

# Inspection of Pilgrims' Way Primary School

Pilgrims Way, Canterbury CT1 1XU

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pilgrims' Way is a welcoming, friendly and supportive place to be. Pupils get on well together and have a sense of belonging in this vibrant, caring community. Pupils describe their school as a happy and beautiful place. They say that pupils are kind, respectful and well behaved. The values of 'respect, resilient, aspire, positive, success' are at the heart of everything that the school does.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, where everyone is included and encouraged to do their best. Children get off to an outstanding start in Nursery and Reception. Pupils are happy at school and enjoy their learning. They are proud of the school and their achievements. They say, 'It's okay to make mistakes because that's how you learn.'

Pupils feel safe in school. Their well-being is a priority for everyone. Pupils have very positive and trusting relationships with staff. They know adults will listen to them if they have any concerns or worries, including about bullying if it should happen. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They participate in the 'mile a day', or at least three laps around the field. Pupils explained, 'It's good for us and gets our hearts racing and blood pumping'.

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

Since joining the school, the headteacher and trust leaders have taken rapid and effective action to address the significant weaknesses of the previous school. Leaders have an unwavering and determined vision and commitment to provide a curriculum that includes and enables all pupils to achieve and succeed. The school's 'irresistible' curriculum is ambitious.

Staff are quick to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are well supported so that they can learn the same curriculum as their peers, experience success and achieve their best. Many pupils who join the school in all year groups are beginning to learn to speak English as an additional language. Leaders focus intently on developing all pupils' communication and speech and language skills. Staff develop and enrich pupils' vocabulary right from the beginning.

In many subjects, including mathematics, the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and remember are very clear. Teachers carefully check pupils' learning. This means that pupils build on what they have been taught before to help them learn new information. However, in some subjects, the essential knowledge and skills that leaders want pupils to learn are not as well defined. In contrast, the curriculum in the early years ensures that children get off to the best possible start. They are very well prepared to continue learning in Year 1. Children are very happy, exceptionally settled and quickly become familiar with the routines of the day. They

carefully carry their trays when they have finished eating and know where and how to place knives, forks and cups.

Reading is taught well and is a priority for leaders. From the start of early years, children enjoy rhymes, stories and songs. They try very hard and concentrate exceptionally well. This helps children to learn new sounds very quickly. They enjoy choosing books to look at on their own or to share with each other. Staff throughout the school are well trained and have the resources they need to teach early reading well. They all use the approaches of the agreed phonics programme. As a result, pupils learn phonics well. They learn how to segment and blend to enable them to read unfamiliar words. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know, which helps them to practise reading and become increasingly fluent.

Staff motivate pupils to read for pleasure. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and frequently. Class reading books are often linked to the topic being studied. In Year 6, for example, pupils were engrossed in a text about a lighthouse linked to their history topic. Older readers can talk about books and authors they enjoy and give reasons for their opinions.

There is a very strong culture of developing teachers' expertise and leadership skills. Team work is exceptionally strong. Staff feel valued and are very supportive of the senior leadership and the trust. Trustees and governors share leaders' vision and aspirations. They know the school well and provide valuable insights, support and challenge.

Leaders are determined that pupils should have opportunities to broaden their experiences, personal skills and contribution to the community. These opportunities include a range of clubs and enrichment weeks. Pupils are sociable, friendly and good natured. They told inspectors that it was particularly important to respect others' language, culture, faith and learning needs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils very well which helps them to notice when pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have a concern. Any necessary action is taken swiftly, including work with external agencies if appropriate.

Leaders provide regular, effective training for all staff so they understand how to help keep pupils safe. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. The required checks are carried out on adults who work in the school. Governors diligently assure themselves that safeguarding is effective. Pupils' well-being and safety are priorities for everyone.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The key knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember is not as well defined in some subjects as it is in others. Teachers are not always completely clear about the explicit knowledge pupils need to learn to meet challenging end points. Leaders need to refine the curriculum to make more explicit the key knowledge that they would like pupils to know and remember.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145951
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10238345
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	299
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gary Bristow
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne-Marie Middleton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.pilgrims-way.kent.sch.uk">www.pilgrims-way.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Pilgrims' Way Primary School is one of three primary schools in the Veritas Multi-Academy Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed on 1 May 2018, when the school joined the trust.
- The school roll is increasing. There are two classes in each year group and a Nursery.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy and assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector

met with members of the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees, and members of the regional governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, music, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum planning in some other subjects and observed some pupils reading to their teaching assistants.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with leaders, staff and pupils. They looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records. Throughout the inspection, inspectors considered and checked the culture of safeguarding within the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school development plans and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. They talked to pupils formally and informally about their learning, what behaviour is like and whether they felt safe at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses from Ofsted's online survey for staff and parents, and spoke to some parents at the beginning of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector
Katherine Russell	Ofsted Inspector

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