

Parkside Community Primary School

Aycliffe Road, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 4EP

Inspection dates

28–29 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	25-26 September 2013

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school. This means that not enough pupils are making fast enough progress.
- Outcomes in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have not been high enough over the last two years, and standards in phonics declined sharply last year.
- Evaluations of the impact of pupil premium expenditure have not been carried out with sufficient attention to detail to ensure that provision for disadvantaged pupils provides good value for money.
- An interim headteacher is in place, and governors are in the process of recruiting a permanent headteacher. The senior leadership team is strongly committed to reversing the decline in standards over the last two years and to improving communications with parents when concerns are raised. However, there has not been enough time for the impact of this work on outcomes in the school to be evident.
- The percentage of pupils who are absent or persistently absent has been above average for the last two years. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils.
- New middle leaders, particularly those responsible for phonics, reading and mathematics, have not yet had the opportunities to introduce improvements.
- Too many pupils are not appropriately challenged. Often, work is either too easy or too hard.
- Pupils do not pay enough attention in lessons, sometimes because the work is not well matched to their needs and sometimes because senior leaders have not been consistent in communicating their expectations to teachers.
- Standards at the end of the early years foundation stage are not high enough, and turbulence in staffing has impeded children's progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The governing body quickly identified the need to improve outcomes and communications. Governors have acted decisively to strengthen senior leadership.
- The interim headteacher has quickly begun to introduce improvements.
- There are various opportunities for pupils to experience a broad curriculum, with music, art and physical education (PE) being particularly notable features.
- Writing including handwriting and the presentation of work are also strengths.

- Pupils' personal development and welfare are given a high priority and pupils are proud of their school.
- Subject leaders are newly energised and have clear plans in place to raise standards.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 have remained either in line with or above national expectations over the last three years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - subject leaders, particularly for reading and mathematics, are given the necessary support to help them raise standards and improve outcomes
 - action is taken to reduce absence, including persistent absence, especially of disadvantaged pupils
 - programmes of support for disadvantaged pupils are thoroughly analysed to provide school leaders and governors with detailed information about their impact.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment and, as a result, raise standards by ensuring that:
 - teachers make better use of assessment information to plan lessons which are appropriately challenging and well matched to the needs of all pupils.
- Improve behaviour in lessons by:
 - reducing low-level disruption and ensuring that systems for promoting positive behaviour in lessons are applied consistently in every classroom.
- Improve outcomes in early years by:
 - making better use of assessment information to ensure that activities accurately match children's learning and development needs
 - improving children's social skills so that poor behaviour does not disrupt learning.

An external review of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because standards have declined since the previous inspection. The interim headteacher and her leadership team have not yet had sufficient time to make the necessary improvements.
- Leaders have not ensured that teaching or outcomes are consistently good. Assessment information has not been accurate enough or used well enough by teachers to plan lessons. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains inconsistent, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils includes opportunities such as 'tea and toast' in the morning to improve punctuality, to raise self-esteem and to improve social skills. However, the evaluation of these initiatives is too limited, and leaders are not clear about the impact of the different programmes. As a result, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils has not been good enough.
- Leaders have struggled to manage the inconsistent standards across the school in part because of difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers.
- Some parents said that over the last 12 months in particular, senior leaders have not communicated well enough with them, especially when concerns have been raised. However, parents now recognise that a new leadership team is in place and they are aware of efforts being made to improve the situation.
- The eight pupils who received a total of 10 fixed-term exclusions last year, combined with evidence from lesson observations and the school's own behaviour records, demonstrate that leaders have not done enough to ensure that behaviour in lessons is consistently good. There are too many instances of low-level disruption such as calling out and not listening to instructions. The school's new leadership team is well aware of these inconsistencies, and plans are in place to improve training and monitoring of the behaviour management procedures.
- Many subject leaders either are very new to their responsibilities or are only now receiving support and encouragement to undertake monitoring and training responsibilities. They are keen to begin work to improve standards. While their work has not yet had time to bring about the necessary improvements, their determination to learn their roles quickly and to take every opportunity to support senior leaders is encouraging. Until very recently, however, leaders have not done enough to challenge or support staff to address the variations in practice and in pupils' outcomes across the school.
- Leaders' work to support pupils' rights, respect and responsibilities is evident around the school, particularly in pupils' understanding of democratic values. For example, leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of electing a responsible and effective school council to support charities and help raise funds for good causes. Pupils also show their responsibility by acting as assembly monitors.
- Sports funding has been used effectively to provide specialist teaching and to increase the range of resources available for teaching. This is having a positive effect on pupils'

enjoyment of PE and the quality of provision. A good range of sports clubs is on offer to pupils. The use of this funding is analysed carefully to ensure that it provides good value for money.

- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is carefully planned, and many parents appreciate the support available. The support base for pupils who have a specific learning difficulty is located in the school, and the manager acts as an effective source of practical advice for teachers and as coaching support for the inclusion leader.
- Leaders at all levels are positively embracing the good support available from 'Herts for Learning', the school improvement service linked to the local authority.
- Governors have appointed new leaders, including an interim headteacher, and this leadership team is in the early stages of restoring continuity to teaching.

Governance of the school

- Governors' actions have not yet had enough time to improve standards. An interim headteacher has started work this term and governors are in the process of recruiting a permanent headteacher. Middle leaders' expertise is still in development, and the quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent.
- The chair is a highly experienced professional with a wealth of knowledge of employment law, and the chair of the education committee is a strategic leader of governance with the local authority. They have made good use of these skills in order to bring about improvements to the school's senior leadership team.
- The governing body has improved its own capacity for strong and effective leadership in a very short time. In the last 12 months, governors have become far more strategic in their work. They now challenge senior leaders about their decisions, hold them to account for standards in the school and are well placed to lead the school through a critical period of change and improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff and governors are trained effectively to fulfil their safeguarding roles and duties. As a result, they know what to do and how to raise concerns in different situations. Training covers a wide range of areas including helping pupils to stay safe from harm when using the internet or communication technology and protecting them from the possible risk of radicalisation or extremism.
- The recruitment of staff is safely managed.
- Staff record and pass on concerns to the leaders responsible, who then act appropriately. Safeguarding referrals to local authorities and other appropriate agencies are effective. Careful record-keeping enables leaders to review their care for children and act quickly if circumstances change. For example, during the inspection, a teacher received information that a child might be at risk. Inspectors noted that this information was carefully recorded, and it was clear that leaders took appropriate

action.

- Agency staff who work in the school, such as catering staff, are also fully trained and could explain clearly how their up-to-date safeguarding skills equip them to deal with any concerns that might arise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are too variable across the school. Inconsistent teaching has resulted in the underachievement of too many pupils. As a result, not enough pupils are making the progress expected of them by the time they leave key stage 2. In some lessons, work set by teachers is too hard for too many pupils, while in other lessons the work is too easy. Too few teachers make consistently good use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the needs of the whole class.
- Discussions with pupils in lessons and checks in their books from last year show that too many pupils have an insecure understanding of the breadth of mathematical concepts. Discussions with pupils, including some who read aloud to inspectors, showed that teachers do not do enough to establish a strong culture of reading at school. Insufficient action is taken to give additional support to pupils who do not read very often at home.
- Some teachers are inconsistent in the degree of challenge they give and in their level of expectation about what pupils can achieve. As a result, the quality of work varies considerably across the school. In mathematics, for example, most-able pupils were simply given more numbers to add together instead of work that challenged them to think hard.
- The teaching of history, geography, science and religious education is stronger across the school. Although a lot of work was undertaken in these subjects last year, some opportunities to challenge pupils through extended tasks were missed.
- Leaders recognise that phonics has not been taught well enough and standards have dropped. Recent training for teachers and learning support assistants is beginning to improve staff confidence and skills. Although inspectors observed a number of effective phonics sessions in which pupils made good progress, pupils do not routinely apply these skills well enough in their reading.
- In nearly all lessons, teachers ensure that pupils present their work as tidily as possible so that they take pride in their work. Handwriting skills are well developed, and the vast majority of pupils join their letters neatly.
- Teachers provide pupils with marking and feedback in line with school policy. Pupils are taught to edit and improve their own work in response to the feedback they receive, and they stated that this encourages them to learn from their mistakes.
- Inspectors noted some exemplary practice in some lessons, such as when teachers use questioning very effectively to assess pupils' understanding and to deepen thinking. When this happens, pupils respond well and make good progress. At other times, opportunities to deepen understanding are missed because teachers' questioning is not sharp enough or because teachers are too quick to accept pupils' initial ideas without exploring ways to help them improve.
- Achievement is higher in lessons in which teachers make good use of time, resources

are appropriate and careful planning ensures that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. In other lessons, too much time is spent either practising concepts which pupils have already mastered, or moving on to independent activities before pupils understand what to do next. Inspectors observed a number of lessons in which teachers did not intervene quickly enough when pupils were stuck or needed to move on to the next challenge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils take pride in their work, their achievements and their school. Their work in books is very well presented. They take care with their handwriting and annotate and label their work in science and geography carefully. In assembly, pupils proudly showed their homework projects, including models of the solar system and ancient Greek helmets and shields they had made.
- The majority of pupils wear their uniforms with pride.
- Playtime and lunchtime routines are carefully designed to help pupils feel safe and to help them use their time productively. Staff are vigilant, caring and quick to act if anyone is feeling upset. Pupils said that they feel safe at school, and the majority of parents agreed.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop responsibility and to use their initiative. They can be elected to the school council and become involved in helping to improve their school, organising events and raising money for charity. Pupils act as lunchtime leaders and assembly monitors, and this work also helps to support pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is enhanced by plenty of opportunities to play music and learn about other religions and cultures. Inspectors saw pupils enjoying their African drumming and heard how pupils' good understanding of Judaism has impressed members of the local community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- While pupils usually walk sensibly in corridors, enter and leave lessons calmly and play together well in the playground, behaviour in lessons is not consistently good enough. Too many pupils are inattentive, struggle to listen carefully or call out during lessons. Expectations about behaviour in lessons are not embedded across the school.
- The school's own behaviour records show that a number of fixed-term exclusions have been imposed, often for persistent, disruptive behaviour. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that behaviour in lessons is managed well, or to develop a culture of high expectation right from the point when children enter the school in the nursery and reception classes.
- Strategies to support good attendance have been only partially successful. Office staff keep a careful record of late arrivals, but leaders do not have an effective system for

