

Inspection of Paddock Wood Primary Academy

Old Kent Road, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6JE

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The interim principal of this school is Simon Page. This school is part of the Leigh Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon Beamish, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Frank Green, who is responsible for this school and 30 others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Paddock Wood Primary Academy are excited to learn. The school is a safe and stimulating place which offers a myriad of opportunities to develop pupils' interests and talents. Each day there is a hive of happy activity. Pupils enjoy the wide range of leadership opportunities available, such as play leaders, language or well-being ambassadors. Pupils receive training that helps them confidently and diligently perform these roles.

Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and behave well. Staff offer consistent, kind support to help all pupils strive to do the very best they can. The school is exceptionally well ordered. Pupils are polite, mature and keen to help. Mutual respect characterises conversations around the school. Pupils feel safe knowing that they can raise any concerns they might have with staff or can add these to the class 'worry boxes'.

The school has worked with pupils and parents to shape the extensive offer of extra-curricular activities. There is something for everyone. Pupils talk animatedly of the clubs they attend and the trips they take part in. The school looks to remove any potential barriers to involvement to ensure everyone benefits, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and disadvantaged pupils.

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

The school has experienced some recent changes in leadership. The trust has acted swiftly in response to ensure that any new leaders benefit from both bespoke programmes and regular subject forums and meetings. This is helping to ensure that the school continues to run smoothly and effectively for both pupils and staff. Staff are positive about the support and training they receive. Morale is high.

Pupils' learning is underpinned by a clearly structured ambitious curriculum from early years to Year 6. In early years, children benefit from a wide range of well-considered opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom. This helps them to explore and develop the foundations of learning across the curriculum. The school has ensured that these opportunities are precisely planned for pupils with SEND. Their needs are quickly identified, and the help is provided, which enables pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers.

As pupils move through the school, their knowledge builds in logical sequences. The learning is carefully interwoven across the different subjects. For example, pupils learn about Darwin and the theory of evolution in history at the same time as they explore views about the creation of the world in religious education. This prompts discussion, thinking and debate.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They mostly deliver the planned curriculum effectively so that pupils learn what is intended. Teachers use the school policies on assessment and the expectations of teaching to check pupils' growing

knowledge and identify any gaps. However, currently this is not yet as consistent as the school intends. Further training and support is being offered to ensure that this is consistently applied across all subjects and classes.

The school has ensured that reading is at the heart of its provision. Enticing displays of books are evident throughout the school. Pupils relish storytime, especially when it is held in the inviting library area. Visits from authors, trips to the local library and opportunities to take home the 'reading suitcases', complete with snuggly blankets, and hot chocolate sachets, continue to help pupils develop a love of reading.

Pupils start to learn to read as soon as they start school in Reception. Regular teaching of phonics from expert staff helps pupils master these important reading skills. Staff check learning carefully and regularly so that anyone who needs help to keep up or catch up is provided with it. Pupils build their reading confidence because the books they use to learn to read are well matched to their growing knowledge of letters and sounds.

Pupils benefit from an exceptional personal development programme. In addition to the carefully planned curriculum, pupils learn about careers and safety through highly anticipated events and visitors to the school. Extensive links with the community and the wider world help pupils learn well about themselves and others. They are very well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Pupils behaviour is exemplary. A well understood and clear behaviour policy is in place throughout the school. Pupils behave in a way that supports both learning and a relaxed and friendly atmosphere across the school. They learn to be responsible and develop skills in managing their own behaviour. Pupils like being at school and they attend well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is some occasional inconsistency in presenting subject matter and checking learning. When this happens, it is more challenging for teachers to identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and therefore where further support is needed. Leaders should continue to support teachers' pedagogical understanding and application of school policies so that the ambitious curriculum is implemented consistently across all subjects and classes.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147409
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296538
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	616
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
CEO of trust	Simon Beamish
Principal	Simon Page (interim principal)
Website	www.paddockwoodprimaryacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has experienced some recent leadership changes. At the time of the inspection, an interim principal was in place and other leadership roles had been reallocated to respond to this.
- The school joined Leigh Academies Trust in September 2019.
- The school is governed by the trust and by a local academy board with delegated powers.
- The school is authorised as an International Baccalaureate World School and teaches the Primary Years Programme.
- 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with school leaders. The inspectors also met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the academies director, and members of the local academy board.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and history. For each deep dive, the 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. The lead inspector listened to pupils read.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys. An inspector spoke to parents at the school gate.
- The inspectors talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including their workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Owen McColgan	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Lovatt-Young	Ofsted Inspector
James Freeston	Ofsted Inspector

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