

Preston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118401
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358337
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicholas Webb
Headteacher	Penelope Day
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
School address	Mill Lane Canterbury CT3 1HB
Telephone number	01227 722235
Fax number	01227 720055
Email address	office@preston.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons were observed taught by six teachers. Inspectors visited all classrooms on a learning walk to sample displays, behaviour, resources and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors examined pupils' work and school documents, including improvement plans, curriculum documents, safety records and assessment information. They analysed 82 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with 64 from pupils.

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

- The progress all pupils make in English, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The achievement of pupils particularly that of more-able pupils, to ascertain whether teaching and the curriculum are challenging enough.
- The impact of assessment and pupil tracking systems in raising achievement.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, in driving school improvement since the previous inspection and the school's capacity to sustain recent improvements.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average size primary school. With the exception of Year 6 all other classes are of mixed-age ranges including the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is an onsite 'Early Birds' Breakfast Club for pupils at the school managed by the governing body. Almost all pupils are from White British heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well below average and includes those with speech and language and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils who arrive and leave the school over time is higher than in most other schools. The school has improved its facilities since the last inspection and now benefits from extended playground facilities and separate administration offices. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy Schools status and the Activemark. There have also been a number of staff changes with approximately 50% of staff new to their responsibilities or in post since the school was last inspected.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This satisfactory school is rapidly improving under the effective leadership of the headteacher, committed staff and supportive governors. The school's good capacity to improve is evident from a number of improvements since the last inspection. As a result of more rigorous tracking systems and improved teaching, there have been several improvements, the most notable being in reading and mathematics. Pupils have positive attitudes about school, behave well and say they feel very safe. Parents and carers agree and are unanimous that their children are very safe and enjoy school. They particularly value the good pastoral care, guidance and support, which are helping to break down the difficulties to learning that some pupils experience. 'We feel privileged to be part of such a happy school... where nothing is ever too much trouble...my child just loves school' are some typical comments made by parents and carers.

Good provision, especially in teaching, helps pupils to make good progress in their learning throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the rate of progress throughout the rest of the school varies. This is because curriculum activities do not provide a sufficient range of opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able, to develop and extend their skills, particularly in writing. Initiatives to address this are at an early stage of development and are yet to be fully reflected in results, in part because of the effect of small pupil cohorts which significantly distort end-of-year assessment statistics and the higher-than-average number of pupils who enter or leave the school overtime. Nonetheless, work in books and inspectors' own observations in lessons indicate that these initiatives are becoming increasingly embedded across the school.

Some difficulties remain. In a few classes the time at the end of lessons is not always used effectively to assess how well pupils have done, what they have learned or to help pupils understand how they can improve. All this means that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory rather than good progress in English overall, although they make better progress in mathematics, and leave Year 6 with literacy and numeracy skills that are broadly as expected for their age.

Leaders and managers have strengthened their roles since the last inspection. Subject leaders now take a more active role in the monitoring of improvements. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and effective. Leaders set appropriately challenging targets. Information about progress towards targets is used well to monitor performance so that everyone is clear about what the school needs to do to improve further. Senior staff have clear drive and ambition to improve attainment and progress still further. As a result improvements in mathematics can already be seen.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment in writing throughout the school this coming academic year by:
 - providing more opportunities for extended writing in literacy and across the curriculum
 - providing more challenging work for more-able pupils
 - indicating to pupils how they might improve their work and providing time for pupils to act on these suggestions.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

An effective Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make a good start to school. Most enter with the skills and knowledge generally in line with national expectations except in speech and language and mathematical calculation, which are lower. In lessons observed, pupils made satisfactory and some good progress across the school. Attainment seen in Year 6 was broadly average overall. Progress in writing is not yet as rapid as in reading and mathematics where attainment is generally above average. More-able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in writing because curriculum activities are not always challenging enough. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and appreciate the teachers' efforts to make learning fun, as, for example, in a good Year 2 lesson where children enjoyed the opportunity to write independently or in a group. Confident readers enthusiastically read their group story, giggling as they imagined the scene when they discovered a bird '... Mr Gregg sitting perched on the shiny bedside table, flapping his wings...' sharing ideas as to what he might be doing there. As one pupil said 'I love writing ... there's always a story to tell!' Pupils' work and the school's tracking information about how well they are doing show that a number of initiatives are helping to accelerate pupils' progress in writing. Initiatives include the use of classroom learning aids and the tracking systems used to identify those at risk of underachievement. However, the curriculum currently lacks sufficient opportunities for pupils to write extensively across other subject areas. Wellfocused, individual support ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally satisfactory progress as their peers and some make good progress. Overall, satisfactory achievement and pupils' positive attitudes to learning all help to ensure that they are soundly prepared for their secondary education and later life.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in their friendships and sensitive support for each other. Good and sometimes outstanding behaviour is reflected in pupils' polite manners and courtesy. Pupils feel extremely safe and know there is always an adult they can turn to in moments of difficulty. They make a good contribution to school life and the wider community by taking on responsibilities, for example as playtime buddies, and as school council members for the local group of schools as well as their own. Pupils are justifiably proud of their excellent fund-raising efforts such as the Conker Championship and football tournaments organised solely by pupils to support a nursery in Kenya. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay very safe, enjoying the wide range of activities provided to help them keep and stay fit. This is reflected in their national awards.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Strong relationships and respect between pupils and adults are significant features of all classes and these help create a positive learning environment. In most lessons seen, pupils benefited from teachers who have good subject knowledge and make learning fun. In these lessons, some pupils make good progress. However, teachers do not always ensure all pupils fully understand how well they are doing or how to improve their work. As a result some pupils' progress is inhibited in a small number of lessons. Targets, however, are being used increasingly effectively to raise standards.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Links with local football clubs and schools as well as specialist teaching in music and French enhance the curriculum, which is further enriched by outside visits and curriculum events such as theme days. Improvements in the way in which mathematics is organised and taught have already gone some way to raising attainment. The school is taking action to improve opportunities for pupils to write at length in literacy lessons and to extend their opportunities to write across the curriculum.

