

Ecclesbourne Primary School

Attlee Close, Thornton Heath, Croydon, CR7 7FA

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Although the overall quality of teaching has improved significantly, it is not yet consistently good across the school. This results in uneven progress for pupils.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, pupils generally achieve better in mathematics than in reading and writing. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching early reading skills and do not make the best use of small group reading sessions to develop pupils' skills and understanding.
- More-able pupils are not always provided with tasks that challenge them in lessons. As a result, too few pupils reach the highest National Curriculum levels by the end of each key stage (Key Stages 1 and 2).
- Teachers do not always make writing tasks meaningful for pupils so that they understand the purpose for writing.
- In mathematics, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly, but do not give enough guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work.
- In some lessons teachers talk for too long and do not allow enough time for pupils to practise their skills and work independently.

The school has the following strengths:

- Leadership and management are good. Senior staff monitor the quality of teaching and learning rigorously and staff receive high-quality feedback so that they can continue to improve.
- Over the last year, school leaders and governors have driven improvement effectively so that standards have risen across the school.
- Many pupils made accelerated progress in the last academic year and are now on track to reach the expected level at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are polite and courteous to adults and each other.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that any form of bullying is dealt with promptly.
- Attendance is now above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 24 lessons taught by 16 teachers. They also looked at pupils' workbooks in lessons and spoke to pupils about their work. They talked to pupils informally during break and lunch times and met with two groups of pupils. They attended two assemblies.
- There were not sufficient responses to Parent View to enable inspectors to see the results. Inspectors talked informally to parents as they arrived to drop off and collect their children.
- Inspectors met with the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Pegasus Academy Trust and the Vice-Chair of the Local Governing Body. They also met with individual teachers and senior staff and considered the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the school's records of attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. They also considered improvement planning and self-evaluation, the school's records of monitoring, key policies and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Melanie Knowles, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional inspector

Patricia MacLachlan

Additional inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Ecclesbourne Primary School is much larger than average. There are two classes in each year group and two Nursery classes. The school converted to academy status in April 2011 and is a member of the Pegasus Academy Trust.
- The school serves a very diverse community, with most pupils coming from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are from Black African or Black Caribbean heritage. Many pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs supported at school action is much larger than average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average.
- The government's floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress, was met in 2011.
- The school has recently set up a breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils. Both clubs were visited as part of this inspection.
- Since the previous full inspection there have been considerable changes to the teaching staff and to the school's leadership team. The head of the school joined the school earlier this month.
- When the school was last inspected in June 2011 it was given a notice to improve because its overall effectiveness was inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan tasks that offer an appropriate level of challenge in lessons, particularly for those pupils capable of achieving the highest standards
 - sharing clear criteria with pupils so that they can judge their own success in lessons
 - reducing the amount of time spent in lessons on whole-class teacher-led work and increasing pupils' independence.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school by:
 - increasing the effectiveness of small group reading sessions and of the teaching of letter sounds
 - ensuring that tasks are meaningful and give pupils a clear purpose for writing
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in lessons
 - improving the quality of written feedback to pupils so that they understand their next steps in learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Assessments indicate that most children have skills below those expected for their age when they join the school in the Nursery or Reception. The majority of children make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this year an increased proportion joined Year 1 with attainment at the expected level for their age in writing, reading, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.
- Across the school, as the quality of teaching improves, attainment is rising securely. This was confirmed by work seen during the inspection in lessons and in pupils' books. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to apply their improved mathematical skills to solve problems.
- School leaders have correctly identified that attainment in reading and writing, particularly in Key Stage 1, is in need of further improvement. Teachers encourage pupils to write, but do not always provide meaningful tasks that inspire them. School leaders have appropriate plans in place to raise the profile of reading and build teachers' expertise.
- In Year 6, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected Level 4 in the end of year tests rose to its highest level for three years in reading, writing and mathematics. However, fewer pupils gained the higher levels in English and mathematics this year. In lessons, inspectors found that more-able pupils were not always challenged by the activities provided for them and some said the work was too easy.
- School tracking data show that many pupils made or exceeded expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics during last year. However, progress is not yet good in all classes or for all groups of pupils. In some classes, where pupils were unsettled by frequent staff changes last year, there is a legacy of low achievement to overcome. Also, Black Caribbean boys do not always make as much progress as their peers.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and other potentially vulnerable groups such as those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those learning English as an additional language, make similar progress to their peers overall. Pupils from Black African heritages generally achieve well. In lessons, teachers' well-matched questioning means that all pupils are involved in whole-class sessions.
- The head of school is determined that all pupils should have the opportunity to thrive. He has updated the school's tracking system so that the progress of different groups of pupils can be reviewed regularly. Although the system is new, senior leaders have already spotted some patterns of underachievement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although it is early in the academic year, all teachers have already built good working relationships with their new classes this term. They apply the school behaviour policy consistently so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them.
- Teachers are keen to develop their skills and respond well to the detailed feedback they receive from school leaders. As a result, teaching is improving strongly and work in books shows that pupils now make better progress in their learning.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good across the school. In lessons seen during the inspection, some teachers talked for too long at the start of the lesson and few teachers informed pupils how they could achieve the learning objective of the lesson and be successful in their learning.
- There are consistently positive features to teaching such as the good use of songs and rhymes to reinforce learning in the lower part of the school and the effective use of interactive whiteboards and visualisers in lessons.
- Teachers' marking is generally thorough, but most rarely gives clear guidance to pupils on

what they need to do to improve.

