

Prettygate Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114743
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326059
Inspection date	2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Beeson
Headteacher	Mr B Hawes
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2005
School address	Plume Avenue Colchester CO3 4PH
Telephone number	01206 577608
Fax number	01206 766098

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the evidence supporting high standards and achievement in pupils' work; pupils' personal development and their contribution to their own learning in particular; the impact of leadership on the quality of learning, and the strengths in the curriculum contributing to pupils' progress and personal development. Evidence was gathered from the observation of lessons, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, discussions with members of the senior leadership team and governors, a scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found the evidence to confirm the school's own evaluations, as given in its self-evaluation form, were justified and these have been recorded where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Prettygate Junior School serves a suburban community which is a mix of owner-occupied and rented properties. The great majority of the 254 pupils are White British. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is near to the national average but has been increasing in recent years. Most of these pupils have language and communication difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. The school shares a site with Prettygate Infant School.

Prettygate Junior has gained recognition for its provision in information and communication technology (ICT). It is a centre of excellence for ICT and has received many additional awards in this field among which are the National ICT Mark and the Digital Equity Award. The school has gained recognition in many other areas. In particular, it has the Inclusion Quality Mark, Activemark Gold for sports and the Healthy Schools Award (Advanced).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Prettygate Junior School is outstanding. It has maintained the high quality of educational provision as a result of determined leadership sustaining an exceptional pace of improvement since the last inspection when Prettygate Junior had also been judged to be an outstanding school. The two areas for improvement identified in that inspection have been dealt with comprehensively. Pupils learn mental calculation skills very effectively. Governors are now rigorous in their evaluations of the school's work. Their role is excellent in supporting the school. The school's capacity to continue improving is outstanding.

The good qualities found in all effective schools are here in abundance. A great many stand out as especially strong. The very high regard shown for every pupil and deep concern that that they all thrive and achieve is at the forefront of the school's aims and shared by all staff. This is clearly reflected in the very positive views expressed by a great many parents. These show the school is in tune with their aspirations and concerns, and also that parents appreciate fully the special qualities of Prettygate. In this respect, they have the highest praise for the headteacher who is an excellent leader. A most effective team provides a high quality of leadership and management throughout the school. Pupils too love their school, valuing the fact they are being exceptionally well prepared for the future. Their attitude to school is excellent. They behave extremely well and attendance is high. They have a huge regard for all the staff and find great enjoyment in their work and activities. Particularly good features are the extent to which pupils are encouraged to express their views about school and the seriousness with which school leaders take these on-board. Pupils take on many responsibilities, contributing outstandingly well to school life and beyond, especially in raising money for many good causes at home and abroad. Personal development, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding.

High expectations permeate all that the school does. One important result of this is the high standards in pupils' work and their excellent rate of progress through Key Stage 2. In the years since the last inspection pupils have arrived into Year 3 with broadly average standards. Typically, by the end of Year 6, they leave with above, or well above, average standards in English, mathematics and science, as shown by the 2007 tests and suggested by the provisional 2008 results. The number of pupils reaching the highest level is down slightly on previous years but, as shown in the school's data, this was expected and, overall, the results do not detract from pupils' excellent achievements. Standards are high in other subjects as well, in ICT especially, which has long been a real strength of the school. ICT is thoroughly resourced and taught with great expertise and it is used extensively to support learning in every part of the curriculum, contributing to outstanding provision for pupils' future economic well-being. Physical education (PE) too stands out because of the generous time devoted to it and sports as well as long-established specialist teaching. Boys and girls are hugely enthusiastic about PE and appreciate the benefits to their health and fitness. Being a healthy school has a high profile and pupils benefit enormously in understanding how to stay healthy and eat well. Their fresh fruit tuck shop is extremely popular.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding, the product of very effective leadership and teamwork throughout the school in making lessons so effective. The monitoring of lessons and the curriculum, carried out by senior leaders and subject coordinators, is frequent and rigorous. The evaluations of strengths and areas for improvement are extremely accurate, aiding the maintenance of high quality and the implementation of new approaches. Lessons are

planned very well and are taught with confidence and expertise. Thorough assessment is used very effectively to match pupils' work to their abilities and this succeeds in them all sustaining very good rates of progress. What pupils should learn is laid out clearly for them and, together with targets set for them, they understand the point of their work and what they have to achieve. New knowledge and skills are expertly explained and demonstrated, always with very effective visual aids on interactive whiteboards. Questioning is focused sharply, adding to the challenge of the work and causing pupils to think hard. Pupils are attentive and confident contributors. Teaching gives them very good opportunities to use initiative and to work together, which improves the quality of learning. Pupils are enthused and make considerable efforts to achieve as much as possible.

An exceptional amount of work has gone into making the curriculum as broad, relevant and interesting as possible for all pupils. As a result, it provides an excellent variety of work and activities, which pupils greatly appreciate. They especially enjoy the many well-attended after school clubs and opportunities for sports and arts. ICT and PE are notable strengths. Overall, the curriculum makes a significant contribution to personal development and academic progress. An appropriate emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy, although both gain considerable strength from the many additional initiatives supporting pupils' progress. Lower attaining and average ability pupils are moved on very effectively in the small booster groups for literacy and numeracy. Links with neighbouring primary and secondary schools provide higher attaining pupils with lessons offering extra challenges to really stretch them. Provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities is broad and highly organised, which ensures that all pupils with learning difficulties gain good levels of basic skills. The numbers with these difficulties, including those with a statement of educational need, is rapidly increasing and the school is working to ensure its provision matches this demand.

The school's ethos encourages and values all involved with it. This is reflected in the strong partnerships with parents, the community, neighbouring schools and many of the local authority's support agencies. There is outstanding promotion of harmony and understanding on both local and global dimensions. The involvement of pupils and staff with, and their support for, a school in Uganda is a true reflection of their work in bringing the community closer together. In school, the care and support for pupils is outstanding. Robust arrangements safeguarding them ensure they stay safe and there is much in the daily routines and curriculum that teaches pupils to be safe. Their academic progress is supported superbly. High expectations underpins much of the support provided. Diligent marking of pupils' work by teachers makes a significant contribution to them knowing how well they are doing and what to do to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure by continued careful monitoring and evaluation that the high quality provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities remains effective in meeting the needs of the increasing number of pupils identified with a learning difficulty or disability.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	1
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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Prettygate Junior School, Colchester CO3 4PH

Many thanks to you all for making my visit to your school so enjoyable and worthwhile. I greatly appreciated the opportunities to talk to you about work and school, and a special thanks to the Year 6 pupils who met with me to discuss their views.

I heard only very positive comments from you about school and I am very happy to say, in all that I found out during the day, I agree with you completely. You have an outstanding school. It gets top marks because of all the hard work of the staff and your amazing efforts in achieving such high standards in your work. As you said yourselves, teachers make lessons fun and there is lots for you to do in school that gives you much enjoyment. I was pleased to see how well teachers plan work that really stretches you. You pointed out, and I agree, ICT and PE stand out from all the other good activities on offer. The work I saw you doing on your laptops was truly impressive.

As impressive is how good your understanding is of staying healthy. It is a very good sign of growing up well that you happily take on lots of responsibilities in helping out at school as well as in helping others less fortunate than you.

Your headteacher is very good at knowing where improvement is needed in school including my recommendation that everything is done to help new pupils who have more difficulty learning than most. As learning buddies many of you will be able to be a great help as well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector