

Inspection of Pelham Primary School

Pelham Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4HL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 May 2025

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The head of school is Cara Took. This school is part of Illuminate Minds 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), Jo Southby, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nicola Harper. There is also an executive headteacher, Sam Robinson, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a very warm and friendly school. All are welcome here. Every class elects a 'kindness champion', who is trained to resolve arguments and support anyone who feels angry or upset. Pupils behave sensibly. They learn to recognise their feelings and make good choices about their behaviour. They feel happy and safe.

The trust's motto 'excellence every day' is demonstrated throughout the school. Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They settle very quickly because routines and expectations are clear and well established. Older pupils achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics, as demonstrated by published outcomes at the end of Year 6.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. This includes deaf pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision). British Sign Language is used regularly throughout the school. Many staff are trained to use it at a high level and all pupils learn it to a basic level.

The school encourages pupils to 'dream big'. It provides a wide range of opportunities for them to develop their talents and interests. For example, pupils can complete the Pelham Passport, which lists '50 things to experience' before they leave. Some of these opportunities have only recently been introduced.

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

Pupils study a broad and ambitious curriculum. Secure foundations are established in the early years, where children have purposeful opportunities to learn about numbers and develop their vocabulary. The school has thought carefully about what pupils should learn and in what order. For example, in history, children in Reception learn about events within living memory. Pupils in Year 1 learn about how toys have changed from the past to the present. Older pupils examine the similarities and differences between ancient civilisations, such as the Romans and Greeks, and our own society.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading. In Nursery, children start to develop their understanding of the sounds that letters make through joining in with familiar stories and songs. Children then learn the school's phonics programme from the start of Reception. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they learn in class. Staff teach the programme well because of high-quality training. Pupils who are struggling are quickly identified and receive extra support. Excitement about reading is developed through the well-stocked library and events such as author visits and book fairs. Pupils enjoy reading to the school's 'dog mentors'.

The school is ambitious for pupils with SEND. It identifies each individual pupil's needs, so they receive appropriate support. Learning is carefully adapted so that all pupils learn the curriculum successfully. The school works closely with external agencies, when appropriate, so pupils with SEND receive the right support.

Typically, teachers have strong subject knowledge. They introduce and present new knowledge clearly. Occasionally, the school does not ensure that pupils in Years 1 to 6 have enough opportunities to practise what they have learned in sufficient depth before moving on. This makes it harder for pupils to consolidate their knowledge in their long-term memory.

Provision in the early years is highly effective. Its curriculum provides a very strong foundation for children's learning and development. Staff create a stimulating and purposeful environment. They support children very well to engage with the learning activities and resources. These are carefully designed to ensure that they match children's next steps in learning. This ensures that children are exceedingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school takes attendance seriously and acts quickly when there are concerns. Staff keep parents and carers informed and work well with families who face difficulties in getting their children to school regularly. The school promotes positive behaviour in a calm and supportive environment. Staff work with pupils, including those with additional needs, to help them manage their emotions and succeed in school.

The school's personal, social, health and economic programme ensures that pupils have a strong understanding of equality and diversity in modern Britain. Trips, events and workshops are thoughtfully designed to enrich the curriculum. For example, every year pupils visit a different London museum and a local landmark. They also engage in workshops on topics including the Vikings, the environment and virtual reality. The school provides a wide range of clubs and activities including coding, cricket, board games and cinema. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are fully included and enjoy this extensive provision.

Parents are pleased that there is now more stable leadership at the school. Staff are very proud to work here. They appreciate the support for their professional development and their well-being. Governors work with leaders to support their ambitions for further improvement. Together, they create a nurturing and inclusive environment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, teaching does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and secure important knowledge. This limits pupils' deeper knowledge and understanding in these subjects. The school should ensure that staff use strategies to embed key knowledge in these subjects effectively so that pupils know and remember more across all subjects over time.

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	139494
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10379141
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nicola Harper
CEO of the trust	Jo Southby
Headteacher	Sam Robinson (executive headteacher) Cara Took (head of school)
Website	www.pelhamprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current head of school started at the school in April 2025. From October 2024 until April 2025, the school was led by the executive headteacher.
- The school operates breakfast and after-school clubs on site.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for up to 14 deaf pupils.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the head of school, executive headteacher, members of the school's senior leadership team, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspectors also met with the chair of trustees and members of the trust board, as well as the CEO and the trust director of SEND, safeguarding and inclusion.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, history, early reading and science. 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 in some other subjects.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to pupils' wider development, behaviour and attendance. They also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and during breaktime.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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