

Inspection of The Prescott School

Knowsley Park Lane, Prescott, Liverpool, Merseyside L34 3NB

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The acting principal of this school is Simon Kevan. This school is part of The Heath Family Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), David Donnelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Stevenson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Over recent years, the school has increased its ambition for pupils. In the main, pupils are learning more effectively than they did in the past. However, as a result of the previous curriculums, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The new behaviour systems have raised teachers' expectations for pupil conduct. Most pupils behave well in lessons and they focus on their learning. However, outside of lessons, their behaviour is more variable. During breaktimes, a small number of pupils do not respond quickly enough to staff's instructions, especially when they are behaving in a boisterous way. This makes some pupils feel uncomfortable during social times.

Most pupils are happy in school. They appreciate the care, revision sessions and wider opportunities that staff provide for them. Some pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular activities. They join sports teams, dance clubs and talent shows.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they are given to take on leadership positions. Members of the student council said that the school listens to, and acts on, their views and ideas. For example, they have changed the cutlery used in the canteen to be more eco-friendly.

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

The school has brought about a number of positive changes to the curriculum since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), follow a broad and ambitious curriculum. An increasing proportion of pupils are choosing to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Despite these changes, some older pupils still have gaps in their learning due to the weaknesses in the previous curriculums. This hampers them from achieving as well as they should.

In most subjects, the curriculum is thoughtfully ordered to build on pupils' prior learning. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and explain concepts clearly. However, some teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their learning in a range of activities or contexts. As a result, some pupils are not able to connect and deepen their learning over time.

Teachers value the training that they have received to identify and rectify misconceptions in pupils' learning. However, they are at different stages in putting their training into practice. Consequently, in a few subjects, teachers do not spot and tackle gaps in pupils' learning as quickly as they should. This means that, in some subjects, pupils move on to new learning before they are ready.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. Staff receive relevant information about pupils' needs. This helps them to adapt their delivery of the

curriculum so that pupils generally receive the support that they need. As a result, pupils with SEND learn well alongside their peers.

Reading has a high priority within the school. Pupils who find reading difficult benefit from support that helps them to overcome gaps in their reading knowledge. Typically, these pupils become increasingly confident readers.

The school has increased its expectations for pupils' behaviour. Most pupils meet these expectations during lessons, although their behaviour outside of the classroom is more variable. A considerable proportion of pupils have low attendance rates and they are often late to lessons. This prevents them from making the most of the improved curriculum offer. It acts as a barrier to their achievement. The school has implemented a range of strategies to support pupils to attend school more often. Despite this work, these strategies have not had the desired impact.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is designed carefully to develop pupils' awareness of personal safety and healthy living. Pupils learn about the differences between people and how to treat each other with respect. They value the wealth of information that they receive about careers. This means that pupils feel well informed about their next steps.

The curriculum is enhanced through a growing number of visits, clubs and extra-curricular activities. However, for some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, the uptake of these opportunities is low. As such, many pupils are not benefiting from the wide opportunities that the school has to offer.

The school, with the support of the trust, has strengthened staff's expertise through further training and the recent appointment of additional middle and senior leaders. However, the school does not keep a close enough eye on the impact of these changes. As such, it is not clear if its work to bring about improvement is having the desired impact.

Staff, parents, carers and pupils are positive about a number of the improvements to the school. Staff have been provided with support to implement the changes to ensure that the impact on workload has been minimal.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not select activities that help pupils to apply their knowledge in different contexts. This limits pupils' ability to connect and deepen

their learning over time. In these subjects, the school should ensure that teachers provide appropriate activities for pupils to strengthen and deepen pupils' learning.

- Some teachers do not check pupils' learning as carefully as they should. This means that they are unaware of misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge that persist over time. The school should ensure that teachers identify and then address missed or forgotten learning so that pupils can build securely on their prior knowledge.
- A considerable proportion of pupils arrive at school late or do not attend regularly enough. This means that they miss out on learning which then hampers their achievement. The school should revisit its strategies for improving attendance in order to reduce the high levels of absence.
- Some pupils do not follow the raised behaviour expectations during social times. This makes some other pupils feel uncomfortable. It spoils their enjoyment of breaktimes. The school should ensure that staff have the same high expectations of pupils' behaviour outside of classrooms and that they follow the behaviour management policy consistently well to reduce instances of poor behaviour.
- Some pupils, including those with SEND, do not take part in extra-curricular activities or school trips. This limits their understanding and experiences of the wider world. The school should design opportunities to promote pupils' wider development better so that more pupils can broaden their experiences, talents and interests.
- The school does not have sufficient oversight of the difference that its improvement work is making to pupils' experience and education. This makes it difficult for it to identify what is working well and where further action is needed. The school should ensure that there are effective systems in place to help it check that its actions are having the desired impact.

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	142798
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10294396
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	899
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Stevenson
CEO of the trust	David Donnelly
Principal	Simon Kevan (acting)
Website	www.prescotschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Heath Family Trust.
- The school makes use of three registered and one unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, members of the trust, trustees and members of the governing body. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Eleanor Overland, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Niamh Howlett	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Maclean	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

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