- Classrooms are bright and well organised. Although the outside areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well resourced with play equipment, they do not provide an exciting, language-rich environment for children.
- The school has a large number of teaching assistants and many make a significant contribution to learning in lessons. Sometimes teachers allocate adult help to a group for too long. As a result, pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop the skills to learn and work independently.
- In the best lessons, expectations are high and activities are pitched at the right level for different groups of learners. The pace of learning is brisk. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson the teacher set up an exciting context for descriptive writing where the pupils were engaged as detectives in investigating a crime scene. Pupils eagerly discussed imaginative adjectives to describe the culprit and then the teacher worked with them to build sentences using adventurous verbs, adverbs and adjectives. After 15 minutes, the pupils were ready to write independently and all settled to work with great enthusiasm.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In class, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well, treating each other and staff with consideration and respect. Pupils talk spontaneously, and with pride, about the diverse cultures and language heritages within the school.
- Pupils, staff and parents all agree that behaviour has improved since the previous full inspection. The school-wide behaviour management system is understood well by pupils and applied consistently by staff. Pupils say that, typically, there is little disruption to learning in lessons and none was seen during the inspection.
- Pupils with particular behavioural needs are well supported through individual behaviour plans, which have clear targets, actions and sanctions. Pupils who, in the past, have had problems managing their behaviour speak positively about how they have been helped by the school to overcome difficulties.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and that bullying of any kind is not a problem in school. This is because the consequences are clear and they know who to go to if they feel worried or upset. They say they feel safe in school and they understand how they can keep themselves safe when using the internet or walking to and from school.
- Attendance has improved dramatically since the previous full inspection. This is due to effective monitoring and robust action in cases where attendance has been consistently low. Clear expectations have been shared with the whole school community. Good attendance and punctuality are celebrated in weekly assemblies.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs provide high-quality experiences for pupils and support parents who need childcare out of normal school hours.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteachers of the Pegasus Academy Trust have skilfully guided the school through a period of significant upheaval. There have been changes to the leadership structure of the school, a high turnover of teaching staff and a lengthy programme of building work but, throughout, they have maintained a constant focus on school improvement.
- The new head of school has quickly gained the confidence of staff, pupils and parents. He has accurately assessed the school's strengths and weaknesses and drawn up a high-quality school development plan to build on the work of his predecessor. The leadership team has also been strengthened by the appointment of two assistant headteachers and year group leaders who work across the three schools in the Pegasus Academy Trust. They can already demonstrate the impact of their work. Key teaching policies have been revised to ensure that there is consistency in practice. Morale in the school is good and there is a sense of confidence and

optimism about the school's future.

- Senior and middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning rigorously. Any underperformance has been tackled robustly and this has led to some changes in staffing. School leaders visit lessons, review progress data and look at pupils' work regularly. Some visit lessons to work alongside colleagues or to model good practice. Newly qualified teachers are supported well.
- Performance management procedures have been tightened this year and a clear policy is in place. The school makes effective use of the expertise across the three schools in the trust to provide appropriate in-house training and professional development for staff. As a result, teachers are growing in confidence and their subject knowledge is improving.
- The curriculum meets the needs and interests of the culturally-diverse school population. Teachers plan learning in history, geography, art and design and technology in broad themes, such as 'Exploration and encounters' or 'On the move'. Each theme builds progressively from largely teacher-directed work to independent work and pupil-directed research. It is clear that the broad range of experiences provided for pupils contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the improved attainment seen in lessons during the inspection.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection all reported that they had seen significant improvement in the school. They find staff approachable and they like seeing the new head of school on the playground before and after school. Some were concerned about the level of challenge in lessons for their children. Inspectors have asked the school to improve this aspect of its work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is well coordinated because the Local Governing Body and the Board of Directors of the Pegasus Academy Trust work closely together. Minutes of meetings show that the board acknowledges and celebrates successes at Ecclesbourne while maintaining its ongoing challenge to school leaders to secure further improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - ensures that financial resources are managed well, including the use of the pupil premium.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136566
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	386026

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Smith
Headteacher	Paul Robins
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 June 2011
Telephone number	020 86843187
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