

Park Primary School

Rutland Street, Colne, Lancashire, BB8 0QJ

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
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 requires improvement.

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because standards in Key Stage 2 were too low last year and currently, progress is uneven across the key stage.
- Progress in writing is less good than that in mathematics and reading in Key Stage 2. This is because some pupils lack the skills to use grammar and punctuation effectively in their writing.
- In some lessons, learning proceeds too slowly when teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in the time available. When this happens, behaviour dips.
- The outdoor area in which Reception-age children learn and play does not offer sufficient opportunity for children to develop their physical skills, such as climbing or riding on wheeled toys.
- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders are not yet sufficiently effective at using the data collected on pupils' progress to monitor progress and evaluate the effect of systems put in place to improve achievement.
- Governors have not yet undertaken training to enable them to have a good understanding of school achievement data. As a result, they are not able to offer sufficient challenge or support to senior leaders to improve pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress from low starting points in the Reception classes.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 as evidenced by the school's above average performance in the national phonics check (linking sounds and letters).
- Pupils with additional needs who attend the 'Rainbow Room' make good progress.
- Despite the great turbulence experienced by the leadership team in the last 18 months, the current acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are bringing about effective change, including improvement to the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 21 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers and support staff. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 1 and 2 read and, accompanied by the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher, examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- The inspectors held meetings and had discussions with pupils, senior leaders and members of the school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspection team took into account the views of 17 parents who made their views known through the on-line questionnaire (Parents' View), as well as a further 21 parents who had informal discussions with the inspection team at the school gate. Seventeen members of staff also made their views known.
- The inspection team also studied health and safety documentation, teachers' curriculum planning, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff and the school's system for checking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stefan Lord

Additional Inspector

David Blackburne

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Park Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils who attend come from families of White British heritage. At the time of the inspection, a small number of pupils came from families from other ethnic groups.
- A much larger than average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those from families in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards set for the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school makes provision through the Rainbow and Oak rooms for pupils with additional needs. Led by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), staff provide pupils with a more nurturing curriculum designed to improve their speech, language, behaviour and learning in six weekly blocks.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been much turbulence within the staff and senior leadership team, including four different headteachers. Since November 2013, the deputy headteacher has become the acting headteacher and the Key Stage 1 leader has become the acting deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and progress to consistently good and better by:
 - improving the pace at which pupils learn and increasing the amount of work expected in lessons in Key Stage 2
 - improving the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to increase opportunities for children's physical development.
- Raise pupils' attainment in writing in Key Stage 2, by increasing the amount of time spent in English lessons on teaching grammar and punctuation.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - improving the use of data collected on pupils' progress to monitor more accurately their progress and the impact of actions taken to improve achievement
 - increasing training opportunities for governors in order that they better understand data relating to pupils' achievement, so that they are able to offer more effective support and challenge to senior leaders.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2013, standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 were below those expected nationally, particularly in writing. Although current Year 6 pupils are making better progress in English and mathematics, this represents achievement that requires improvement overall.
- Key Stage 2 pupils make slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. Although pupils are often given good opportunities to write in different contexts and styles, the work in their books shows that their knowledge of grammar and punctuation is not as good as it should be. This reduces their overall achievement.
- Currently pupils' progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 is improving. However, this improvement is recent and is not consistent across the year groups. Pupils make a better start in Year 3, and this continues in Year 4. Progress last year dipped in Year 5, due in part to the school's on-going staffing issues and has only recently started to improve in Year 6. This lack of consistency in progress between years results in too few pupils making good progress from their individual starting points.
- The most able pupils in Year 6 have very recently begun to make accelerated progress in mathematics and a small group are currently receiving extra support and tuition, with the expectation that they will reach Level 6 in this year's end of Key Stage 2 national tests.
- Pupils spoken with say they enjoy reading. The development initiatives, such as the 100 club and the readers' disco, in which pupils who reach the target of reading 22 books are invited to a special disco, has inspired pupils, particularly boys to read more. As one pupil explained, 'It's sometimes difficult to fit in reading because I do football training in the week, so I have to catch up at the weekends.' However, although this has helped to improve pupils' achievement in reading, progress is still not consistently good across all years.
- The vast majority of children who join the Reception classes enter with reading, writing and numeracy development well below that typical for their age. They make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and leave with skills and knowledge which are closer to that expected for their age.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved and last year was close to the national average. Current school data shows that staff are building further on this improvement. Inspection evidence from lessons and pupils' books confirm this.
- The school is justifiably proud of the achievement of Year 1 pupils whose scores were slightly above the national average in the phonics screening check, which tests pupils' ability to link letters to sounds. This is because of the good quality of phonics teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1.
- The vast majority of pupils who attend the school are known to be eligible for free school meals. Attainment for this group was broadly similar to others in the results of national tests at the end of Year 6. Their attainment was lower in comparison to others in the school by approximately a term. Data from current tracking information shows gaps are beginning to narrow and attainment for this group of pupils is improving in line with others within the school. This is due to the effective use of the pupil premium funding which the school has used to boost pupils' achievement through one-to-one and small group sessions, particularly in the schools 'nurture' provision.
- School staff identify and provide for the extra needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This group, together with those that are most able, and those from other ethnic backgrounds make equal progress in English and mathematics to others in the school, and so their progress requires improvement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. This is reflected in the uneven pattern of pupils' progress

tracked by the school from class to class and is further evidenced by progress observed in some pupils' books.

