

Parklands Community Primary School

Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 3RL

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Pupils' progress in English, particularly in writing in Key Stage 2, is too slow. Far too many pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 with standards that are well below the expectations for their age.
- While there are signs of recent improvement, the overall quality of teaching is inadequate. As a result of weak teaching over time, pupils have fallen behind in their learning.
- Not all staff manage pupils' behaviour in ways that work well. Some give too many instructions so pupils get confused and do not listen. In weaker lessons when tasks are too easy or too hard, pupils quickly lose interest or become too dependent on adult help.
- A small number of pupils arrive late for school and often miss the start of lessons.
- Until recently, subject leaders have not been given enough guidance on how to do their jobs. This means that they do not know enough about how well their subject is being taught or what to do to raise standards.
- In recent years, school leaders, including governors, have not done enough to check on the progress of pupils or how well teachers have been teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has been swift to take action to improve the school's performance.
- The care and support given to pupils who find aspects of school life difficult, or who face difficulties in their lives, is of high quality and is greatly appreciated by parents.
- The attention to children's social skills and emotional needs when they first start school helps them to settle in quickly, understand the difference between right and wrong, and to be happy at school.
- Procedures for keeping pupils safe are well organised and understood by all. All statutory requirements are met.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors visited an assembly, breakfast club, and the school's nurture room. Inspectors also observed break times and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, parents, school staff and volunteers, the Chair of the Governing Body, a parent governor, and a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors took account of 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The returns from the staff questionnaires were also analysed.
- A number of documents were examined. These included information about pupils' progress, school improvement plans and records of governors' meetings. The work in pupils' books and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Parklands Community School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action is above average.
- Most pupils are White British and some pupils come from Traveller backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the additional pupil-premium funding is above average.
- Parklands Community Primary School does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate inadequate teaching and make sure that all lessons are at least good so that pupils make better progress and reach higher standards in all year groups by:
 - making sure that all pupils learn how to work on their own without relying too much on adults' support
 - improving teachers' skills in finding out what pupils already know and can do before trying to teach them new things
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking so that pupils are told clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work
 - providing more training and guidance for staff on the school's new policies for managing pupils' behaviour and for encouraging positive attitudes to learning so that all staff follow the policy in the same way.
- Raise standards in English, particularly in writing, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunity and real purpose to write longer pieces of work
 - teaching pupils about the features of different types of writing and showing them how to check the quality of their own, and each other's, work
 - making sure staff know how to help pupils develop their writing skills as they go from year to year.
- Work with parents to make sure that all pupils get to school on time so that they do not miss the start of lessons.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - giving subject leaders more time and opportunity to check how well their subject is being taught and the progress that pupils are making
 - making better use of the available information about pupils' progress so that school leaders, at all levels, are better able to check how well pupils are doing and whether actions to boost progress have worked
 - making sure that the new systems and routines to check the quality of teaching and to set

- targets for future improvement are implemented rigorously
- ensuring that the governing body gets the information it needs in order to check the work of the school.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- In recent years, standards in English and mathematics, at the end of Key Stage 2, have been low. This is most noticeable in writing, which lags a long way behind reading and mathematics. Last year, only a quarter of the pupils who left at the end of Year 6 were able to write to the expected standard for their age.
- Many children start at Parklands School with skills and knowledge that are lower than those seen in many other schools. However, even allowing for these low starting points, their rate of progress as they move through the school is too slow.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children are helped to develop positive attitudes towards school and are encouraged to do things for themselves. Attention to their early language, literacy and social skills is effective and children do well in these classes. In Key Stage 1, the pace of learning has got faster since the last inspection and many pupils make steady progress in reading and mathematics, although fewer do well with their writing.
- When pupils move into Key Stage 2, the pace of learning slows and too many pupils do not make the progress in English and mathematics that they should. However, it is their poor progress in writing that gives the greatest cause for concern.
- Over the past year, the school has done more to check how well pupils are doing and to see if different groups of pupils are doing better, or worse, than others. These records show that, in the last term, progress in mathematics and reading for all groups of pupils got faster, but this is not the case in writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities receive a lot of extra help and support. As a result the gap between their achievement and that of other pupils in the school is narrow. Nevertheless, they could still do better.
- The school has used the extra funding provided through the pupil premium to increase the range of activities on offer to pupils, and also to pay for extra teaching assistants. These actions have helped to enrich pupils' school experience, and pupils supported in this way have made better progress than others.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- In recent times, the quality of teaching has been inadequate and this is why pupils' progress has been too slow. During this inspection, some good teaching was seen, but there is still too much teaching that requires improvement, and some that is inadequate.
- Overall, teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes and Key Stage 1 is better than it is in Key Stage 2, although there is strong teaching at the top end of the school.
- When teaching is weak, teachers use worksheets that are too hard or too easy. This makes pupils confused so they lose interest or get frustrated. At other times, adults give too many instructions or do too much for pupils so they are not made to think for themselves.
- In the better lessons, teachers ask questions to find out what pupils already know, to make sure their teaching helps the pupils to learn more. In one effective mathematics lesson, for example, careful questioning prompted pupils to share ideas about how to find the difference between numbers. By listening closely to their suggestions, the teacher was able to introduce new problems that made pupils think hard and use their existing skills in new situations. However, in the weaker lessons, this does not happen.
- In another class, pupils talked about the features of biographical writing and discussed how well their work measured up against the success criteria that they had helped to set. However, in too many lessons pupils are not given enough guidance on the different types of writing, nor do they get enough chances to share their ideas or to check their own and each other's work to consider ways to make it better.
- All teachers and teaching assistants work hard and want to improve their teaching. However, planning documents that show how pupils' skills should develop as they move through the school are not very helpful. Again, this aspect of the school's work is weaker in English than in

