

Purfleet Primary Academy

Tank Hill Road, Purfleet, Essex RM19 1TA

Inspection dates

19–20 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides committed leadership that is focused on the pursuit of excellence for all pupils. Together with the governors and senior leaders she has created an inclusive and aspirational culture where pupils believe they can succeed.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations; as a result standards are improving. However, on occasions teachers do not provide pupils, especially the most able, with activities that are sufficiently challenging.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years because they benefit from learning in a stimulating environment where teachers match activities to pupils' needs.
- Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to succeed. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and respectful.
- The school ensures that pupils are safe and well cared for. Parents support this view.
- The school is making good use of the pupil premium grant to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are well supported in school.
- Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. End-of-key-stage results continue to improve. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop reasoning skills in mathematics to accelerate their progress.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. However, on occasions they are not provided with work that is sufficiently well matched to their individual learning needs.
- Progress in science is variable across the school because pupils do not always have the opportunity to carry out science investigations.
- Governors provide a good level of challenge and support. They know the school well and are committed to improving the provision for pupils.
- Attendance is below average. The school is working hard to improve attendance and there is evidence that strategies used are improving attendance. Leaders are not evaluating the impact of specific actions so that they can concentrate on those that are most effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that outstanding and good teaching, learning and assessment practices are further built on to accelerate pupil progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide more challenging learning opportunities for the most able pupils
 - giving pupils opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics through problem-solving activities
 - ensuring that teachers match the work for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities more closely to their specific learning needs.
- Raise attainment in science by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop scientific enquiry skills.
- Further improve pupil attendance by evaluating the impact of existing strategies in order to select and concentrate on the most effective practices.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides decisive leadership. She is passionate about providing the best possible education so that each pupil has the opportunity to achieve their best. She is ably supported by a well-qualified and determined governing body and senior leadership team.
- Since the last inspection school leaders have created a culture of high aspiration, where every child, regardless of their background, is given the opportunity to achieve in a caring, well-disciplined environment. As a result academic standards are improving.
- Parents agree that the school has improved. Their views are summed up in this typical comment: 'The school has greatly improved since the change in headship. Children are happy, well cared for and learning.'
- Pupil progress is tracked regularly and analysed in detail. Senior and middle leaders quickly put in place support to help pupils who may be falling behind in their learning. As a result most pupils make rapid progress and catch up with their classmates.
- The headteacher has been relentless in her drive to improve teaching standards. The recruitment of staff has not been easy but the headteacher is determined to appoint only good teachers. Senior leaders use a range of information to judge the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Where teaching is deemed to be less than good staff are provided with support from outstanding teachers and training is provided by the academy trust, resulting in pupils throughout the school making good progress.
- Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum, and through interesting topics such as 'beast creator' and 'the scented garden' they study design technology, art, science and humanities subjects. The school is part of the Thurrock 'Trailblazer' programme which provides arts and cultural experiences built into the curriculum or offered as extra-curricular clubs. A group of pupils talked enthusiastically to inspectors about their visit to the dungeons and their role in the current production of *Carmen*.
- Senior leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their action plans for further improvement are focused on the right priorities.
- The school has identified the barriers affecting the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders use the pupil premium funding wisely to raise the aspirations of disadvantaged pupils, provide academic support and ensure that they have access to a wide range of experiences and opportunities such as trips and visits.
- Leaders make good use of the primary sports and physical education funding to improve the quality of teaching and to provide opportunities for pupils to take part in clubs and competitions against other schools. Pupils say that they enjoy their sports lessons and talk with pride about their participation in sports matches and competitions.
- The academy trust has high expectations and is effective in holding the headteacher to account. The regional director visits regularly to review the school's work. The trust has also provided a good level of support, especially for staff training to improve teaching and the quality of middle leadership. This has contributed towards the current school improvements.

