

Purleigh Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114918
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311756
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Baker
Headteacher	Mrs Dawn Dack
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	Pump Lane Purleigh Chelmsford Essex CM3 6PJ
Telephone number	01621 828282
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Purleigh Community Primary School is smaller than average and the vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of those from minority ethnic groups who speak English as an additional language is below one percent. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational need. Pupils' socio-economic backgrounds vary, but the proportion who claim free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is higher than average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, the Eco School Award and has been accredited with Investor in People status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Purleigh Community Primary is a good school with some outstanding features. Parents agree and in the words of one, 'Purleigh Community School is a wonderful school which has numerous qualities that make it so.' The school focuses on developing the whole child and pupils are cared for and supported outstandingly well. This makes an excellent impact on their personal development and well-being, which is outstanding. Pupils develop a real awareness of their role as citizens in the community and one parent wrote, 'My child is always scolding me for wasting electricity and not re-cycling!' Pupils are kind, considerate, mature young people who never fail to recognise the rights of others and their own responsibilities.

Pupils achieve above average standards and make good progress during their time at Purleigh. Children enter Reception with levels of attainment that are generally below those expected. They leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are significantly above average. Pupils do particularly well in writing and make exceptional progress because leadership of English is excellent. Progress is not quite as good in mathematics and science but the school is already aware of this and has appropriate strategies in place to remedy the situation. Pupils use their writing skills effectively across the curriculum. This cross-curricular style of working is a particularly effective component of the outstanding curriculum, which also benefits greatly from the excellent links the school has forged with other educational institutions and agencies. A particular strength of the curriculum is art. The school is adorned with a superb array of high quality three-dimensional art work.

Teaching is good overall because teachers take time to plan interesting and enjoyable work for the pupils. They make good use of interactive whiteboards, which pupils appreciate. Assessment is particularly good because high quality professional development for teachers has resulted in a common understanding of and agreement about what levels pupils are working at. Marking and academic guidance are exemplary. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils are given sufficient time to work independently or to investigate and explore things for themselves, particularly in science and mathematics.

Outstanding leadership and management keep a finger on the pulse of the school at all times and leaders are pro-active in seeking out ways to make improvements and raise standards. The particularly outstanding leadership of the headteacher has ensured excellent improvement since the time of the last inspection. Writing was a weakness but is now a strength and all other issues have been tackled effectively. The knowledgeable governors do an excellent job and hold the school to account well for its performance.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Reception class covers a wide range but is generally below expected levels. The careful induction of children to Reception ensures that most of them settle quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning. Good liaison takes place with pre-school groups and families. Early assessment takes place to identify each child's particular needs and provide the necessary support.

The teacher and assistants provide a good range of stimulating activities, which ensure that children enjoy their early learning experiences. Good use is made of resources and children learn how to work and play together well in the indoor and outdoor areas and develop good

