

# Pilgrims' Way Primary School and Nursery

Pilgrims' Way, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1XU

## Inspection dates

16–17 November 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Overall attainment remains low. Leaders have been unable to sustain and continue the initial improvement in standards they brought about when the school first opened.
- Teaching is not good as there are many inconsistencies between the quality of learning in different classes. Assessment information is not used well.
- Pupil premium funding is not used effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, are not catching up with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils, especially the most able, are not always given challenging enough work.
- Early years provision in the Nursery and in the Reception classes requires improvement to enable all children to make good progress from their starting points.
- A number of local governors are new to role. The challenge they provide to school leaders is not yet having an impact on raising standards.
- Directors from the academy trust have not been effective at holding the school to account.
- There is a lack of clarity around the leadership structure and the responsibilities of trust and school staff. This includes leadership of the early years provision.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher's vision and determination underpin the school's culture. Staff support her aim that every child will leave the school with the personal skills and foundations in learning needed in later life.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve behaviour so that it is now good.
- Sustained and effective work with families by school staff has led to a significant improvement in attendance.
- The school is very inclusive and offers a warm welcome to all pupils and their families. The work of school staff to help families new to the area settle quickly has been impressive.
- The school is a harmonious community. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well and benefit socially from the opportunity to work alongside new friends.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by ensuring that:
  - there are clearly defined areas of responsibility and lines of accountability for school leaders, academy trust leaders and specialists, members of the local governing board, and academy trust directors, so that they all have a relentless focus on raising standards
  - plans for improvement and provision, including for the spending of pupil premium funding, are sharpened and have clearly measurable targets.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment, so that they are at least good by:
  - ensuring that assessment information is used accurately to plan challenging learning for all groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged and those who are relatively new to the school
  - learning from and sharing best practice within the school, academy trust and beyond.
- Improve early years provision, so that it is at least good by:
  - simplifying the complicated leadership structure, so that it is clear who has overall responsibility for raising standards in the Nursery and Reception classes
  - ensuring that assessment is consistently accurate
  - planning activities that enable all groups of children, especially those who are most able, to make good progress from their starting points.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet ensured that there is consistently good teaching across the school. Previous improvements in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have not been sustained because of this.
- Leaders are still adapting systems of assessment in the school. The current systems do not allow leaders to track the most able pupils' progress from their starting points. Nor do they allow teachers to easily plan the next steps of learning. Leaders have not ensured that the school's policy for marking and feedback is applied consistently by all teachers.
- Pupil premium spending is not linked closely enough to the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Targets for achievement are rarely measurable. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are not catching up with other pupils nationally.
- The school's self-evaluation is over-generous with regard to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and early years provision. Areas identified as requiring improvement by visiting leaders from the academy trust are not included in the school's own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The headteacher receives helpful support, challenge and training from the academy trust. While she and her teaching staff have performance targets linked to pupils' outcomes, these are not focused enough on the achievement of all groups of pupils.
- The headteacher has led the school with determination. She has ensured that behaviour has improved over time so that teachers can now focus on teaching. She has also brought about a significant improvement in attendance. This is because she has built a team that shares her aims about doing the best for the community the school serves.
- Staffing is now more stable. All of the staff who completed the confidential online questionnaire enjoy their work and feel well supported by school leaders. They unanimously agree that the school has improved in recent years.
- Middle leaders, such as those responsible for English, talk positively about the training and coaching they have received from the headteacher. As a result, they are now able to accurately evaluate strengths and weaknesses in teaching throughout the school.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Pupils' needs are quickly identified, there are positive partnerships with other agencies, and the quality of interventions and teaching is monitored accurately.
- School leaders have recently been focused on an unprecedented influx of new pupils. They sought to meet with and support the new community quickly and provide a smooth start to school life at Pilgrims' Way. They have made necessary changes to the structure of classes to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The tolerance shown by different groups of pupils towards one another, and the togetherness of the whole school community since the recent growth, show that this has been managed very well.

- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. A recent example of this was the thoughtful work around the Royal British Legion's role in remembrance.
- Values such as democracy have been explored through a school-wide exploration of Magna Carta when devising the school's own code of conduct. As a result of these well-planned activities and through the 'work hard, be kind' values demonstrated in their conduct in the school, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The most able pupils are very positive about the experiences they receive through the new 'masterclass' curriculum. They enjoy learning languages such as Mandarin and playing different sports such as rugby.
- Most teachers make effective links between subjects, allowing pupils to apply their reading and writing skills in interesting topics. However, there is inconsistency in the teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics in some year groups.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used effectively. There are clear links between the introduction of a sports coach and improvements in behaviour on the playground.
- Parents are consistently positive about the school and can see the improvements that are being made. They told inspectors that the growth in pupil numbers has been handled well by school leaders.
- The school has taken advantage of the local authority's offer to visit academy schools regularly. School leaders and directors appreciate the external view of strengths and weaknesses, and the training that the improvement adviser provides.

