

# Prettygate Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114744
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	357605
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dennis Mason
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Jackson and Rita Tingle (co-headteachers)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Plume Avenue Colchester CO3 4PH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 572357
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who visited 14 lessons taught by six teachers. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance records, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, notes of governing body meetings, school development planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 19 staff and 83 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively does the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage contribute to children's overall attainment, and how well are learning and progress sustained through Key Stage 1?
- With the new co-headship arrangements, are leaders effective in managing provision and ensuring consistent outcomes for boys and girls of all abilities?

## Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. Most pupils are White British. Only a very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than average. The school has gained the Activemark and Sportsmark awards and the Inclusion Quality Mark, and has Healthy Schools status.

Since January 2011, the headship role has been shared between the previously full-time headteacher, who is in school for three days each week, and an acting headteacher, taking on this role for the other two days.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

'Together as friends we will:

Discover and learn,

Play and be happy,

Stay safe and healthy,

Be proud of who we are.'

Prettygate Infant's vision statement is prominently displayed near the entrance to the school and on its website. This is a good school because leaders, the staff team and governing body succeed admirably in fulfilling this vision.

Prettygate Infant is a friendly, welcoming community where pupils and the many adults who help them get on very well together. Parents and carers feel fully involved in school life, and the school works in close partnership with them. From the start of the Reception Year to the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress and their attainment is generally above average. Boys and girls of all abilities learn well because they benefit from good teaching, often characterised by teachers' high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For those who need extra help with their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number at any early stage of learning English as an additional language, lessons are supplemented with carefully tailored individual support. Every day starts, for example, with a short but effective session of one-to-one provision for those who need extra help with reading, writing, mathematics, or their speaking and listening skills. In lessons, pupils usually know what they should be learning and why it is important. The pace of some lessons slows, however, when teachers' lesson introductions go on for too long, especially when this results in pupils spending more time sitting on the carpet listening than on practical activities. It is these that pupils most enjoy, along with the opportunities that the school's exceptionally stimulating curriculum gives them for learning through discovery. Regular 'discovery afternoons', for example, give pupils the opportunity to try lots of new things such as bell ringing, digital imaging and drama.

Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. This helps to make the school a happy place, where pupils play and work collaboratively. There are good arrangements for pupils' care and welfare. As a result, parents and carers are unanimous in their view that the school keeps their children safe, and pupils are confident that, if they have any worries, there is an adult they can go to to ask for help. Pupils have a good appreciation of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise, and they are keen to make full use of the school's spacious and well-resourced playing fields and outside area. Because the school helps them to grow in confidence, pupils are proud of their school and they take a pride, too, in the presentation of their work. They are keen to win awards for their good work,

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effort and acts of kindness, and pupils beam with pride when their names are called out in assembly to receive a commendation or badge. Attendance rates are outstanding.

The recent change in leadership arrangements has the full confidence of staff, parents and carers because the co-headteachers work in close partnership, with each contributing complementary skills. They have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for continuing development. The school has depended, however, on systems that are too informal. Welfare arrangements that might otherwise be considered as outstanding are let down because they rely on casual notes where formal recording is more properly demanded. Leaders regularly monitor lessons but their observations focus more on the characteristics expected of teaching than on the progress that pupils make. Although points for development are identified, leaders do not record how they systematically follow these up to ensure that they are acted upon. Nevertheless, the school's sustained success reflects its good capacity for continued improvement.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- By the start of the autumn term 2011, further accelerate pupils' learning in lessons by ensuring that:
  - lesson introductions do not go on for too long
  - lengthy periods listening on the carpet are not allowed to limit the opportunities for pupils to get on with practical activities
  - teaching assistants are always given an active role during whole-class teaching.
- Develop more robust management systems by the end of the summer term 2011 through:
  - standardising the arrangements for recording notes on children's progress and welfare
  - focusing lesson observations on pupils' learning and rates of progress rather than on the features of teaching
  - systematically following up in subsequent observations the points for development identified by school leaders when they visit lessons.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Children start school with skills and capabilities that are generally in line with those expected for their ages. They make consistently good progress so that their attainment is above average by the end of Year 2. In 2010, pupils at the end of Year 2 were the equivalent of around six months ahead of the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school assesses pupils in the current Year 2 to be doing less well. However, much of the work seen in Year 2 during the inspection was of an above average standard, reflecting teachers' high expectations of what the pupils can do and with pupils eagerly rising to the challenge. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the learning of pupils of all abilities was extended by the 'n work' which is a regular feature of mathematics in the school. Pupils are given a value for 'n' and then substitute this to solve a range of expressions using their knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pupils are encouraged always to 'have a go', and even their errors illustrate a

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keen understanding of mathematical principles, so that a boy who mistakenly reversed the expression 'n - 3' concluded that, with n valued at 6, the answer must be -3.

Pupils attain above-average standards in other curriculum subjects. They sing tunefully and with gusto, and their art is especially impressive. Stimulated by the chance to examine a stuffed owl brought in by a visitor, pupils have produced remarkably confident pen and ink drawings. They have learnt about famous western artists, for example producing their own versions of repeat images of canned food in emulation of Andy Warhol. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities, including as school councillors and play helpers, and they are enthusiastic in raising funds and otherwise supporting a range of charitable causes. The school's well-established ties with a school in Uganda have helped to broaden pupils' awareness of the wider world. This link has been brought to life through a photo-journal of one of the co-headteacher's visit to the Ugandan school. This tangible record has enabled pupils to see for themselves how their gifts are pressed into everyday use.

