

Inspection of a good school: Prospect Vale Primary School

Prospect Vale, Off Brown Lane, Heald Green, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 3RJ

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 July 2023

Outcome

Prospect Vale Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Prospect Vale Primary School is a friendly school community where everyone values and celebrates people's differences. Positive relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are evident throughout the school. Pupils treat each other with kindness and consideration. They are happy and feel safe. Leaders' records show that they deal effectively with any incidents of bullying.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils know that it is important to work hard and to behave well. Most pupils rise to leaders' high expectations of them. In lessons, they work well together. At breaktimes, they play happily together. Most pupils, including children in the early years, achieve well across a range of subjects.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills and their confidence. For example, pupils carry out a range of roles with meaningful responsibilities, such as being sports ambassadors or Pupil Parliament representatives. Pupils also take an active part in charitable work. They value supporting causes within and beyond their school community.

Pupils take part in activities which allow them to pursue their interests and talents. For example, they enjoy developing their skills by attending baking, recorder and chess clubs. They enjoy 'making memories magical' through the trips and visits they experience linked to their learning. They told the inspector about visits to a castle, a beach and Jodrell Bank.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils should have and when they should acquire it. They have ensured that this knowledge builds in a thoughtful way from the Nursery Year to Year 6.

Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They plan engaging activities that capture pupils' attention and support their learning. In lessons, particularly in English and mathematics, they check effectively that pupils have understood and remembered key content. In most subjects, they ensure that pupils revisit their previous learning so that they retain it. However, in some subjects, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to embed their previous learning. This means that in these subjects, some pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. Pupils remember their current learning but some cannot recall what they have learned over time. As a result, some pupils are not as ready for the next stage in their education as they should be.

Subject leaders carry out checks to ensure that teachers are implementing the intended curriculum well. They use these checks to identify the developmental needs of teachers. In some subjects, when monitoring the impact of the curriculum, subject leaders do not focus sharply enough on how well pupils are learning and remembering the most important knowledge, concepts and vocabulary over time.

Leaders give the teaching of reading a high profile. All staff are trained in how to teach the phonics programme. As a result, they teach phonics consistently well. Children in the early years make a positive start in reading. In the Nursery Year, they learn songs and rhymes to prepare them for their phonics learning. Across the early years classes and key stage 1, they learn to identify and read the sounds that letters make. Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds and words that they know.

Leaders arrange targeted support for pupils who are struggling to read or are learning English as an additional language. This helps most pupils to read fluently and accurately. Older pupils enjoy a range of books that reflect the diversity of the school population and the wider community it serves. They enjoy reading and studying a range of authors and genres.

Leaders work closely with staff and other agencies to identify quickly any pupils who may have SEND. Staff support these pupils well. Teachers adapt the implementation of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This ensures that these pupils successfully follow the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders and staff establish clear routines, which most pupils follow diligently. Pupils can concentrate on their work because lessons are rarely disrupted. Children in the early years settle quickly and listen carefully to staff.

Pupils benefit positively from the opportunities that leaders provide to enhance their personal development. They enjoy representing the school in various sporting activities and learn to play musical instruments. They are proud to share musical performances with their families and friends. They understand fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. Their school experiences prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders take account of staff's well-being. Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders to help manage their workloads. Governors are committed to supporting the

school. However, some parents and carers who shared their views do not feel that leaders keep them informed of important aspects of their children's education and school life.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders recognise that it is everyone's duty to keep pupils safe. Staff are trained in safeguarding and they understand their responsibilities. They are alert to the signs of harm, abuse and neglect. They know the procedures that they must follow if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare.

Through the curriculum, staff and visitors teach pupils to keep themselves safe. For instance, they understand what it means to be a good friend and how to keep themselves safe when online. They learn how to be safe when crossing a road, riding a bike and when they are near water.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to revisit and strengthen their previous learning. This means that in these subjects, some pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. Leaders should ensure that teachers provide pupils with enough time to consolidate their knowledge of the curriculum in all subjects.
- In some subjects, when monitoring the impact of the curriculum, subject leaders do not focus sharply enough on how well pupils are learning important subject content. This means that leaders sometimes lack a detailed understanding of the effectiveness of the curriculum. Subject leaders should ensure that they keep a sharp focus on how well staff teach important aspects of the curriculum so that they can ascertain whether teaching enables pupils to remember key knowledge, concepts and vocabulary.
- Channels of communication have not been consistently effective or clear. As a result, some parents do not feel that leaders keep them informed of important aspects of their children's education and school life. Leaders, including governors, should ensure that they work closely with all stakeholders to improve communication.

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 November 2013.

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 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](#)' 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	106071
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10291397
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Trafford
Headteacher	Paul McDowell
Website	www.prospectvale.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body is responsible for a breakfast club on the school site.
- There have been a number of changes to the membership of the governing body recently. The chair of governors was appointed in July 2023.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, she met with subject leaders and teachers. She visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' and children's work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- The inspector heard pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 read to a familiar adult. She also considered the curriculum, spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.

- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body, the headteacher and other school leaders.
- She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the school improvement adviser.
- The inspector talked with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour, the early years and SEND.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about safeguarding and their wider experience of school. She looked at a range of policies and documents relating to pupils' and children's welfare and education. She observed pupils' and children's behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. She discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. She also checked the single central record.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. She took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. She also considered parents' emails sent for her attention.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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