

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Phoenix Infant Academy

Warrington Avenue, Slough, Berkshire SL1 3BQ

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 February 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Amanda Jarrett. This school is part of The Thames Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Richard Kearsy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jon Reekie.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know and model the school's values of stay safe, try your best, be kind and be respectful exceptionally well. They share and celebrate each other's successes positively. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils enjoy roles and responsibilities such as school and 'eco' councillors. They are rightly proud of their school, and each other.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils thrive due to staff's clear expectations that are set out for them. Alongside this, staff and pupils demonstrate incredibly warm, supportive relationships that are reflected throughout the school. Beginning in Reception Year, staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and apply the behaviour policy fairly and consistently. If any pupils find managing their own behaviour challenging, they receive timely, considerate and effective support.

Pupils attend school regularly. Staff have the highest expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils reach these expectations. Staff are dedicated to all children and their families. The school's determination and commitment to every pupil ensures that pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are very well prepared for their next stage of education.

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

Pupils are happy and confident. They feel safe and understand how to stay safe, including when online. For example, pupils learn about the potential emotional effects of online harm appropriately and how to protect themselves and keep their personal information private. Pupils understand how to lead healthy lifestyles well. They learn comprehensively about nutritious food types, food hygiene and how to have healthy friendships.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and ensures that the curriculum is adapted to match their needs closely. Staff think carefully about how to ensure pupils with SEND access and experience opportunities equally throughout their learning. This includes the high quality personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND, respond to the school's PSHE programme brilliantly.

There are a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' talents and interests. Sports and extra-curricular activities such as gymnastics are popular and help pupils to be active and engaged in wider school life. Disadvantaged pupils consistently access and benefit from the school's activities. Music, singing and collaborative performances are key features of the school's provision. Reception Year and the 'Nest', the specialist resourced provision for pupils with SEND, are filled with songs, music, rhythm and rhymes. Pupils learn effectively about cultural, social and religious differences, and how to work together positively. This helps pupils build confidence and develop a strong sense of belonging.

The curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils. Lessons help pupils to build their knowledge well. For example, in mathematics, pupils learn subject specific terminology such as 'regroup, part-part whole and partitioning' which are used, revisited and embedded in their understanding. Across the curriculum, pupils learn to write confidently. Pupils are rightly proud of their work, which is of high quality. Across the curriculum pupils learn to write confidently, with thoughtful description such as describing a mountain as 'a spiky curve with rough, red rocks'. Staff have strong subject knowledge. They use questioning expertly and systematically to check pupils' errors and misconceptions. This ensures that pupils build on their prior knowledge and learn the curriculum strongly.

Reading, books and stories are prioritised. The school's approach to phonics and early reading is robust and highly effective. Children begin to learn phonics from the start of Reception Year. Staff model sounds and check pupils' knowledge and understanding accurately. If any pupils fall behind, they receive timely interventions and catch up with their peers quickly. Traditional stories are at the heart of the curriculum from the beginning of Reception Year. Pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become fluent readers.

The school and wider community truly work in partnership together. Leaders are committed to taking decisions in the best interests of pupils. Trustees understand their roles and responsibilities fully. Staff are very positive about how the school engages with them and are supported to manage their workload successfully. The school offers

excellent professional development opportunities, often helping other schools see what is possible in early primary education.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive. They are extremely grateful and appreciative of the staff team's dedication to their children. Many parents expressed how well they have been supported in knowing how to contribute to their child's education positively. One parent echoed the thoughts of many others, saying, 'From the beginning of Reception my child has shown more confidence in everything they do.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

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	138731
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10341722
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jon Reekie
CEO of the trust	Richard Kearsy
Principal	Amanda Jarrett
Website	www.phoenixinfants.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Phoenix Infant Academy joined The Thames Learning Trust in September 2015

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the chief executive officer, the chair of trustees and members of the governing body, and other senior staff.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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' interest first.
- The inspector spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at break and lunchtime.
- The inspector met with groups of staff and considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed from parents through Ofsted Parent View

Inspection team

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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