Governance of the school

- Governors carry out their role effectively.
- Governors are committed to the school and have high aspirations for all pupils.
- Governors possess a range of relevant skills that allow them to carry out their duties. They are well informed about the work of the school through reports from the headteacher and visits to the school. Evidence indicates that governors are robust in holding senior leaders to account for standards within the school. They understand that their role is strategic and they provide a good balance of challenge and support to senior leaders.
- The governing body has high aspirations for pupils. Governors understand the pupil progress information and how the school is performing against other schools nationally. They carefully monitor the impact of the pupil premium and sport funding on pupil outcomes. Governors rigorously monitor pupil attendance.
- Governors take their safeguarding duties seriously and understand their role in promoting equal opportunity for all members of the school community. They have undergone training related to the government's 'Prevent' duty. Governors review the relevant policies annually.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders ensure that the appropriate checks are carried out on all staff before they can work with pupils. The identity of visitors to the school is also carefully checked and anyone who has not been appropriately checked is accompanied at all times.
- Policies for safeguarding pupils follow the latest guidance, are up to date and available on the school website. Staff know how to identify the possible indicators of safeguarding concerns. They know what to do if they are faced with any safeguarding issues. Staff training is regular and new staff are provided with training as soon as they start. All school staff are trained to identify possible indicators of female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. In personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons, computing lessons and in assemblies pupils are taught about safety on the roads, when using the railway, and water safety. Talks are given about dangers of the internet and social media, and how to report incidents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and some aspects are outstanding. Outstanding teachers are used successfully to support other teachers in the school if required.
- Teaching is characterised by positive relationships and high expectations from staff. Pupils understand what teachers expect of them and show a zest for learning. Pupils are eager to learn and succeed.

- Inspectors saw some first-rate examples of questioning by teachers. These questions made pupils think about the reasons for their answers, and supplementary questions are used well to correct pupil misconceptions.
- Inspectors saw good examples of teachers checking pupils' work carefully in lessons. Most teachers successfully move pupils on to the next learning activity or provide the pupils with the help they need in order to complete the work and make improved progress.
- The teaching of writing is good. Pupils have the opportunity to write in subjects other than English. They learn to write for different purposes. Teachers provide interesting writing topics; for example Year 6 pupils were writing poems about the 'the magic box' using a range of poetic techniques and metaphorical language. Pupils told the inspectors that they now like poetry because 'our teacher makes it fun'.
- Phonics teaching is good. Teachers encourage pupils to use their phonics knowledge to spell and read unfamiliar words. They do this confidently, and adults are quick to identify and correct mispronunciations of letter sounds. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to practise their reading in a wide range of subjects.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics has improved. Teachers are making sure that pupils have a good grasp of basic arithmetic. Pupils have the opportunity to set out calculations and to solve word problems. However, inspectors saw limited opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills in order to solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers' skills at matching the learning activities to the abilities of the pupils has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have higher expectations of the most able pupils and they expect them to complete the harder challenges. However, in some lessons, the most able pupils were provided with work that was not sufficiently demanding, and they finished it too quickly as a result.
- At the time of the last inspection teachers were not setting work that was sufficiently challenging for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils are being challenged more now; however, in some instances teachers are not preparing work that meets the specific individual educational need of the pupil. In these cases the work is often too hard. As a result the progress of these pupils is slower than expected.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly, in accordance with the school's marking guidelines. Pupils receive useful verbal and written advice on the quality of their work and pointers for improvement. Almost all pupils make the necessary corrections to their work.
- Homework is set frequently. All pupils are expected to read each evening, and mathematics work is also set during the week. Pupils also have homework linked to the topics they are studying. Pupils have a choice of the homework tasks they complete. They told the inspectors that they enjoyed this homework. The vast majority of parents feel that homework is appropriate and that teaching is good.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are happy and self-confident. They are proud of their school and were keen to talk to inspectors. All of the pupils spoken to said that they enjoyed school and were happy.
- The school supports the development of self-confidence well as pupils' views are listened to and respected. Teachers use praise effectively when pupils have done a good deed, worked hard or shown perseverance. There are many inspirational quotes around the school but the one that best embraces the school ethos is: 'I can be whatever I want to be as long as I work hard.'
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school because the grounds are secure and there are always adults around to keep them safe. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and that should it occur they have confidence in adults dealing with it. School records support this view as the incidence of bullying and racist behaviour is low.
- Pupils who may, for a variety of reasons, find it difficult to join in whole-school break and lunchtime activities are very well supported by the clubs and activities provided by the learning mentors. These sessions help pupils to socialise with their peers and support their social skills and confidence.
- The school provides a wide range of clubs and activities. Breakfast club gets the many pupils that attend off to a good start, and pupils say that they enjoy the wide range of indoor and outdoor activities offered to them. At break and lunchtime, alongside sport, pupils have the opportunity to take part in many activities including art club, 'dancercise', poetry, film-making, book club and chess.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils have the opportunity to take on leadership roles within the school such as play-leader roles and learning ambassadors, who support younger pupils with their reading. They have the opportunity to discuss moral issues in subjects such as religious education and PSHE lessons. Pupils learn about world faiths and the local religious leaders are invited to deliver assemblies related to Christian festivals. Art displays around the school are high quality and show pupils' appreciation of the work of different artists. Work in their art books indicates that pupils are developing a healthy range of artistic techniques.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Older pupils talked to inspectors about the improvements in behaviour that they have seen since starting school. Pupils say this is because there are clear rules that all pupils are expected to follow and because teachers 'always deal with bad behaviour'.
- Pupils behave well during break and lunchtime. Established routines ensure that the dining hall is calm and orderly. There is a good level of supervision, and staff regularly check that pupils have what they need. Staff demonstrate respectful, calm behaviour and show a caring approach towards the pupils. Pupils show good table manners and chat to one another quietly as they eat.

