

Inspection of a good school: Tavistock Primary & Nursery School

Plymouth Road, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8BX

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has navigated through a period of leadership changes. During this transition, the school has worked on developing an ambitious curriculum alongside the management of pupils' behaviour. These actions are starting to make a difference. However, these improvements are in the early stages. Consequently, the curriculum does not yet support all pupils to build their knowledge well enough. Bullying is well understood by pupils. Most pupils feel their worries are dealt with. However, for some pupils and parents, bullying remains a concern.

The school's values of 'resilience, self-belief, responsibility, understanding self, co-operation and risk taking' are central to the vision at Tavistock Primary School and Nursery. Staff take time to build positive relationships with pupils to help them to be successful. The school knows pupils and their families well.

The school provides opportunities to support pupils' wider development. Clubs are valued by pupils, such as cricket and choir. Experiences are considered to enhance the curriculum. For example, pupils attend a residential visit to London to support their historical study of the Tower of London. Pupils appreciate their leadership roles. For example, house captains value their responsibility of counting the house points earned throughout the week to announce to the school in assembly.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that sequences the knowledge it wants pupils to know and remember. This starts in the early years. The school has considered the significance of the local area. For example, in history, pupils regularly learn about the heritage of Tavistock. The school are continuing to work on the precise knowledge they

want pupils to know and remember so that pupils revisit their previous learning more often to help all pupils to build their knowledge more securely.

The promotion of reading for pleasure is a priority for the school. 'Books for life' have been carefully selected to ensure pupils are exposed to a wide variety of books. Pupils share their enjoyment of 'browsing sessions' where they view books that cover a range of genres. Pupils take pleasure in recording their favourites in their reading journals along with their book reviews. Children learn to read when they start in Reception Year. Staff receive training to strengthen their subject knowledge. This helps pupils to grasp the basics of reading. However, some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not getting all the support they need to learn to read quickly enough. As a result, they find their learning across the curriculum more challenging.

To support the teaching of the curriculum, regular 'professional development meetings' take place to strengthen staff subject knowledge. For example, staff received training on how to support pupils' mathematical understanding with the use of resources. Teachers use this training to support pupils' learning. For example, in Nursery, children are supported to develop their knowledge of number recognition and counting by playing the 'Catch and Count' game.

The school has worked on the approach to supporting pupils with SEND. Staff receive training to support them in adapting learning to help these pupils learn the curriculum. While the support for these pupils is improving, the deficiencies in the implementation of the curriculum mean these pupils do not yet progress as well as they could across subjects.

The school has worked on a new approach to managing behaviour. Routines and expectations are set for pupils to follow. This starts in the early years where children know what is expected of them when learning on the carpet. Most pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and respond well to the school's agreed rules 'ready, respectful, safe'. However, some staff do not have a secure understanding of the behaviour policy. This means it is not applied consistently. This can lead to low-level disruption and more challenging behaviour. This worries some pupils and parents. Leaders take action when issues occur and provide additional support for those pupils who may need it. However, leaders do not monitor patterns of behaviour with enough rigour to decide on adaptations needed to the curriculum.

Pupils learn about well-being, relationships and living in the wider world to support their understanding beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy. For example, they value the daily mile as a way to benefit from regular exercise. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Governors have ensured there are systems in place to support the well-being of staff. They have strengthened their strategic role to hold leaders to account. However, leaders do not share some key information with governors, such as behaviour and safeguarding records that show patterns and trends over time. This makes it hard for governors to hold leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

At the time of the inspection, minor improvements to safeguarding were identified. These include staff ensuring that record keeping accurately reflects the school's policy to enable leaders to monitor patterns over time with precision.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are not supported well enough to grasp the basics of reading. As a result, these pupils do not become confident, fluent readers quickly. The school must ensure that pupils get the support they need to learn to read successfully.
- Staff do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. As a result, the poor behaviour of some pupils is not always managed effectively. This worries some pupils and impacts on their learning. The school must ensure its expectations of behaviour are understood by all staff so that the behaviour policy is applied consistently.
- The school, including governors, do not monitor some important aspects of the school's work in sufficient detail, such as behaviour and safeguarding. Therefore, they are unable to identify trends and patterns to inform adaptations to the curriculum and some aspects of the school that need to further improve. The school and governors need to ensure that monitoring and evaluation are effective to make informed decisions about priorities for improvement.
- Some parents are concerned about some aspects of the school's work. The school must strengthen communication with parents to ensure concerns are resolved and to build effective partnerships.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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	113265
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344477
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	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan James
Headteacher	Laura Handel
Website	www.tavistock-pri.devon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection. The current headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with school leaders, staff, parents, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, 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 listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspector spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Esther Best, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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