

Inspection of Pilgrim Primary Academy

Oxford Street, Plymouth, Devon PL1 5BQ

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Rachael Saim. This school is part of Reach South Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Dean Ashton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marcus Agius CBE.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Pilgrim Primary Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Pilgrim Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Pilgrim Primary Academy as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pilgrim Primary Academy gives pupils the confidence to aspire to ambitious futures. During their time at the school, pupils' eyes are opened to a range of possibilities. For example, going to university and thinking about careers with employers such as the Royal Navy. The school has close links with local sports clubs who provide good role models.

Pupils enjoy learning in a positive environment. Their pastoral and academic needs are well understood. Pupils thrive due to the supportive relationships they develop with staff. They learn to love reading and are resilient when this is tricky. Everyone benefits from the 'marvellous manners' that pupils show. Children are taught how to behave and learn well together from Reception Year. Staff are quick to offer praise and rewards for the behaviours they want to see. They recognise new 'behaviour champions' each day.

Diversity is celebrated exceptionally well. Many different nationalities and languages are represented in the school community. The school taps into the richness and learning opportunities that this provides. Pupils are committed to treating others how they would like to be treated. Religious festivals are accommodated with kindness and understanding. Pupils enjoy learning about different traditions and cultures.

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

The school is determined that each pupil will become a proficient reader. Parents and carers have everything they need to support from home. For example, families who speak English as an additional language, learn about the school's approach to phonics before the children start at the school. The phonics programme is precisely tailored for pupils at different stages. The school is a hive of activity during phonics lessons, with pupils of all ages enjoying success.

In the early years, children receive precise guidance with their developing writing. This helps them to adopt a good writing position and form letters accurately. The school continues to support and celebrate pupils' writing as they grow older. Many achieve well in writing, even those who join the school during key stage 2.

The school's curriculum is carefully designed to reflect and teach pupils about the local area as well as opening their eyes to what is beyond. It is taught well. Pupils are ready for the challenges of the secondary school curriculum when they leave.

Staff promote a positive reading culture. Discussion of words and texts is central to the curriculum. Pupils learn how to use and enjoy a library. There is a sharp focus on checking for gaps in pupils' reading skills. Some pupils struggle to fully understand reading material due to gaps in their wider knowledge of vocabulary and the world. Leaders provide a rich wider curriculum, as well as a wealth of trips, visits and experiences to help with this.

With the support of the trust, the school has identified a need to develop some aspects of the early years curriculum further. Children who join the school in Reception Year, get off to a flying start in literacy and mathematics. However, their learning of the ideas and

concepts that will support their wider learning in key stage 1, is less well developed. The school has begun a review of the curriculum to strengthen this.

There is significant expertise to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Speech, language and communication needs are identified at the earliest opportunity. Skilled staff draw on the support of a speech and language therapist to address any gaps. There is effective support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. The school is quick to adapt or make alternative provision. This helps pupils who struggle to have a positive experience of school.

Pupils rarely experience disruption to their learning. Pupils recognise that staff are quick to respond to any incidents of poor behaviour. The school is developing different activities for pupils to do at break and lunchtimes to promote more positive play. Pupils' attend school well. Where attendance dips, the school works with families to overcome any difficulties.

The school takes every opportunity to ensure that pupils reflect on their place in the world. Pupils speak warmly about their discussions in personal, social and health education. They support each other, respecting one another's feelings and privacy. The school makes sure that every pupil gets the benefit of a rich set of experiences.

The school benefits from energetic and determined leadership. Leaders are highly ambitious for what pupils, many of whom are disadvantaged, can achieve. They consistently act in pupils' best interests. Staff are united in the same purpose. They work proactively with families and in the local community to help pupils to overcome their personal challenges and fulfil their potential.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the curriculum for children in the early years are less well developed than others. Although children build up their knowledge of literacy and mathematics well, they do not learn as much as they could from the wider curriculum. The trust should continue to develop the early years curriculum to support children to learn key knowledge and vocabulary in readiness for key stage 1.

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	144188
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10322307
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	376
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marcus Agius
CEO of the trust	Dean Ashton
Headteacher	Rachael Saim
Website	www.pilgrimprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2024.
- The school is part of the Reach South Academy Trust. The trust runs 17 academies in the South West of England.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the director and deputy director of education from the multi-academy trust, one trustee and three members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and physical education (PE). For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, visited lessons and sampled pupils work in other subjects, for example, English and art.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.

Inspection team

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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