mathematics.

- Work in books is better this term than it was last year. Pupils are getting more done than they used to and are proud of their independent writing and homework 'busy books'. However, pupils still do not spend enough time working on longer pieces of writing for any meaningful purpose.
- Teachers' marking varies in its effectiveness. At its best, it tells pupils how well they have done and what they need to do next in order to make more progress. At its weakest, it gives little or no advice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils **requires improvement**

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and most attend regularly and on time. However, a small number of pupils arrive too late, too often, and miss the start of lessons.
- Pupils, staff and parents also say that behaviour at the school is now much better than it used to be. A new behaviour-management policy has been introduced. This makes it clear that good behaviour and attitudes to learning will be rewarded and poor behaviour will be challenged. This policy is being followed by most of the staff.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying and most of them understand how it differs from the playground fall-outs that happen occasionally. Parents in their responses to the online questionnaire expressed some concerns about how the school tackles bullying. However, pupils say that bullying is not a problem because, while it does happen sometimes, staff take it seriously and deal with it quickly.
- Pupils who find it difficult to manage aspects of their behaviour are helped and supported. The school does this well.
- The 'smile room', which is a quiet space offering a calm safe refuge for pupils, is a strength of the school. By having access to this place, and the caring support offered by the well-trained staff who work there, pupils who find it difficult to cope in school are helped to manage their behaviour and to make progress in improving their attitudes to school and to learning.
- All staff pay proper attention to the procedures that keep pupils safe. Consequently, pupils feel safe and well cared for at school. The school also teaches them how to manage everyday risks and to help others. Some of the older pupils act as play leaders or road safety officers. These roles require them to take on extra responsibilities that assist the smooth running of the school and help to teach other pupils about safety matters.

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- The headteacher has acted swiftly to bring about improvement. She knows how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to make it better. She has set about making improvements with speed and energy. She has high expectations and communicates them clearly.
- While improvements have been made, more remains to be done to accelerate the pace of improvement. Leaders, including governors, have not focused sufficiently on linking the quality of teachers' work with their pay progression and training needs. Consequently, some teachers have not kept up-to-date with training and some weak teaching has gone unchallenged. This term, systems have been put in place to help teachers and to make them more accountable for pupils' progress. However, it is still too early to judge the impact of this.
- Subject leaders and teachers with leadership responsibilities now have more opportunity to find out what is working well and what needs to be improved. All have an increased awareness of their role in driving forward whole-school improvement. This has created a sense of shared purpose that has lifted staff morale. Nevertheless, despite recent improvements their role in checking the quality of teaching and learning and taking action to boost pupils' progress is still an area for development.
- The progress of all pupils, including those supported through the use of extra funding, is recorded regularly. However, not all leaders and other staff are involved in analysing the information in enough detail so that they know which actions have been the most, or least,

successful in helping pupils to do better.

- The school provides a range of activities that teaches pupils about the wider world, broadens their horizons and adds excitement to their learning. Year 6 pupils meet pupils from other schools when they take part in a residential trip to an activity centre. Visits to places of interest and visitors and volunteer helpers make a valuable contribution to the pupils' education, well-being and personal development.
 - The school meets statutory requirements relating to safeguarding and equality of opportunity. While all groups of pupils have not been doing equally as well as they could, all have equal access to the wide range of subjects and activities provided at school.
 - The local authority knows that the school is not performing as well as it should and has provided some extra help. More recently, the school has taken the initiative in seeking advice and additional support. This has helped to assist the new headteacher in making changes this term.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. Although, since the last inspection, the governing body has improved its knowledge and skills, it has not done enough to find out about the quality of teaching and to challenge inadequate achievement.
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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	111238
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	405324

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Darby
Headteacher	Mrs Rosalind Flanders
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 December 2010
Telephone number	0151 3382220
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