

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Platt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Platinum Way, St Mary's Platt, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8FH

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

Outcome

Platt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly and caring school. Adults know pupils well. They provide high-quality emotional support which helps pupils to flourish. These warm relationships ensure that pupils feel happy and safe. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are well mannered and courteous. They follow the school rules of being 'ready, responsible and respectful'. Each Year 6 pupil is linked as a buddy to a child in Reception. Pupils form strong bonds with their buddies. Buddies look after the younger pupils with kindness and care, such as holding their hands when they walk to church.

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic success. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve well. Effective systems are in place to support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils take pride in helping to make the school even better. Members of the newly elected junior leadership team enjoy contributing their ideas.

Children in Reception enjoy a bright and well-designed indoor and outside environment. The key stage 1 playground is well equipped to nurture pupils' imaginations. Pupils develop an early love of reading. They say that stories come to life when read by staff sitting in the enormous 'Story Telling Chair'.

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

The school has an ambitious and effective curriculum. This means that pupils learn subjects in a well-structured way. Teachers are well trained. They explain to pupils the key learning for each lesson carefully. Those who need additional support, including pupils

with SEND, are identified quickly. The school gives these pupils effective support to develop their skills well. In most subjects, teachers check pupils' understanding to make sure it is embedded before moving on. For example, in mathematics, pupils say how useful they find the five-minute recap session. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not always use assessment effectively to check what pupils know and remember.

In the early years, there are high-quality interactions between staff and children. Every opportunity is taken to make sure that children explain their learning. This helps children to build strong communication and language skills. As pupils progress through the school, they learn a wide range of subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils can orally express their learning well. They talk knowledgeably, for example about whether they would have preferred to live in the Stone or Iron Age. However, pupils do not always communicate well in writing. This is because many pupils have not yet developed strong enough spelling and handwriting skills.

Reading takes a high priority in the school. Well-trained staff expertly develop pupils' phonics skills. Pupils are proud of their reading skills. They enjoy reading books that match the sounds they know. The school ensures that pupils who struggle with phonics get the support they need. As they progress through the school, pupils become fluent readers.

Pupils behave well. In lessons and around the school, they are respectful of others. Attendance is a high priority for the school. The causes of any absence are well monitored. The school works closely with families and external agencies to ensure that the attendance of a few pupils continues to improve.

Pupils are well prepared for their future lives. They learn about different cultures and faiths. Pupils enjoyed an interactive webinar on Black History Month. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep safe online. The school provides a varied range of enrichment opportunities to help prepare pupils for life beyond school. For example, pupils learned about heart resuscitation by practising chest compressions on their teddy bears. Many pupils enjoy visiting the on-site forest school and learning about the local environment. Pupils enjoy making meals in the school's well-equipped food technology room.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of their roles. They have worked hard to ensure that pupils were not unduly affected by staff changes or the remedial work on the school building. Most parents and carers are very supportive of the school, although a few mention that communication with the school can sometimes be an issue. Staff work together well as a team. Staff are very positive about the school and say that their workload is always considered. Leaders, governors and the staff team are focused on upholding the school's ethos. This is to 'encourage children to learn with enthusiasm, hope and courage, to the best of their ability'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not build pupils' foundational skills in writing as well as they could. This means that pupils do not communicate consistently well in writing across the curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils get sufficient opportunities to practise their transcription skills, such as spelling and handwriting, until they are fluent.
- In some subjects, teachers do not consistently identify pupils' misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge. This means that they do not always adapt the curriculum to address these gaps. The school needs to ensure that assessment is used effectively to check pupils' knowledge and understanding in all subjects, so that it informs what comes next in their learning.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in October 2015.

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	118728
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341518
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Knox
Headteacher	Emma Smith
Website	www.platt.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has undergone a significant change in staffing, including leadership, over the past two years.
- The school moved into a new purpose-built building in September 2021. After issues became apparent, much of the school's contents had to be packed away to allow for extensive remedial works to take place in July and August 2024.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in July 2023. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and senior leadership team. A meeting was held with members of the governing body, including the chair. The inspector met with a representative of the local authority. She also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the Diocese of Rochester.
- The inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early English and mathematics, history, physical education and science. For each group of subjects, the inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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' interest first.
- The inspector met groups of staff. She also considered the opinions expressed through Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector spoke with some parents on the school gate and had a telephone conversation with a parent. The inspector considered the views expressed through Ofsted's Parent View.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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