

Inspection of a good school: Prettygate Infant School

Plume Avenue, Colchester, Essex CO3 4PH

Inspection dates:

1–2 October 2019

Outcome

Prettygate Infant School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like school and are happy. Most enjoy a range of subjects and the extra-curricular activities. Pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners. Pupils are well cared for by staff and encouraged to do their very best. However, lessons do not always build on what pupils already know or set them up for future learning. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. There is a calm and friendly atmosphere around the school. Pupils understand what good behaviour is and help each other to make the right behaviour choices. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning, and disruption in lessons is rare. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Teachers are quick to pick up pupils whose behaviour could lead to disruption.

Pupils told us that they feel safe in school. They know that the adults in school will help them with any worries or concerns. Bullying is rare, and if it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils are considerate towards one another and adults. One parent said, 'My child's school mates are full of love and kindness.'

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

New school leaders have rapidly gained a good understanding of the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses accurately. Leaders have prioritised the more important areas and have addressed them as a matter of urgency. Many parents and carers commented on the positive start made by the new headteacher. They said, 'The headteacher is very welcoming and approachable.'

Leaders and governors want the best for the school and its pupils. They work well together and have clear plans to bring about the improvements needed. Staff see the benefits of changes made, for both pupils and themselves.

Leaders have been working on developing the curriculum for some time. However, they have not considered this in enough detail. Leaders have identified what pupils need to know at the end of key stage 1. Teachers are not clear about what pupils need to learn each year to achieve this. As a result, teachers do not plan activities that build well enough on what pupils already know.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good. However, teachers do not use what they know about pupils' previous learning to help pupils develop their knowledge and skills. Teachers do not routinely plan activities that are appropriately challenging. In mathematics and science, some pupils complete work that is too easy. Pupils need more opportunities to explain their thinking and share what they already know.

Reading is a priority from the start of early years. Teachers are well trained to help younger pupils to learn their sounds quickly and get them reading straight away. Teachers continually update parents about the progress children are making in reading. However, parents would like to know more about their children's learning in other subjects.

Pupils enjoy reading and listen enthusiastically when the teacher reads a story. However, pupils find it tricky to talk about books that they enjoy and know well. Leaders recently introduced ways to help pupils read more confidently and improve their vocabulary. It is too early for these changes to have made a difference. Weaker readers have extra support to help them catch up quickly. However, pupils often have books which are too hard for them. This does not allow pupils to practise what they are learning and slows their progress.

Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should across the curriculum. This is because leaders have not used the pupil premium funding well enough. They have not checked closely that it makes a positive difference to pupils' experience of school.

Teachers and teaching assistants adapt work so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access the curriculum. Pupils with SEND make strong progress. Leaders check pupils' learning routinely. Leaders ensure that staff receive the training they need to support pupils with SEND well.

Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities typical for their age. They settle quickly because transition is planned carefully. An effective team ensures that the children get off to a good start and make strong progress. Adults plan learning activities which build on the children's knowledge and interests. Children develop skills such as confidence and perseverance. In mathematics, teachers help children to make connections with what they already know. Adults use resources and activities skilfully to give children plenty of opportunities to practise what they have learned.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained. Teachers know the pupils well and are quick to identify any signs that may suggest a child is at risk of harm. Staff follow the procedures for reporting

concerns, however minor. The safeguarding team follows up concerns quickly and works closely with the relevant agencies to make sure that pupils get any help that they need. Leaders' checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children are thorough. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through special assemblies, for example with the NSPCC, and in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and science lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' curriculum planning does not clearly identify the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn and remember along the way to achieve what is expected by the end of key stage 1. Teachers are unclear about what pupils learn each year and how it builds on previous learning or contributes to what pupils will learn in the future. Subject leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in each subject is logically planned and sequenced so that it builds upon pupils' previous learning, and check that teachers are implementing these plans effectively.
- Most parents feel well informed about the progress that their children are making. They feel particularly well informed about reading. Some parents want to know more about what pupils learn in other subjects. Leaders need to improve communication with parents about what their child is learning throughout the year across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not use what they know about pupils' prior learning to plan lessons and activities that help pupils to know and remember more. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment effectively to support planning activities that are well matched to pupils' prior learning.
- Although adults help pupils develop their phonic skills, some pupils often read books that are not well matched to their phonic ability. Consequently, some pupils do not develop the confidence and fluency in reading that they should. Leaders need to ensure that there is greater consistency in matching reading books to pupils' stage of reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should across the curriculum. Leaders should target pupil premium funding precisely to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	114744
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10110270
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Maytham
Headteacher	Mark Millbourne
Website	www.prettygate-inf.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2016

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than average.
- The new headteacher started on 1 September 2019. He is also the new headteacher of Prettygate Junior School. The deputy headteacher and many other leaders work across the infant and junior schools. The infant and junior schools have one governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the headteacher, the early years leader and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). She also had a telephone conversation with the deputy headteacher. The inspector met with three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

- The subjects considered in depth as part of this inspection were reading, mathematics, and science. In each subject, the inspector visited lessons, scrutinised the work in pupils' books and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to pupils to gather their views of the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey. The inspector also reviewed school information related to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the school's policies and procedures. She also met with the designated safeguarding leader and family liaison officer to review the actions taken to keep children safe. The inspector spoke to staff to check that they understood the school procedures.
- The inspector took into account the views of the 23 members of staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. She also considered 62 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 51 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rachel Welch, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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