

Inspection of a good school: North Kidlington Primary School

Benmead Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire OX5 2DA

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 May 2024

Outcome

North Kidlington Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and nurturing school. Pupils are well looked after and enjoy learning. They appreciate the warm welcome they receive from staff, who are at the school gate every morning. Staff know pupils and their families very well. They build strong partnerships between home and school.

The school's values of kindness to self, each other, and the environment bind the community together. Pupils behave well. Established routines around behaviour and adults' high expectations start in Reception. Pupils try hard to show kindness to each other. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and collaborate with each other on their learning. As a result, they develop as confident learners and achieve well.

Pupils look forward to their lessons. They enjoy a wide range of trips and experiences that help to bring learning to life. Each pupil receives recorder lessons for four years and performs in school concerts. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs they attend at lunchtimes. The biannual dance festival performance in a professional theatre is a joyful celebration for many pupils. At social times, pupils of all ages play together well. They make sure that everyone is included.

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

The school has designed an interesting and ambitious curriculum in which reading is prioritised. Daily 'story time' and whole-class reading activities enable pupils to encounter new vocabulary and develop a love of reading. The diverse range of carefully selected texts inspires pupils and fires their imagination. In the last two years, there have been changes to further strengthen the approach to early reading. Staff are well trained to teach phonics. They use a variety of techniques to engage pupils. Staff quickly notice pupils who do not know the sounds that they need. Precise, small-group teaching then ensures that these pupils keep up. This means that all pupils learn to read quickly, confidently and with comprehension.

Staff are well trained to teach all areas of the curriculum. They develop expertise to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, this approach means that teachers are skilled in the new mathematics curriculum. Right from the start of Reception pupils explore the way that numbers work. Pupils are proud to share their ideas and explain the methods they use to tackle increasingly complex tasks. As a result, they become more confident. A focus on times tables in the newsletter for families and the popular 'polygon of the week' assembly question support this.

The ambitious wider curriculum matches pupils' needs and interests. Pupils revisit important knowledge and practical skills regularly, starting in reception. This helps them remember. Pupils use songs and actions to help them recall important knowledge, such as the names and locations of the continents. Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. Teachers skilfully adapt learning to support pupils with (SEND). This ensures that the curriculum focuses on the most important aspects of pupils' learning. Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their individual starting points. In some subjects, pupils' written work does not always reflect the high standards they demonstrate in English. This means that they do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the curriculum as they learn the school value of 'be kind to ourselves'. Nurture groups help pupils to learn important social skills. They develop the confidence to talk about how they are feeling and take turns. The school makes sure that pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils learn about democracy through voting on key decisions in the life of the school. These range from school council elections to the naming of the school pets. Pupils are proud of their roles of responsibility. Play leaders teach younger pupils new and interesting games. Those who work in the 'Wild Garden' ensure that the space is well cared for and open to all. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 delight in reading stories to those in reception.

The school achieves high attendance and promotes it at every opportunity. Highly practical support and effective home-school partnerships help those who encounter challenges with attendance. Such partnership working is much valued by parents.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Collaboration is at the centre of all processes. This means they can ask anyone for help or advice. They value leaders' support and consideration of their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' written work across the wider curriculum is not consistently accurate and of high quality. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could in some subjects.

The school should ensure that pupils' writing skills are well developed across all curriculum areas.

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 the school to be good in December 2014.

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 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	123025
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10321861
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christabel Ashby
Headteacher	Emilie Fidler
Website	www.north-kidlington.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with a range of senior leaders about their roles, including the school's headteacher. The inspector also met with representatives of the governing body and spoke on the telephone to the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, 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' interests first.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments.
- The inspector considered responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors spoke to groups of staff and pupils to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Lizzie Jeanes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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