

Inspection of a good school: Prettygate Junior School

Plume Avenue, Colchester, Essex CO3 4PH

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 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, parents and carers and staff delight in being part of the Prettygate community, where relationships are positive and pupils thrive. Pupils are extremely well cared for and supported. They love socialising with their younger friends and siblings from the partner infant school during shared lunchtimes. They play happily together, take turns in games and show great kindness to others.

Staff have high expectations of pupils and what they can achieve. Pupils rise to meet these especially well. They are proud to demonstrate the school's 'ARK' values of 'ambition, respect and kindness'. Pupils live out these values. They know their importance and are proud to join the headteacher for hot chocolate on 'Marshmallow Mondays' to celebrate when these values are embodied.

Pupils understand about equality and know that everyone is welcome. Pupils feel safe and happy here. Behaviour around the school is first class. Pupils are creative in using the equipment provided to invent games that involve their friends. They love exploring their 'beautiful grounds' and joining in with 'forest school' activities. They benefit from a range of leadership opportunities, including joining the learning council, being values ambassadors, reading ambassadors, eco-warriors and house captains.

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

The school has high ambitions for pupils. The highly effective curriculum supports all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to make excellent progress. The school has identified the important knowledge and skills pupils need to learn, building a highly effective and ambitious sequence of learning. Staff teach the curriculum with precision and care. This leads to all pupils achieving consistently well.

Leaders are reflective and continually refine their offer for pupils, while considering staff workload in their plans. Staff value the training leaders provide, which helps them refine and develop their practice.

Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to build pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils engage well in lessons and keenly discuss what they know. Teachers provide regular recaps on what they have previously taught, and this supports pupils with new learning. They work closely with families and external agencies to identify and support pupils with SEND well. Staff ask clear, precise questions and give pupils regular opportunities to think and talk about learning. For example, teachers provide regular opportunities for mathematical reasoning and guide pupils to explain their mathematical thinking clearly. This helps pupils become confident and articulate as they develop a secure understanding of what they have been taught. Pupils apply their learning exceptionally well, for example, during fieldwork visits in geography.

The teaching of reading is especially strong. In phonics, there is clear and systematic teaching which is precisely matched to pupils' needs. This helps those who join the school needing extra support to become fluent, expressive and confident readers. The school focuses on core reading skills, including vocabulary, retrieval and inference. Staff ensure that pupils experience a wide range of interesting texts.

Pupils' behaviour is commendable. Attendance is high. Pupils are absorbed in their lessons and are considerate towards others. Relationships are incredibly positive. Pupils want to do well for staff because they know they have pupils' best interests at heart.

Pupils benefit from an extremely well-considered personal development programme. Pupils access a range of clubs that interest them, including pottery, sports, music and choir. Assemblies are exciting opportunities for talk and reflection about school values and how pupils might best demonstrate them. These provoke thought well beyond the assemblies themselves. Pupils know why their school values are important. The 'experiences calendar' maps the important enrichment activities staff want pupils to undertake. These include a trip to a Roman castle, experiencing a space dome, a virtual reality experience and a skipping day, as well as visits from authors, a theatre visit and performing on stage. Staff ensure that the emotional well-being of pupils is as well considered as their academic needs.

Governors maintain a clear, informed and strategic oversight of the school. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and provide high-quality support and challenge for leaders.

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 October 2014.

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	114743
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10318578
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Linda Gildea
Headteacher	Mark Millbourne
Website	www.prettygateschools.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation with Prettygate Infant School.
- The headteacher is also the headteacher of Prettygate Infant School. The deputy headteacher and other leaders work across both the junior school and the infant school.
- The junior school and the infant school have one governing body.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum with leaders in several other subjects.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector spoke on the telephone with the local authority's school effectiveness partner.
- 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' interests first.
- The inspector took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governing body and reports from the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. The inspector met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Nick Rudman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024