- The pace at which pupils learn in some classrooms is slower than it should be. Too little time is allocated for pupils to practise their skills, present their ideas or think out problems for themselves because teachers have too low expectations of what can be achieved in the time available. Too often, teachers continue to explain tasks when it is clear from pupils' responses that they understand what is required of them and they are ready to move on and get started on their own work. This slows progress for all groups of pupils.
- Parents of children who attend the Reception classes feel that the school gives their children a good start. 'The staff here make us feel welcome' was a comment made by a parent. Teaching in these classes is often innovative and children clearly enjoy learning. However, the provision made for learning and play outside is less good than inside the classroom. Whilst children are keen and eager to play outside, there is insufficient opportunity for them to develop their physical skills, for example, learning how to pedal a tricycle. As a result, some make less progress in this area of learning.
- Information on pupils' previous learning is used effectively to set work. An example of this was seen in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, where pupils were learning how to count on in 1s, 10s and 100s dependent on their ability levels. Staff were deployed well and supported pupils' learning well. The most able pupils were encouraged to think of their own numbers to count on from. When one pupil chose an odd number of over a thousand, much debate ensued as to in which column the numbers went. The activity extended pupils' learning on place value well and increased their confidence in applying previously learnt skills.
- Teachers and support staff work closely together and effective working partnerships are evident across the school. The quality of this work was seen in a Key Stage 2 lesson, where the teaching assistant's high quality questioning skills ensured pupils in her group made the same good progress as those in the teacher's group.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement overall. Although the majority of pupils show mature and attentive attitudes in lessons, where teaching is less good, minor incidents of difficult behaviour sometimes go unchecked and learning slows.
- Parents hold mixed views on the quality of behaviour in the school. Whilst the majority feel that behaviour in the school is good and that any incidents of difficult behaviour are effectively dealt with by staff, a minority disagree. School staff believe that this is due to the dip in behaviour overall which the school experienced last year.
- Attendance has risen a little since the previous inspection and is now in line with the average for other primary schools. This is largely due to the consistent approach taken by all staff to promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality, and the work undertaken by the learning mentor who works tirelessly with families to encourage regular attendance.
- Pupils feel valued as members of the school community and their views are communicated well to the headteacher through the school council. They are keen to take responsibility as was seen in the playground activities and games organised by older pupils for younger ones. This demonstrated clearly the contribution that pupils make to the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils spoken to understand the different forms bullying can take. They feel that incidents do not happen often because pupils are made aware through, for example, talks by representatives from 'Childline' of the effects bullying can have on others. Pupils are helped through good quality advice and guidance given by staff.
- 'School is good and teachers make learning fun', commented a group of pupils, giving clear evidence of what a safe and happy place pupils feel the school is.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders do not yet use data on pupils' progress well enough to measure pupils' achievement over time, nor the results of systems put in place to accelerate progress. For example, if pupils are found to be falling behind they are given help to improve and catch up. However, leaders do not accurately measure the rate of improvement or the success of measures put in place.
- The current acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have brought stability to this school after a period when the leadership was constantly changing. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. Their calm and consistent approach has reunited staff who are ready to see through improvements to pupils' achievement and progress.
- They have successfully started to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, as evidenced by the increase in achievement in the end of Year 2 assessments and the improved quality of work observed in pupils' books.
- The school's development plan accurately identifies those areas of the school's work which require the most improvement and the targets set are clearly focused.
- Middle leaders, including curriculum coordinators, monitor the quality of teaching in their subject areas well and this has contributed directly to recent improvement in pupils' achievement.
- School leaders ensure performance targets for staff link directly to pupils' achievement and targets within the school's development plan. Checks on the performance of staff are undertaken and the acting headteacher has used this information to make decisions on teachers' pay.
- Although the school's curriculum requires improvement, especially with regard to planning for teaching literacy, it is enriched by visits away from the classroom, offering pupils many opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding. For example, whole-school trips to a pantomime at a local theatre and regular residential visits to an outdoor pursuits centre increase pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum meets the needs of children in the Reception classes well by offering a good balance between activities which are adult-led and others which children choose for themselves. This helps to increase children's social and independence skills.
- The school has developed a clear plan for using their allocation of the primary school sports funding. It has employed a sports coach who delivers high quality lessons for pupils and training opportunities for staff to develop new skills. These are beginning to improve the quality of teaching in physical education (PE) and the health and well-being of pupils.
- Since the previous inspection and through the recent turbulence within the senior leadership team, the local authority has offered the school a high level of support. This support has recently been reduced as the effectiveness of the current leadership team has increased.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school's governors bring a range of skills and experience to the governing body. They have recently started to update and improve these skills through further training. However, they have yet to gain a good enough understanding of pupils' achievement data and are, therefore, unable to offer senior leaders sufficient support and challenge to improve standards of achievement. In partnership with senior leaders, governors have developed an effective system for checking the performance of all staff, which rewards good teaching and is beginning to address underperformance. They manage the use of the pupil premium funding prudently and this careful management has enabled them to support eligible pupils well. Recent changes to the school's financial management have resulted in an effective plan which is successfully reversing the school's previous deficit budget. Safeguarding procedures and policies within school meet current requirements.

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	119172
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	430968

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ralph Latham
Headteacher	Sarah Midgley
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2012
Telephone number	01282 863225
Fax number	01282 865710
Email address	admin@colnepark.lancs.sch.uk

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