Parents and carers frequently comment on the good welfare, care and nurturing provided by the school. They appreciate the comprehensive range of early intervention programmes and special arrangements made to support pupils, especially those who experience difficulties in learning. Staff work closely with parents and carers and a wide range of outside agencies and partnerships to provide just the right level of support for families as

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well as the pupils to help them in their learning. Effective induction and transition arrangements ensure that the many pupils who arrive at the beginning, or part-way through the year, are made to feel welcome. The school monitors attendance and punctuality rigorously and although attendance is average, initiatives such as first day call, and rewards for regular attendance such as 'Attendance Ted' are helping to improve pupils' attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection the headteacher's drive and determination have brought about a climate of improvement where everyone is ambitious to make the school even better. The development of assessment systems to track and target pupils at risk of underachievement, the setting of challenging targets and organisational changes to the teaching of mathematics have all been effective in raising attainment. However, this has not yet ensured that standards are high enough, or that all pupils reach their full potential.

The monitoring of progress and classroom practice has begun to improve the quality of teaching. However, some subject leaders are in the early stages of developing their responsibilities particularly in the analysis and use of tracking data. As a result, the impact of their leadership has yet to be fully realised. Nonetheless, there is no hint of complacency and there is a determination to sustain and build upon recent gains. In this way the school promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils and, equally, makes sure there is no discrimination.

Members of the governing body work hard and are supportive of the school's work. They take their roles seriously and have a good understanding of the school's areas of relative underperformance. However, many are very new to their roles and have yet to be fully involved in monitoring performance. Despite this, there is a constant drive and ambition throughout the school and the already improving attainment in mathematics indicates that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. The school has developed good provision to ensure pupils understand issues relating to global development within its provision for community cohesion. Links with the local and international communities, for example in Kenya and France, are well developed and a good start has been made at developing pupils' understanding of schools and communities in the United Kingdom. Measures for safeguarding pupils are good and all statutory requirements relating to child protection are well met.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of good provision and support, pupils settle quickly and happily into the daily routines of school. Provision is well led. As a result of the positive partnership between parents and carers and the school, children's needs are quickly identified and appropriate support provided to help children make good progress towards achieving their potential. Children enjoy a wealth of fun activities providing opportunities to explore the world around them. For example, a sand tray full of hidden letters provided good opportunities for children to find, recognise and sound out those they knew. Children could be seen having fun building boats out of scrap materials to see which floated the best. They were equally enthusiastic in their 'Bob the builder' construction area investigating the shape, weight and size of construction blocks. Opportunities to develop learning are frequently provided during 'showing time', as, for example, when one child described the model boat she had made and how she tested it. Exposure to a wide range of learning experiences both indoors and outside provides a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. However, the planned outdoor activities do not yet provide the same level of challenge as the stimulating and well-matched indoor provision.

Day-to-day assessment is effective with planning adapted to meet children's needs as a result of effective tracking and monitoring of progress. Because of good teaching, a flexible curriculum and well-led provision, by the time children enter Key Stage 1, with the exception of writing and calculating which remain comparative weaknesses because of children's low starting points in these areas, they have made good progress in their learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the relatively large number of questionnaires, or who spoke to inspectors, hold positive views about the school. Almost all were very happy with their children's experiences and many commented favourably about how very safe and happy they felt their children were. Many wrote positively about the school. 'Our children love their school and obviously feel happy and confident there', 'I feel they (the school) strike the right balance to include learning, outside activities and enjoy growing up...' being typical examples. However, a very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns that their child did not make enough progress or were not well prepared for secondary education. A few parents and carers also felt that the school could provide more information on how well their children progress and take more account of their views. Inspectors agreed that pupils, especially the most able, need to make more progress in their learning especially in writing. They evaluated that the school prepares children securely for future education and that the school is working hard to take account of parents' and carers' views while keeping them fully informed about their child's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Preston Primary 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 120 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	70	25	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	51	40	49	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	33	48	59	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	39	40	49	6	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	36	44	42	51	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	45	38	46	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	55	34	41	2	2	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)	28	34	43	52	1	1	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	43	40	49	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	38	43	52	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	32	44	54	9	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	33	50	61	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	54	33	40	2	2	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).

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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 Preston Primary School, Canterbury CT3 1HB

Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for the help you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about the things you like about your school. We particularly enjoyed your celebration assembly and were pleased to see how very well you understand the importance of using the internet safely. We would like to thank pupils who came to talk to us, and those who filled in the pupils' questionnaire. We agree with you that you go to a satisfactory school that is rapidly improving and think that the staff look after you well.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- You are very safe and happy at school and enjoy learning.
- Your teachers make learning fun.
- The youngest pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Your mathematics learning has improved throughout the school.
- Your displays and art work throughout the school are very good.
- Your behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding and pupils are polite and well mannered.
- You make a good contribution to your school and the wider community through the responsibilities you hold such as the on the school council, playground buddies and your involvement in fund raising for the nursery in Kenya.
- Your headteacher and staff are making sure that your school gets even better and are being helped to do this by the governors.

So that your school continues to improve, we have asked the teachers to do these things.

- Ensure that more of you, especially the most able, make faster progress in English, especially in writing by having more opportunities to write in lots of subjects.
- Ensure that work is not too easy or too hard but at just the right level of challenge.
- Help you to know how to improve your work and give you time to work on these suggestions.

You can help them to do this by doing your best to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Forbes

Lead inspector

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