### **Governance of the school**

- The accountability and standards committee is led by an experienced and competent chair who is also a foundation director of the trust. While the committee and some of its members are relatively new, they have a wide range of relevant skills and are well trained. They carefully evaluate improvements, especially around behaviour and attendance. They stringently monitor aspects of the school's work such as the compliance of the school website. The committee asks pertinent and challenging questions about pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching. The answers that committee members are given by leaders are often too optimistic and not rooted in evidence. Committee members do not routinely challenge leaders about this.
- Despite their personal strengths and skills, academy directors do not know this school and its unique characteristics within the trust well enough. Recent discussions by the directors have focused on growing the trust, rather than checking on the standards and vulnerabilities of Pilgrims' Way. The trust has the ethos of allowing its schools to have autonomy. However, the checks on the quality of teaching, the accuracy of self-evaluation and pupil premium spending in particular have not been rigorous. Senior staff of the academy trust, who are also directors, are honest and reflective about this shortcoming.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff who are responsible for leading the school's work to keep pupils safe from harm know the community they serve very well. This ensures that they can work closely with families and other agencies to ensure that the pupils in their care are safe.
- Checks on new staff are rigorous, as is the safeguarding training they receive on induction. A range of staff told inspectors that they receive regular training and are updated on the latest statutory guidance around safeguarding.
- Record-keeping procedures for the most vulnerable pupils are rigorous, including records of links with other agencies. However, school leaders have not consistently recorded all of the necessary actions they have taken recently to safeguard pupils joining the school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- There is a wide variation in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. As a result, not enough pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to plan activities that meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Sometimes work is too easy for the most able pupils or too hard for pupils who have fallen behind. A few pupils who are new to the school have not yet been correctly assessed to ensure that they get the right work to help them make progress.
- Teachers take a varied approach to planning work for their pupils. For example, not all pupils get the opportunity to grapple with extended problems in mathematics and not all classes are taught key skills well in subjects such as history and geography.
- Teachers do not all routinely correct mistakes that pupils make with common spellings in their writing or simple calculations in mathematics. As a result, pupils continue to make the same errors.
- Additional small-group teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or need to catch up is of variable quality. Where activities are closely matched to the needs of pupils, they make progress. However, where adults lack the skills or training required to teach effectively, the progress made is more limited.
- A recent initiative to introduce an increased focus on key vocabulary in English and mathematics is being used consistently and successfully across the school.
- Another initiative to use challenging reading texts is raising expectations. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are reading a classic children's novel that links with their current learning about the second world war.
- Where strong teaching exists in the school, it is characterised by high expectations and effective questioning that makes pupils think. The most skilled teachers provide helpful feedback that helps pupils to improve. In these classes, more care is also taken with the quality of pupils' presentation and their handwriting.

- Parents who completed the online Parent View survey were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of teaching in the school and the homework their children receive.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders and staff who are responsible for pupils' welfare know the community and families they serve very well. The school's work to help a large number of new families to settle into the area has been appreciated by parents. Their children have felt welcomed and quickly made new friends.
- Pupils confirm that everyone gets along well. They say that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively by adults. Very few parents had concerns about bullying. The vast majority of parents stated that any concerns they had were dealt with well by the school.
- Older pupils take responsibilities such as being house captains and buddies seriously. Inspectors observed first hand the care that older pupils show towards their younger peers and the respect the younger pupils show their older friends.
- Without exception, school staff from senior leaders to teachers, teaching assistants and office staff demonstrate positive attitudes and support towards the school's pupils and families, including those who are vulnerable.
- Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. Many pupils enthusiastically walk, bike or scooter to school each morning. Other pupils enjoy the before-school breakfast club or football sessions, which encourage them to arrive at school on time.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- During their visit to the school, inspectors observed mainly good behaviour in lessons and around the school, including in the dining hall at lunchtime. Pupils whom inspectors spoke to and surveys completed by staff and parents confirmed that this is typical.
- Pupils' attitudes in lessons are good. For example, girls in key stage 2 that inspectors spoke to were very positive about their current learning in mathematics.
- There are some pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour. Staff are incredibly vigilant and normally intervene before any difficulties occur. The improvements in behaviour over time for these pupils are very clear. Older pupils are reflective about how strategies such as working with a sports coach have helped them to behave calmly.
- Where behaviour in lessons is not as good, it is normally because teaching is not meeting the pupils' needs well enough.