At more than 96%, attendance is high in comparison with all-through primary schools and is very much higher than most infant schools. Together with their good key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), this prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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## How effective is the provision?

What most stands out about this school is the way the curriculum stimulates the interest of both boys and girls, and motivates them to work with effort and concentration. The school has implemented the recommendation from the last inspection, so that pupils are now very actively involved in their learning. When starting a new topic, they share together what they already know and identify what they particularly want to find out. Photographic records map pupils' progress and their display around the school contributes to pupils' sense of achievement. Because they are well motivated, pupils produce work that is imaginative and which consolidates their key skills. Pupils in Year 2, for example, inspired by learning about Samuel Pepys and writing about the Great Fire of London, have produced thoughtful 'diary' accounts of the fire. Many have gone on from this to write poetry of a high standard. ICT is used well throughout the school, for example to record the results of pupils' investigations in science and mathematics, and to provide creative illustration for pupils' other work.

Teachers and other staff know the pupils well. This contributes to the good welfare arrangements, although it has also given rise to systems for recording information that are more informal than would normally be expected. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is especially well tailored to their specific learning needs. This is greatly appreciated by parents and carers. As one, typically, wrote: 'The school set up a fantastic support programme for my child and their progress has been good as a result.' The good relationships that adults have with pupils contribute to the pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan activities that challenge pupils. They also give good oral and written feedback to pupils that shows them what they need to do to improve their work. Teaching assistants give pupils very good support when helping them in small groups and in the one-to-one sessions, but their skills are not always fully utilised during whole-class teaching, when sometimes they can be largely passive observers.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The co-headteachers and leadership team have been successful in building a team with a shared drive to get the best for pupils. They promote equal opportunities well, as shown in the way pupils in potentially vulnerable circumstances are helped to overcome barriers to their learning. The development of curriculum topics and themes that appeal equally to boys and girls has helped those boys who join the school with lower literacy and communication skills to narrow the gap. Parents and carers praise leaders' approachability.

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As one explained, 'Parents are always welcome and children are always greeted individually by name by the headteachers.' Community cohesion is promoted well, in turn contributing to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are eager to learn about other ways of life, whether through the fictional Scottish Island of Struay or through the school's strong ties with Christ's Embassy School in Uganda.

Governance is good because the governing body is both supportive and challenging of school leaders. Its members visit regularly and so are not just dependent on staff for knowing what goes on in school. It monitors performance against priorities in its annually updated school development plan. The governing body has ensured that arrangements for safeguarding meet the current regulatory requirements.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and they quickly become enthusiastic learners so that they make good progress, usually attaining standards above those expected for their ages. Parents and carers value the strong partnerships which develop between home and school and appreciate the good start the children get in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are well supported by good teaching in a rich, stimulating environment. Exciting activities are carefully planned to promote key skills, good personal and social development and high levels of choice and independence. A high priority is given to the acquisition of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Challenging activities, such as writing to Boris the Polar Bear in the Arctic Zone, remembering and reciting with actions a long poem about Goldilocks, and using sounds to spell and write words and sentences such as 'bees are wonderful' interest the children and promote good learning. Numerous opportunities for creative activities link with class topics and themes and result in, for example, high quality observational drawings. Children cooperate well with each other and



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their behaviour is exemplary. They are confident and enjoy excellent relationships with the staff and each other. However, teachers do not always give them enough time to finish their work. Staff track and assess children's progress regularly and use the findings successfully to identify and target where children need extra help. Each child's progress is carefully tracked in this well-run provision, but the school's arrangements for tracking are overly complicated because they comprise too many overlapping recording systems which duplicate effort.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers express very positive views about all aspects of the school. Many refer specifically to how welcoming and caring it is. Although a small number do not agree that the school fully meets their child's particular needs, several parents and carers wrote specifically to praise the quality of provision for their child. As one put it: 'The school provides a happy, calm and nurturing environment where individual needs are met by all.'

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Prettygate Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	76	18	22	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	78	18	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	49	59	32	39	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	59	31	37	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	73	21	25	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	76	18	22	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	75	21	25	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	60	24	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	67	22	27	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	60	30	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	58	32	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	76	17	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	82	15	18	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



28 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Prettygate Infant School, Colchester, CO3 4PH**

Thank you for welcoming us when we came to visit your school. Many of you told us you are proud of your school. Your pride is justified. Prettygate Infant is a good school. Staff look after you well and you benefit from good teaching that helps you to make good progress in Reception as well as in Years 1 and 2. As a result, you reach above-average standards in your reading, writing and mathematics. We were impressed, too, with the super artwork you have produced. I especially liked the pen and ink drawings of the owls you saw in 'Bird Week'. A feature of the school that stands out is the exciting curriculum. All the exciting and interesting topics help to make learning fun. The great facilities at the school help too, including the forest school and all the equipment you get to use in the playground.

We were pleased to see how well behaved you are and how well everyone gets on together. This makes Prettygate Infant such a happy, friendly place to be. Your attendance is excellent. That's a big well done to you and to your parents and carers. Your school is well run, but we have asked staff and the governing body to tighten up their systems to make sure that they always record information, just as you are all recording in your books what you do in lessons. Although you make good progress in lessons, we would like to see you do even better. We have therefore asked your teachers to make sure that lesson introductions do not go on for too long. You especially enjoy practical activities so we would like to see you given more time for these. Support staff do a very good job working with those of you who need extra help with your learning. They help you particularly well when you are working individually and in small groups. We have asked the school to always make sure that they are just as effective when the teacher is talking to the whole class.

You can help to make your good school even better by continuing to work hard and by taking care always to check your work and to follow the advice teachers give you when they mark it.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly, and our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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