

Inspection of a good school: Priestlands School

North Street, Pennington, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 8FZ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

Outcome

Priestlands School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has a welcoming and inclusive ethos. Staff take time to get to know pupils as individuals. Leaders are rightly proud of the positive relationships between staff and pupils. Indeed, parents use the word 'nurturing' about the school. Behaviour in lessons is calm and purposeful. Most pupils also behave well at social times. Bullying is rare. Pupils and staff are vigilant about discrimination and derogatory language. Pupils feel safe in school, and they are confident that staff will deal with issues effectively.

The school's ethos is at the heart of leaders' high aspirations for pupils, both academically and personally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), follow a broad and relevant curriculum which gives them varied choices for when they leave the school. Most pupils are very successful. They achieve well. To support pupils' wider development, leaders organise a wide range of clubs and activities so that pupils can flourish personally by discovering and pursuing talents and interests outside the classroom. These opportunities are enjoyed by pupils. Staff and pupils celebrate both participation and achievements in extra-curricular activities through the house system.

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

The curriculum is ambitious from the start of Year 7. In key stage 4, pupils primarily study academic courses, including those which make up the English Baccalaureate. Carefully chosen vocational options provide additional variety and depth. The curriculum in each subject is well organised. Leaders have clearly identified the important knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to achieve well.

Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively. Most teachers present new content clearly and select activities which help pupils embed what they have learned. Teachers check pupils' understanding before moving on to new work. The special educational needs coordinator provides staff with clear information about pupils' needs and how to address them. Most staff use this information diligently to adapt teaching. There are many examples of

effective and inclusive practice across subjects. Consequently, most pupils remember and apply what they have learned increasingly well. Occasionally, there are inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is taught. As a result, some pupils, including some disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders' actions are improving consistency, and this work continues.

The school's reading culture is visible in lessons and during tutor time. Staff explore varied texts with pupils. Pupils generally select interesting and ambitious books to read for pleasure. There is an effective programme to help pupils catch up with reading. Staff swiftly identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, these pupils' fluency and comprehension improve quickly.

Clear routines and positive relationships ensure classrooms are effective learning environments. Staff use the new behaviour systems with increasing consistency to support this. However, the conduct of a small number of pupils, particularly at social times, does not meet leaders' high expectations. Leaders recognise this and are taking appropriate steps to ensure that behaviour is managed well at all times.

Provision for pupils' wider development and preparation for the future is strong. Through the careers programme, all pupils benefit from links with a variety of employers and training providers. Pupils are encouraged to be effective citizens by taking on responsibilities and raising money for charity. Across the curriculum, leaders select themes and resources which are relevant to young people, but which also reflect the wider world and modern Britain. For example, pupils explore diverse texts in English and global themes in history. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They confidently discuss age-appropriate themes like consent and online safety.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the support and professional development provided. Staff acknowledge that leaders have taken meaningful steps to help them to manage their workload. Trustees are knowledgeable and fulfil their statutory duties effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and those responsible for governance ensure the school has a strong safeguarding culture. Policies and systems enable leaders to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders make the required checks on staff to ensure they are safe to work in school. Through regular and comprehensive training, all staff understand the risks faced by pupils. Staff are vigilant and report concerns swiftly. Leaders make and pursue referrals to external partners tenaciously. Pupils know the different ways they can ask for help from school, and they trust staff to provide it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teaching is not always as effective as it could be for every pupil. As a result, the achievement of some pupils, including some with SEND and some disadvantaged pupils is not as high as it could be. Leaders should continue to develop teachers' teaching knowledge so that all teachers can support all pupils to achieve well.
- The recently introduced behaviour systems are not always implemented consistently, particularly outside lessons. Currently, the conduct of a minority of pupils does not meet leaders' high expectations. The new approaches to respond to these behaviours are not yet embedded and so the behaviour of these pupils is not managed as effectively as it could be. Leaders should ensure that all staff, pupils and parents understand the school's new behaviour systems and why they are in place. They should also ensure that all staff implement them as consistently outside lessons as they do during them.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

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

Unique reference number	137129
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10200376
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,254
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kevin Harriman
Headteacher	Peter Main
Website	www.priestlands.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 November 2016

Information about this school

- This school is a single academy trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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, senior leaders and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, science, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including governors' minutes, policies and records for behaviour management, attendance and bullying. Inspectors also reviewed documents related to the alternative provisions used by the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils at different times during the school day including form time, and break- and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils from different year groups and considered their responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. During the lessons visited, they looked at the support these pupils were receiving.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey. They took account of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments.

Inspection team

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