- Behaviour in the playground is good. Pupils play hard and make good use of the playground equipment and activities. They are respectful towards one another and disagreements are rare. If they should occur, pupils say that staff deal with incidents immediately. A group of key stage 1 pupils told the inspectors they like lunchtimes, 'because you can make new best friends, like if someone is sad you can be their friend'.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They respond promptly to teachers' requests and follow instructions. Pupils value the rewards system, for example wearing their 'star pupil' stickers with pride. They are genuinely pleased when pupils are named as 'star pupil' and inspectors witnessed spontaneous applause when teachers awarded the honour.
- Punctuality to school has improved since the last inspection as a result of actions taken by the school. There are now very few pupils late for school.
- Behaviour records indicate that behaviour over time is good. The number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced. There are a small number of pupils who find controlling their behaviour difficult. These pupils receive high-quality support to help them control their behaviour both inside the classroom and during break and lunchtime. As a result they very rarely disturb their classmates' learning.
- For the last two years, attendance has been below average due to the persistent absence of a small number of pupils. Attendance figures are also acutely affected by the number of pupils who leave mid-way through the school year but remain on the school's register. School staff take care to ensure that they know the precise whereabouts of any pupils who are absent from school in order to ensure they are safe. They work closely with the local authority to track children who leave mid-year.
- Leaders are using a wide range of actions, including working with parents, to improve attendance. These actions are showing an impact as the number of pupils persistently absent from school is declining. However, staff are not monitoring the impact of individual actions in order to evaluate which are the most effective in improving attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- There has been a sustained improvement in the outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. Pupil progress information and the work of pupils currently in the school indicate that this is set to continue.
- The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been above average for the last three years. This represents good progress from individual children's starting points.
- Due to improvements in the way phonics is taught, the number of pupils meeting the expected threshold in the national screening check exceeded the average for 2016. A higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and boys, achieved the expected standard than in previous years.
- Pupils who read to the inspectors told them they frequently read at home, and enjoyed reading and listening to stories. Lower-ability pupils used a range of techniques to help them read. They were confident to read in front of others. The most able readers are reading more challenging books. Pupils read with high levels of fluency and expression.

- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in each of reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was broadly average in 2015. Results for 2016 indicate that pupils achieved above average in the new higher standards in all three subjects, and science, when compared against provisional data.
- Pupils made good progress at the end of key stage 2 in all subjects. However, the proportion meeting the expected standard in reading, writing, mathematics, and English spelling, punctuation and grammar was below the published provisional figures. Overall attainment was affected by the number of pupils who joined Year 6 mid-way through the school. Some of these pupils had gaps in their education and required a great deal of support to catch up. These pupils made good progress during the year but did not attain the expected standard. Almost all pupils who completed Years 5 and 6 at the school met the end-of-key-stage expectations.
- Pupils who join the school mid-year are provided with small-group teaching in order to help them catch up. This includes pupils who are new to the country and speak little or no English, seen for example in writing in an English lesson: 'Its hinges are made from wood as strong as obsidian crafted by a wizard.' As a result of well-targeted support and high expectations most pupils quickly catch up and return full-time to lessons.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is rigorously tracked, and additional targeted help is provided if they fall behind in their learning. As a result almost all are making good progress across the school. School progress information and work in pupils' books indicate that they are making good progress in a range of subjects because they are attempting harder work and succeeding.
- The proportion of most-able pupils in the school is small. Progress information and 2016 provisional key stage 2 results indicate that they meet the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence of progress, and work in pupils' books, indicate that the most able pupils are using complex grammar and a wide vocabulary in their written work. In mathematics there was little indication of pupils explaining how they solved problems.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good in most subjects. The progress of these pupils in writing is particularly strong. For example, inspectors saw examples where pupils who have special educational needs and who were unable to join their letters or use capital letters and full stops properly in September had mastered these skills. However, there is some fluctuation across subjects and year groups because pupils are sometimes given work that is not well matched to their ability.
- Pupils are making good progress in a range of other subjects. Pupils' books indicate good progress in topic work, where pupils were able to use their writing skills well. In art pupils are showing good observational and creative skills. However, there is a variation in the outcomes for pupils in science. Not all teachers are providing enough opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific enquiry skills and this is impeding the progress of some pupils.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed by a leader who knows the strengths and weaknesses well. She is well supported by a deputy headteacher to make the required improvements.
- The school liaises well with parents before their children begin in Nursery or Reception. Staff from the school visit the children in their home, children and parents visit the school and they have the opportunity to attend meetings about starting school. Parents have plenty of opportunities to contribute to their child's learning journals. Relationships with parents are positive. Staff meet parents daily when they bring or collect their children. This provides an opportunity to discuss any issues.
- Children make good progress in both Nursery and Reception because teaching activities are well matched to the children's levels of development and interest. For example, during a literacy session a group of boys in Reception were enjoying acting out their sentences. They were very excited about their choice of words and keen to act out their sentences to the inspectors.
- Children learn in a calm, orderly and safe environment. They quickly learn how to behave well, as adults demonstrate appropriate behaviour, and take every opportunity to develop children's social skills. Children work well together taking turns and sharing equipment. Relationships between adults and children are very positive.
- The topics covered are well thought out to engage and motivate both boys and girls. The outside area is well resourced with equipment to develop the children's physical development. Learning activities both inside and outside provide plenty of opportunities for children to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. All staff have received the appropriate training for working with this age group. They are vigilant at all times to ensure any concerns are quickly addressed.
- At the end of Reception children are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	139380
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10021798

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	530
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Norman
Headteacher	Lesley Mabey
Telephone number	01375 659 900
Website	www.purfleetprimary.co.uk
Email address	@purfleetprimary.thurrock.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The school has been part of the 'REAch2' academy trust since 2013.
- Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. This is above average for primary schools. The largest group is made up by pupils of Black African heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the

end of Year 6.

- The early years is made up of Nursery and Reception classes. Children attend part-time in the two Nursery classes and full-time in three Reception classes. The majority of children transfer from Nursery to the Reception.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club and after-school club.
- A full governing body was appointed in January 2016. The chair of governors is a national leader of governance.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part-way through the year is much higher than average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 18 lessons and made nine shorter visits to classes to observe the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Senior leaders joined the inspectors for three of the observations. The inspectors also looked at the work in pupils' books in lessons and conducted a work scrutiny to look at pupil progress in the last academic year. Inspectors visited two assemblies.
- Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- The inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms and around the school at break and lunchtime. They spoke formally to three groups of pupils and held informal conversations with pupils in the playground and dining hall.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, special educational needs coordinator and six members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to the deputy chief executive and the regional director of the academy trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school policies, safeguarding documents, and pupil progress and attendance information.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start and end of the day and took note of their views. They also considered the 97 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which included eight free text responses. Results from the school's own parent survey were also considered by the inspectors.
- There were insufficient responses to the staff survey for them to be taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Caroline Parody, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Judith Sumner	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Chaplin	Ofsted Inspector

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