levels of self-confidence. Children achieve well and, by the time they enter Year 1, a good proportion achieve all the early learning goals for this age, particularly in creative and physical development. This is because teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. A current priority is to improve speaking, listening and handwriting skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science to at least match those attained in English.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to learn independently, particularly in mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and they make good progress throughout their time at Purleigh. Children begin with knowledge and skills that are generally below national expectations. By the time they begin Year 1, most have reached the expected goals except in the areas of language and writing development. However, by the end of Year 2, standards are slightly above average, including those in reading and writing. This is because the school's sustained focus on writing pays real dividends, ensuring that pupils achieve well and attain significantly above average standards. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 show that pupils reach significantly above average standards overall. The percentage of pupils attaining at the higher level 5 in mathematics, English and science is above average. Results in English are higher than in mathematics and science. The school has recently identified the need to raise standards even higher in mathematics and science and has put strategies into place to do this. The impact of these is evident and indications are that pupils are on course to meet their challenging targets this year in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. There is no evidence of underachievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Relationships between adults and pupils in the school are excellent. Within the school's stimulating and caring environment pupils really flourish and enjoy lessons immensely. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Pupils greatly appreciate the world around them and develop a clear understanding of a range of different cultures in the wider world. They use opportunities extremely well to reflect on their own feelings and respect the views of others. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles through exercise and diet. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school because teachers care for them and deal with any issues promptly and fairly. The school council contributes well thought through ideas to improve areas around the school, for example, the covered pavilion for use at break-times. Pupils make significant contributions to the wider community, raising money for a number of charities. They develop academic and personal skills, which prepare them extremely well for the next stages in their education and future lives. Attendance is well above average and reflects the very positive atmosphere within the school and the pupils' keenness to learn.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall, with real strengths in the teaching of writing and speaking and listening. This is a great improvement since the last inspection, when writing was identified as an area for development. Teachers' planning clearly indicates opportunities for extended writing in other subject areas besides English. This has ensured that pupils have a realistic idea of how to write for different audiences and purposes. In an excellent English lesson the teacher's imaginative planning created a highly stimulating learning experience. Excellent use of 'hot seating' and a variety of visual images enabled pupils to make excellent progress in their speaking and listening skills when re-telling a real life adventure story. Where the teaching is less effective, there is a tendency for teachers to talk too long and direct the pupils' learning too much. This restricts the opportunity for pupils to learn as independently as they could and slows progress. The school is already planning to make better provision for pupils to take a more investigative approach to learning in science and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The provision for continuity of learning across the school is excellent. The school strives successfully to make links between subjects to make learning more meaningful. Activity weeks, such as 'Art Week' and 'Book Week' enrich the curriculum well. This gives pupils the chance to learn in depth and participate in enjoyable and exciting activities. Well developed partnerships with local secondary schools and other external providers offer an impressive variety of extra opportunities for pupils to learn music, drama, modern languages, cricket, rugby and 'body care fitness'. These, along with relevant and appropriate personal, social and health education, contribute very well to pupils' personal development. Pupils also learn to swim and all leave the school being able to do so. There is a wide and varied range of extra-curricular clubs such as bell-ringing, karate and country dancing, which are well attended. There is a strong emphasis on the development of basic skills. This has a very good impact on the progress pupils make, particularly those who find learning more difficult.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding levels of care and support enable pupils to feel safe and well looked after. Procedures for safeguarding children meet requirements. Support for the wide range of needs of pupils and their families is highly effective. As one parent stated, 'Brilliant support has been provided by the school.' Pupils' individual needs are identified early and very effective support is provided to help pupils fill gaps in their learning.

Through close involvement with relevant external agencies, a small number of vulnerable pupils are supported well. Academic guidance is exemplary. Marking is regular and supportive and helps pupils understand how to improve their work. The setting of targets is very well established and pupils know them. Progress towards these is reviewed regularly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership with a clear strategic vision for ongoing school improvement. She has established a strong senior leadership team and has made excellent use of external support. Teachers, parents and governors greatly respect and share her commitment to maintain high levels of care and achievement for all pupils. Self-evaluation is highly effective and areas for development identified during the inspection were of no surprise to the school and strategies to make the necessary improvements are already in place. All staff have responsibilities for different areas of the school's work and perform together extremely well as a highly cohesive team. The school's performance is regularly monitored and improved. Challenging and realistic targets are used effectively to raise standards. Governance is excellent. Governors are very active and supportive and play an important role in monitoring and evaluating the development of the school. Good use is made of the accommodation and resources to support the very positive learning environment. In light of this and the improvement since the last inspection the school has outstanding capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 February 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Purleigh Community Primary School, Chelmsford, CM3 6PJ

Thank you very much for giving my colleague and I such a warm welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We were impressed by how well behaved and polite you were. Some of you took the time to speak to us about your school and told us how much you enjoy attending. You know how to lead a healthy lifestyle and you particularly enjoy swimming. You told us about all the excellent trips you go on and the clubs you can participate in. You also raise money for charity, which is highly commendable, well done! Your attendance is super.

We think your school is a good school with some outstanding features. This means it does everything well but does some things even better than that. Your teachers take time to plan interesting lessons so that you learn lots of new things. They work hard to make sure that you achieve well. Your headteacher does a fantastic job and wants all of you to do as well as you possibly can. You can help by always making sure that you do your best work. You have made tremendous improvements in your writing; this is excellent! We have now asked that your school ensures that you do just as well in mathematics and science. This can be done by making sure that you do experiments and investigations on your own so that you explore things for yourselves.

We really enjoyed our time in your school and look forward to seeing how well you do in your tests this summer.

Kind regards

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead inspector