

# Preston School Academy

Monks Dale, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 3JD

## Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently high enough.
- Outcomes require improvement because results, although improving, are not securely good. Some groups of pupils struggle to overcome a legacy of underachievement.
- Subject leadership is not consistently effective. This leads to variations in the quality of teaching and in outcomes for pupils within and across subjects.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses lacks rigour. This means that they are not always precise enough in identifying specific actions which need to be taken in order to improve outcomes.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) underachieve relative to others nationally and have done so over time.
- Governors have an overgenerous view of the school's improvement since the last inspection.
- Recent changes, including significant changes in staffing, have generated strong capacity for improvement, but they have not had time to have a significant impact on the lack of progress made by many pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. The principal has raised the expectations of staff and pupils. He has made improvements to the quality of education in the school since he took up post.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site is excellent. They are proud of their school, wear their uniform with pride and respect the school environment.
- The curriculum is matched well to the needs of pupils and linked effectively with good careers guidance. All pupils progress to post-16 courses, training or apprenticeships that meet their needs and aspirations.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They are tolerant and respectful of each other and they are keen to play a part in the life of the school through participation in sporting and community events.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - leaders and governors develop a more accurate view of the quality of teaching by paying sufficient attention to the impact it has on improving pupils' outcomes
  - leaders and governors devise and implement a more effective improvement plan, setting clear timelines and checking closely the impact of actions taken
  - pupils' outcomes, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, improve markedly.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently strong across the school by ensuring that staff:
  - plan learning activities which stretch and challenge all pupils appropriately and engage them in their learning
  - ensure that all pupils are challenged to think more deeply about their learning
  - learn from the practice of the most effective teachers at the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because there is variability in the quality of teaching and in outcomes for pupils across and within subjects.
- Leaders have not acted quickly enough to secure improvements in the quality of teaching and in outcomes for pupils since the last inspection.
- Leaders' assessment of their own effectiveness and different aspects of the school's work is not precise. They have not taken a sufficiently objective and rigorous view of their work. Consequently, over time, this has hindered efforts to ensure that pupils' achievement continues to rise rapidly in all areas of the curriculum.
- The principal is highly committed to the school. He is determined to improve the quality of pupils' experience and raise their achievement. To this end, he is working closely with other leaders, who are equally committed, to unite staff behind a common purpose. This is beginning to work. Most of the staff who responded to the survey issued during the inspection are proud to work at the school.
- The principal is steadily building leadership capacity at different levels. This has not been easy, and he has had to take some difficult decisions. Nevertheless, leadership is now at the point where it is beginning to move the school forward.
- Senior and middle leaders are monitoring teaching and learning appropriately through lesson observations, analysis of information on pupils' progress and the examination of pupils' work. However, they are not all evaluating robustly the impact of teaching on pupils' progress in order to identify and support the needs of pupils.
- The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. It has been redesigned to ensure that more pupils have access to courses that form part of the English Baccalaureate. Pupils have a range of options in Years 9, 10 and 11 that prepares them for further study. Effective careers guidance is threaded throughout the curriculum from Year 7 onwards. This raises pupils' aspirations well. Virtually all pupils progress to education, training or employment when they leave the school.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium effectively. The gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally are closing.
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced effectively through a programme based on fundamental British values. The school provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is improving. Alongside a systematic approach to identifying the precise needs of pupils, effective interventions have been introduced, and so these pupils now have more effective learning experiences.
- Pupils who have complex needs are well catered for by the area resource base. The care and attention they receive there enables them to make progress in their studies and in their personal development. These pupils have autism spectrum condition and the school works well to enable them to follow a curriculum appropriate to their needs.
- The formal curriculum is supported by a wide variety of extra-curricular activities.

These sporting, cultural, artistic and creative activities enable pupils to develop their particular interests and to grow in self-confidence. The extra-curricular programme makes an important contribution to the school's work to promote pupils' personal development.

- Leaders are aware that communication between the school and parents has not been good in the past and they are working hard to make improvements.
- The school receives support from The Priory Learning Trust. However, this is at an early stage and so it is not possible to evaluate the impact of this work.

### **Governance of the school**

- Over time, governors have not sufficiently challenged senior leaders to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable across the curriculum. Governors now ensure that they are thoroughly informed about the school's performance. However, they are not sufficiently rigorous in their analysis of the ways in which improvements impact on outcomes for pupils in the school.
- Governors take their responsibilities seriously. Their areas of expertise and the training in governance which they have had ensure that they are confident and capable when supporting senior leaders. Governors' experience of financial management is used successfully to support senior leaders' plans to further strengthen the quality of education that the school provides.
- Governors value highly the school's work in promoting well-rounded development and the many extra-curricular activities to which pupils have access.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All policies and procedures are up to date and reflect the latest national guidance. Appropriate checks are made on all staff to make sure they are suitable to work with children. Senior leaders make safeguarding a priority. They fully meet their statutory responsibilities.
- Governors oversee safeguarding effectively. They work with school staff to make sure that safeguarding arrangements are in place and up to date. They undertake regular reviews of the school's records and procedures to ensure that there are no weaknesses in the system.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and whom to talk to if they have any concerns regarding their safety. They have a good understanding of keeping safe online and are aware of the risks of sexual exploitation.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors do not have concerns about bullying at the school. They stated that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much across the school and within departments. Leaders' raised expectations and staff training are leading to improvements, but teaching does not ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Until recently, teaching did not routinely meet pupils' differing needs. Consequently, the least able did not always receive the support they needed to enable them to make good progress and the most able were not sufficiently challenged. Improvements in leadership are now leading to improved provision for pupils with SEND and more challenge for pupils of all abilities.
- The introduction of 'The Preston Way' has led to much greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. However, some teachers rely too heavily on systematic approaches to classroom management which limit pupils' opportunities to discuss ideas in detail and thus deepen their learning.
- Teachers are very aware of the need to help disadvantaged pupils make better progress and they support these pupils in a variety of ways. The progress of this group of pupils overall was below average last year. Recent improvements in teaching and well-targeted support for individuals are leading to better progress for this group, particularly in key stage 3.
- Most teachers provide pupils with feedback in line with the school's policy but the impact on pupils' learning is too inconsistent. Senior leaders are aware of this and are addressing the issue more effectively.
- Pupils' progress in English is improving rapidly. Strong and effective support for teachers of mathematics and science is also having a positive impact, and this can be seen in the recent work in pupils' books. Senior leaders are confident that further changes in staffing planned for September will enable the school to consolidate and build upon recent improvements.
- Stronger teaching is evident in some subjects. For example, in history and geography expectations of literacy are high and result in pupils producing high-quality written work. Pupils' work in computing and business studies is also of a high standard.
- Teachers are keen to develop their practice. This is because they are committed, enjoy their work and are receptive to new ideas. Teachers' commitment to their work is helping to establish new initiatives that are beginning to improve teaching. However, the good practice seen in history and English, for example, is not shared widely across the school.
- Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff. There is mutual respect between them which reinforces good behaviour. It also enables classrooms to be safe spaces where pupils feel comfortable to speak up in front of their peers.
- Many teachers use their subject knowledge well to ask thought-provoking questions that lead to interesting discussions. Pupils who contribute to discussions learn to voice their views in an articulate, balanced way.
- Homework is used effectively by most teachers to help pupils develop their ideas and extend their learning.

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The great majority of pupils are well motivated, respectful and appreciative of their teachers, and collaborate well when working in class. Most take a pride in the presentation of their work and are ambitious for their future lives.
- Pupils arrive punctually to lessons and settle down to work quickly. Most pupils show an eagerness to learn, particularly when teaching engages their curiosity.
- Pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme of opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of how to use online communications without putting themselves at risk of harm.
- The broad programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is helping to prepare pupils well for their lives as good citizens in modern Britain.
- Careers education forms an integral part of pupils' learning from Year 7 through to Year 11. Pupils are offered an increasing range of opportunities to find out more about their own strengths and skills and how to present these. These skills are helping pupils to become more successful learners.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision. The school tracks their attendance and progress regularly, working with these providers to ensure that the personalised programmes support pupils effectively.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and the atmosphere is calm and orderly. They are polite and welcoming towards visitors. Around the school, pupils hold doors open for each other and greet staff with a smile.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe, including when they are online. Pupils spoke of how the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme covers a variety of topics that help them to lead healthy lives, for example sex and relationships education and information about the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse.
- Rates of pupils' attendance in recent years were below the national averages. However, leaders have now adopted a much more rigorous approach to monitoring and recording absence, and this is helping to improve the attendance of all groups of pupils.
- The school has worked successfully to reduce the use of fixed-term exclusions. Records show that these have fallen by a third this year. Leaders are aware that there have been too many permanent exclusions in the last three years and are working hard to provide alternative provision for pupils at risk of exclusion.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision at Yeovil College. The

school monitors their progress, both academic and personal, closely and has strong relationships with the college.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Requires improvement**

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils currently in the school are not making consistently strong progress.
- Pupils' outcomes for at least the last three years have been much lower than they should have been compared with similar pupils nationally. This is because pupils have not been taught consistently well. Many pupils have underachieved, especially disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, and the most able pupils.
- Leaders' improvements to teaching and learning, coupled with a more stable staffing structure, are helping to secure better progress for current pupils, especially in key stage 3. Work scrutiny and observations of pupils' learning and progress in lessons confirm this overall improvement. Nevertheless, there is still work to be done to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress.
- Pupils with SEND are beginning to make much better progress from their starting points as a result of the help they now receive. The inclusive ethos of the school contributes strongly to the academic progress they make.
- The area resource base, which caters for pupils with autism spectrum condition, currently has 11 pupils on roll across all year groups. The excellent facilities and highly trained staff combine to support pupils to make good progress from a very wide range of starting points. Pupils attending the area resource base are integrated and accepted into the school very well, attending tutor groups and many mainstream lessons.
- The principal is acutely aware that pupils should be making better progress overall. Building on improvements made last year, such as higher rates of attendance and more consistent approaches to teaching and learning, he is taking decisive action to raise standards. Although it is too soon to see any real impact on pupils' outcomes, inspectors could see positive signs of improvement.

## School details

Unique reference number	136894
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10088401

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	952
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair	Marta Baker
Principal	Gregg Morrison
Telephone number	01935 471 131
Website	<a href="http://www.prestonschool.co.uk/">www.prestonschool.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:Gregg.Morrison@PrestonSchool.co.uk">Gregg.Morrison@PrestonSchool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 June 2017

## Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and the proportion supported by an education, health and care plan is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- A small proportion of pupils are from other than White British backgrounds.
- The school makes use of one alternative provider. Currently a few pupils, who are dual registered, spend time at South Somerset Partnership School.
- The school hosts a local authority-run unit for 11 pupils with autism spectrum condition. Pupils in the unit are on the school roll.
- The school has received support from The Priory Learning Trust.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects and age groups, and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work. All of the observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- An inspector visited the autism spectrum condition unit.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour data, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Meetings were held with governors, the principal, senior and middle leaders, and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 112 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 83 written comments. They also took into account the 66 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Richard Steward, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Nicholson	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Thompson	Ofsted Inspector

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