- Successful planning and support mean that exclusions and more serious behavioural incidents are reducing and becoming much rarer occurrences.
- Owing to the concerted efforts of school leaders, attendance has increased considerably in the last year. The headteacher's determined ambition that every pupil should attend regularly is understood throughout the school and is beginning to be realised.
- The number of pupils who are persistently absent is dropping because of the successful targeted work of the school with individual pupils and their families.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Overall attainment is low across the school. The proportion of pupils working at the expected standard for their age is increasing slowly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- On the whole, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress as other pupils in the school. However, this means that they are not catching up with other pupils nationally quickly enough.
- In recent years, girls have not made enough progress during key stage 2 in mathematics. Girls currently in the school are now making similar progress to the boys in mathematics.
- When the school opened, attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 improved in both 2014 and 2015. However, these improvements were not sustained in 2016 when pupils were not prepared well enough to meet the new higher national expectations.
- The most able pupils in Year 2 are challenged well. The proportion of these pupils demonstrating skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics at a greater depth was above the national average.
- The progress of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is strongest in Year 5 and Year 6. These pupils are now demonstrating skills and knowledge that are appropriate for their age.
- Although still below the national average, the outcomes from the Year 1 phonics screening check have rapidly improved since the school opened.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The leadership of the early years provision is too complicated and not improving outcomes quickly enough. It is not clear who has overall accountability for raising standards in both the Nursery provision and Reception classes or for the link between them. Current improvement plans for Nursery are weak.
- In the past, assessments at the end of Reception Year were not accurate, despite being moderated by the local authority. This year, assessments were more realistic and show that less than half of the children were well prepared for Year 1.

- Disadvantaged children do not make enough progress in Nursery. Despite making similar progress to their non-disadvantaged peers, only a small minority of disadvantaged children reach the expected standard by the end of Reception.
- Teaching in the early years requires improvement. For example, the needs of the most able children are not met. In Reception classes, they are too frequently given the same activities as other children. When children successfully complete activities in Nursery, the next steps of learning are not always sharply focused on developing knowledge and skills further.
- Early years staff help children to settle into school quickly. They have very positive relationships with the children they work with and with their families.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the provision. There are high expectations of behaviour that the children live up to.
- Any special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified. This speedy intervention and effective partnerships with parents and other agencies ensure that these children are well supported in their learning.
- An early years specialist from the academy trust is helping school staff to make improvements. She is perceptive about what needs to improve and has already shown a positive impact with the recent improvements to the outdoor learning area for the Reception classes. This provision is now rich and has a positive impact on language development.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years provision and all statutory welfare requirements are met.



## School details

Unique reference number	140345
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10019852

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	316
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Petra Bensted
Headteacher	Alice Witty
Telephone number	01227 760084
Website	<a href="http://www.pilgrims-way.kent.sch.uk">www.pilgrims-way.kent.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@pilgrims-way.kent.sch.uk">office@pilgrims-way.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school opened as an academy sponsored by the Village Academy in December 2013.
- The Village Academy is a trust of seven primary schools in Kent, led by a principal who is also one of the directors.
- Each school in the Village Academy has a local governing body, known as the accountability and standards committee. This committee reports to the board of directors of the academy trust.
- The number of pupils on roll has grown considerably in the last six months. The school opened new classes in September 2016 and October 2016 to accommodate a large number of children from the London borough of Redbridge. Their families have recently been rehoused at the former army barracks close to the school.

- The on-site First Steps Nursery, which was previously inspected separately by Ofsted in September 2014, was part of this inspection. The nursery caters for children from the term before their third birthday.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much greater than that found nationally. Over half of the current pupils receive additional government pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school operates a breakfast club and a tea-time club that provides after-school childcare.
- The school meets the current government floor standards that set out the minimum expectations for primary schools.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class, including the nursery, at least once and made a number of shorter visits to classrooms. The majority of these observations were carried out with the headteacher or other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the accountability and standards committee (the local governing body), including the chair. He also met with three directors of the Village Academy, including the chair and principal.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of school documentation, including documents relating to safeguarding, attendance, the achievement of pupils and governance.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other school leaders, those responsible for pupils' welfare and a range of other staff.
- To gain their views of the school, inspectors spoke informally with pupils in lessons and around the school, went on a tour of the school with some pupils and met a group of pupils more formally. Inspectors also heard some pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 read. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- In addition to speaking to a number of parents at the start of each day of the inspection, inspectors considered 26 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered 24 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Cole	Her Majesty's Inspector
Leah Goulding	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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