. Consequently, they have raised expectations of what pupils should be able to do and achieve.

Together with support from the trust, leaders have overhauled the curriculum. They have ensured that subjects are well sequenced. This means that pupils' knowledge builds on what they already know. For example, pupils in key stage 1 learn to create maps with appropriate symbols. This builds on work with treasure maps in the early years. Leaders

ensure that pupils with SEND learn the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers.

Staff talk about the positive changes that leaders have made to the behaviour policy and the curriculum. They feel workload has eased as the curriculum has become more embedded. Staff, including those in the early stages of their career, feel supported by leaders.

Leaders have supported staff to ensure that they implement the curriculum well. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They identify misconceptions swiftly. Leaders have placed an emphasis on pupils knowing subject-specific vocabulary. This has paid off. For example, in mathematics older pupils use the correct terminology linked to shapes. Younger pupils use terms such as numerator and denominator when discussing fractions.

Teachers use questions to good effect to deepen pupils' knowledge and revisit what they have learned in the past. As a result, pupils recall their knowledge well. For example, key stage 2 pupils can explain how earthquakes occur and why volcanoes erupt. However, in some subjects, leaders recognise that they have not developed systems for checking how much pupils have learned.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They have trained all staff so that pupils learn to read in a coherent and consistent way. Staff waste no time in teaching children to read as soon as they start in Reception. Pupils read books closely matched to the sounds that they know. This allows them to become fluent readers. Staff swiftly identify pupils who need extra help. Through carefully targeted support, they catch up quickly.

Teachers read a range of stories to their classes regularly. Pupils learn some of these stories off by heart to deepen their knowledge and appreciation of key texts. Pupils are developing a love of reading. They talk of their enthusiasm of going to the library to choose a new book.

Pupils understand the importance of tolerance. They say that at Pondhu people treat each other equally. For example, they say boys and girls play football together at playtimes and that everyone is welcome to join in. Pupils know how to keep healthy. They talk passionately about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Pupils develop their leadership skills through becoming playground buddies.

The trust knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well. It takes swift and effective action where necessary. For example, it has taken action to strengthen local governance so that leaders are supported and challenged more effectively.

The vast majority of parents would recommend the school. They feel that staff care for their children well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of vigilance. They train staff regularly to ensure that they can identify pupils at risk of harm. Staff note concerns, however small, diligently and in a timely manner. This means leaders build up the 'whole picture' of the pupil. They escalate any concerns to the local authority as appropriate. Staff work with a range of agencies to ensure that families get the support they need.

Leaders, with support from the trust, make thorough checks on staff's suitability to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not yet established how they will check how well pupils have learned the curriculum. Therefore, leaders are not clear whether pupils recall and use knowledge as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively in order to help pupils to embed knowledge in all subjects.

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 Pondhu Primary School to be good in October 2012.

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'](#) 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	148106
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10268570
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Geoff Brown
Headteacher	Rachel Clift
Website	pondhu.eschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in January 2022.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, groups of staff, groups of pupils, a trustee and members of the trust's rapid improvement group.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.

- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. He met with the designated safeguarding lead to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and took into consideration responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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