

Inspection of a good school: Preston Primary School

Mill Lane, Preston, Canterbury, Kent CT3 1HB

Inspection dates:

1 February 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in their learning here, and they achieve extremely well. From the start of Reception, staff get to know each child individually. Every child is supported and challenged to achieve the best that they can. Pupils are enthusiastic about being at school. They are keen to make the most of opportunities to learn. Their behaviour is excellent, and they show kindness and respect to one another. This reflects the values that the school seeks to instil in them.

Pupils really enjoy the termly 'flourish days' that bring together everything that they have learned. In these, pupils use knowledge from across the curriculum to plan and produce creative projects. Staff help pupils to demonstrate their knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from this approach particularly well.

Pupils benefit from extensive opportunities in this small school. Some school clubs are run by the pupils themselves, helping them to develop leadership skills. 'Theme weeks' enable pupils to apply and extend their learning beyond conventional subjects. For example, during 'future aspirations' week, pupils use their mathematical learning in enterprise challenges.

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

Children in early years make a very strong start to their education. Staff help them to become confident and curious as learners. By practising their reading, writing and number skills, children develop the building blocks for success at school. Children with SEND are identified accurately and swiftly. As a result, they benefit from targeted support to help them to access the curriculum.

Across the school, pupils achieve highly. This is because leaders organise pupils' learning to build knowledge in a clear sequence. Within mixed-age classes, teachers have clear aims for every pupil. They provide clear and effective examples and models for pupils to follow. For example, in mathematics pupils use counters and blocks to help them learn about multiples. Teachers check each pupil's understanding systematically. This enables all pupils, including those with SEND, to understand multiplication in practice. In physical education, pupils are called upon to demonstrate aspects of their previous learning. This reinforces their understanding of movement patterns, and also helps their classmates to learn. Over time, pupils build a deep understanding of the topics that they study. This is reflected in the school's published outcomes, but it extends throughout the curriculum.

The school makes sure that every pupil gains confidence in reading. Staff teach phonics with accuracy. They make sure that the books pupils read are appropriate to their stage in the phonics programme. Alongside this, pupils enjoy story time in the 'aviary' and choosing books in the library. Weaker readers receive support to help them catch up. They learn effective strategies for reading new words. As a result, pupils develop their reading fluency. Assessment in reading, as in other subjects, is used skilfully by staff. They structure tasks that enable pupils to demonstrate the full extent of their learning. By building a detailed picture of what pupils know and can do, teachers close any gaps in learning swiftly. This enables pupils, including those with SEND, to achieve their potential.

Pupils' behaviour contributes strongly to their learning. In class, they are focused and engaged. They enjoy sharing the playground spaces, and older pupils look out for their younger peers around the school. Pupils are confident that staff will help them to deal with any worries at school. Leaders have developed effective processes to reduce pupil absence. As a result, pupils' attendance is high. In instances when pupils' behaviour or attendance needs to improve, leaders make sure there is effective support in place. For example, through time in the 'nest room', pupils learn ways to manage their feelings.

Learning outside of the academic curriculum is also very strong. Pupils have opportunities to explore beliefs and backgrounds from beyond their community, such as through a range of well-considered trips. The school offers clubs and activities that broaden pupils' experiences. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from these, regardless of need. Through assemblies, pupils learn about rights and responsibilities. This encourages many pupils to engage in fundraising for charities.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive. They report that leaders are thoughtful about workload and provide effective training. Leaders and governors value and act upon staff's feedback. They use the school's federation partnership to share expertise. This helps staff to become more skilled, which ultimately benefits the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 July 2013.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	118401
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296261
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Ed O'Connor
Headteacher	Helen Clements
Website	www.prestonprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2018 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 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.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the headteacher, subject leaders and other leaders from the federation partner school. The inspectors also met representatives from the governing board, and they spoke with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also discussed the curriculum and the provision for pupils with SEND, and they sampled work from other areas of the curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, governors, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts the pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Daniel Botting, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cathy Reid

Ofsted Inspector

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