reducing poor punctuality. Systems to support the attendance of disadvantaged pupils have not been as successful as leaders had hoped. Overall absence rates, including persistent absence, are above average. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance remains in the lowest 10% nationally and declined further last year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the national assessments for the last two years, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been below, and sometimes well below, that of other pupils nationally.
- However, standards at the end of key stage 1 have remained either in line with or above national expectations over the last three years. In 2017, attainment in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 were all above the national figure, while that in mathematics was in line with national outcomes.
- Outcomes in reading and mathematics at key stage 2 were particularly low in 2017. Only 63% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading compared with 71% nationally and only 50% in mathematics compared with 75% nationally. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils was very low in mathematics, with only 36% meeting the expected standard.
- Outcomes for the current most-able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are also inconsistent across different classes and different subjects. This is often because teachers do not use assessment information carefully enough when planning lessons. In the 2017 key stage 2 assessments, outcomes at the higher level were well below national averages in reading and mathematics, including those for disadvantaged pupils.
- Younger pupils do not use their phonics skills consistently well enough. Outcomes in the phonics screening check dropped sharply in 2017 and only 56% of pupils met the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check. This is well below the national figure and well below previous results in the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make variable progress because, while they generally receive good additional support, class work is not consistently based on secure assessment information.
- The school's own assessment information shows that current Year 6 pupils are doing better in mathematics and reading this year. Nevertheless, work across all year groups, together with the school's own information, shows that progress is inconsistent. This evidence supports senior leaders' opinions that many pupils must make accelerated progress in order to catch up.
- Writing is a strength of the school because teachers have worked hard to ensure that it is consistently good. Writing outcomes for the last two years at the end of key stage 2 have been at least in line with and sometimes above national expectations.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children join the Reception and Nursery classes with a broad variety of skills and

aptitudes. Since 2014, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of the early years has been below and sometimes well below the national average. Children do not make enough progress from their different starting points because work is not well enough matched to their development needs.

- Additional provision in place to support disadvantaged children with their social skills and confidence in reading, writing and number work has not yet improved outcomes.
- Leadership of the early years has been inconsistent. Although adults generally make a positive contribution to learning, asking interesting questions and recording children's progress, planning has not been sharp enough to ensure that activities offer enough opportunities for progress to be good. Interventions have not had enough impact, particularly for those children who find learning difficult.
- Where adults use questioning well to support speaking and listening skills and interactions with children in their role play areas, this helps to extend their imagination. One group of children was busily 'at work' in the role play office. The children enjoyed speaking to customers on the office telephone, making notes in the office diary and sending emails on the office keyboard.
- Children's behaviour is not consistently good. There are too many small disruptions to address squabbles or sort out whose turn it is to use a particular area of the classroom. As a result, children's social development does not progress as quickly as it should and this, in turn, means that the pace of academic learning also slows.
- Staff give children's welfare a high priority and make sure that the statutory safeguarding requirements are met. Relationships between parents and staff were not as productive as they could have been last year, and parents were very concerned about the high turnover of staff. Parents feel that things have improved this term. They told inspectors that they feel welcome and included, and they confirmed that they receive useful information about how their children are getting on.

School details

Unique reference number	117562
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10036133

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miranda Barnett
Interim Headteacher	Lesley Spence
Telephone number	0208 387 3000
Website	www.parksidecommunityps-herts.co.uk/
Email address	head@parkside.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium strategy, the content of the curriculum, admissions arrangements or the attendance record of the governing body on its website.
- The interim headteacher came into post at the beginning of September 2017.
- The school is a larger than the average-size primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who are receiving support is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are believed to speak English as an additional language is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school, and conducted joint observations with senior leaders including the interim headteacher.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in every subject and every year group and listened to Year 1 and Year 2 pupils read.
- They also met with pupils, formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the inclusion coordinator, the early years leader, the pastoral support worker, the manager of the local specific learning needs outreach service, a representative of Herts for Learning, the chair of governors and the chair of the education committee of the governing body.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation that covered: information about pupils' attainment and progress; the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; minutes of meetings; records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils. The school's website was also scrutinised.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed by parents through informal meetings and the 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View.

Inspection team

Nick Rudman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Webb	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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