

Inspection of Priestnall School

Priestnall Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 3HP

Inspection dates: 29–30 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe in this school. They say that bullying is rare. Most pupils behave well. Learning is rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They have good relationships with their teachers and with other pupils.

Most pupils attain well in their GCSE examinations. Some pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not do as well. These pupils have underperformed in their studies for a number of years. Their learning suffers because of leaders' and teachers' low expectations.

Pupils participate in a wide range of clubs at lunch time and after school. There are many sports clubs as well as a school band. Pupils also have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills by leading an assembly or becoming an anti-bullying ambassador.

Pupils are aware of equality issues. They understand that people have different beliefs and values. They say that discrimination is not tolerated by staff or pupils. Pupils' understanding of democracy and the rule is not well developed.

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

The quality of education that pupils receive at this school does not enable some pupils to achieve well. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils and those who find learning more difficult, including those with SEND. Leaders have identified what needs to be done to bring about improvement in the school. However, these plans are very recent. There has not been enough time for actions to be fully implemented or to show improvement.

Teachers welcome the actions taken so far by leaders. Teachers said that leaders consider their workload when introducing change. They are confident that they can improve the school under the new leadership.

In some subjects, such as history and art, the curriculum is now ordered so that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. Learning is revisited so that pupils can remember more. Teachers' expectations are high for all pupils in these subjects.

In other subjects, teachers do not expect enough of some pupils. The curriculum lacks ambition for less able pupils, including those with SEND and for some disadvantaged pupils. These pupils are not taught the full curriculum because they find learning difficult or because they have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders and teachers do not have high enough aspirations for these pupils. They do not make sure that these pupils have the same chance to thrive as much as other pupils in the school. These pupils start with low attainment and leave Year 11 with low attainment.

In English, pupils' learning is focused on their GCSE examinations from the start of Year 9. In Years 7 and 8 pupils' learning is based upon too few books and plays. This means that some pupils do not develop their literacy skills fully before moving on to their GCSE studies. For these pupils, the lack of high-quality literacy skills has an impact on other subjects as well as their English, for example history and geography.

Leaders have introduced additional reading lessons to the English curriculum. They want to help pupils to develop a love of reading, but, this is not happening. Leaders do not make sure that teachers select quality literature to share with their classes. Leaders do not have an overview of the books that teachers select for use in these classes.

Pupils talked confidently to inspectors about how to keep themselves safe online. Older pupils talked about the differences between healthy and toxic relationships. However, the curriculum for developing pupils' personal development has some limitations. For example, pupils could not talk as knowledgeably about democracy and the rule of law. They are not being as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Attendance is in line with the national average for all pupils. Although most pupils behave well in school, there is a group of pupils that do not manage their own behaviour. The proportion of pupils that have been temporarily excluded from school is well above the national average. Leaders have not done enough to help these pupils. They are often temporarily excluded more than once.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know what they must do to safeguard pupils. They make sure that this happens. Staff are trained in their safeguarding duties. They know how to spot when a pupil is at risk. Leaders have made links with support agencies outside school so that these can help pupils if the need arises.

Pupils trust their teachers and say that there is always someone to talk to if they need help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders, governors and teachers should raise their aspirations for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who find learning more difficult, including pupils with SEND, by making sure they receive a high-quality and ambitious curriculum that enables them to achieve well.

- Leaders and governors should ensure that the English reading lessons are used effectively by teachers to help all pupils to read more widely and develop a love of reading.
- Leaders and governors should ensure that the curriculum for pupils' personal development prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors should ensure that pupils who have difficulty moderating their own behaviour are supported, so that the proportion of pupils that are temporarily excluded from school is reduced.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	106133
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10114651
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keith Thompson
Headteacher	Craig Burns
Website	www.priestnall.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 June 2011

Information about this school

- In the eight years since the last inspection, the school has had four headteachers. The current headteacher has been in post since September this year.
- The school currently uses alternative provision at Vale Vocational Centre to contribute to the education of a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life. We held meetings with senior leaders, governors, subject leaders and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- We looked at documents. These included leaders' summary of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and the school development plan. We examined information about pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- We considered the views expressed by parents and carers in the 113 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

- We focused on English, history, art and modern foreign languages during the first day of the inspection. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. We considered wider aspects of the school later in the inspection.

Inspection team

Erica Sharman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector

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