

Pirton Hill Primary School

Butely Road, Luton, LU4 9EX

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher, who has high expectations for all pupils and staff. She is well supported by governors and senior leaders who all have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for further development.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are rigorous and the training and support provided have led to continuous improvements.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years and make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils' achievement has improved significantly and is now good. They make good progress throughout their time at the school.
- Teaching is consistently good and lessons are active and enjoyable. Teachers plan purposeful activities that motivate pupils and help them to learn new skills quickly.
- The governing body is knowledgeable about the school and how pupils' achievement and teaching are improving. It provides good challenge and support to other leaders.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the best possible progress they can because they are especially well supported.
- The school provides well for pupils who join at other than the usual times, including those who are at an early stage of learning English or have special educational needs. This helps everybody to catch up quickly, sometimes from low starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their attitudes to learning are strong. Pupils are polite and courteous, and they work hard.
- Pupils feel extremely safe within this secure and caring learning environment. Parents agree that the school is a safe place to learn.
- The exciting range of subjects is enriched considerably by a wide range of clubs, trips and activities that develop pupils' sporting, musical and creative skills. Sport is of a very high standard and has a positive impact on pupils' determination to do well, contributing to the pupils' enjoyment of school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The standards pupils achieve are not yet as high as they could be in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some teachers do not adapt quickly enough within the lesson to ensure that tasks are neither too easy nor too hard for different groups of pupils.
- Some subject leaders are at an early stage of development in driving improvements in teaching and learning in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 25 lessons or parts of lessons, several of which were seen jointly with the headteacher or other senior leaders. In addition, inspectors observed small groups of pupils taught by learning support assistants. Observations were also made of the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and looked carefully at their work in lessons. They also scrutinised pupils' English and mathematics books to establish the quality of their work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes. Several groups of pupils discussed their views about the school with inspectors.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the early years leader, senior and subject leaders, the inclusion leader, five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, the minutes of governing body meetings, records of lesson observations and the management of staff performance, information on pupils' progress, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Account was taken of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's recent parental survey. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and parents attending the Year 2 end of theme 'wow' showcase of pupils' learning.
- Questionnaires were returned by 58 members of staff, whose views were also considered.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Christopher Perry | Additional Inspector |
| Patricia Symington | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-size primary school.
- Early years provision consists of two full-time Reception classes.
- The school serves a diverse community. Nearly 70% of the pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is double the national average.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium funding is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.
- There have been many staff changes since the last inspection. The senior leadership team has been restructured and nine new teachers have joined the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:
 - all teachers use information on pupils' progress to challenge pupils of all abilities, so that pupils make more rapid progress in their lessons
 - teachers respond quickly in lessons to reshape tasks when pupils find they are too easy or too difficult.
- Further strengthen the impact of leadership by developing the skills of subject leaders so that they make an even greater contribution to improving the quality of teaching in the subjects they lead.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been instrumental in rapidly improving teaching and achievement across the school. Her high aspirations are shared by the staff. As a result, the school has significantly improved in the short time since the previous inspection.
- School leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths. The school's plans identify the correct priorities and give details of the actions needed to bring about further improvements. Senior leaders make effective use of regular, detailed checks on teaching, linked to teachers' performance targets, to help teachers improve their practice. Pupils' achievement is improving as a result.
- Senior leaders make very good use of data to check that all groups do as well as they can. They ensure that pupils who are in danger of falling behind receive support to help them catch up. Leaders check the accuracy of school assessments by sharing information across year groups. The consistent approach to the planning for learning in each year group supports improvements.
- Some subject and other middle leaders are at an early stage of ensuring that learning and teaching in the subjects they lead are consistently good or better. Some are new to their role, and governors and senior leaders have identified where they would benefit from additional support and training.
- The school has prepared very well for the introduction of the new curriculum, which is enriched by a wide range of before-school, after-school and lunchtime clubs. It covers a wide range of subjects and provides activities that promote enjoyment and a love of learning. The exciting range of subjects is enriched considerably by a wide range of clubs, trips and activities that develop pupils' sporting, musical and creative skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. The rich range of cultural diversity within the school is celebrated and pupils talk confidently about various faiths and cultures other than their own.
- The school promotes democracy and British values very well. Pupils' understanding and compassion for each other are linked to the school's core values, as are British values of respect, forgiveness and honesty. The school's values encourage pupils to do their very best, in both their work and their behaviour. Visits to the Houses of Parliament, singing carols outside 10 Downing Street, and holding elections for prefects and members of the school council, encourage an understanding of democracy.
- Sport is of a very high standard and has a positive impact on pupils' determination to do well, contributing to the pupils' enjoyment of school. The additional funding for sport has been used effectively to introduce a variety of new sports and to improve the skills of teachers. There is a very strong focus on improving pupils' lifestyles and their physical well-being, as well as competing in a wide range of high-level competitions across the county.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to appoint additional staff, work with families, train teachers in support programmes, enable pupils to attend breakfast and after-school clubs, and generally enrich the wider experiences of disadvantaged pupils. The impact of this spending can be seen in the good progress disadvantaged pupils make across the school.
- There are effective partnerships with external agencies, particularly those helping individual pupils and their families to overcome any difficulties that may hinder pupils' readiness to learn. This caring school provides well for those who are in the care of the local authority. The promotion of equal opportunities is an integral part of the school's ethos, and discrimination in any form is not tolerated. This approach ensures that equality of opportunity and good relationships are fostered very effectively.
- The partnership with parents is strong. Parents who were spoken to and those responding to the Parent View survey have full confidence in the senior leaders.

- The governing body ensures that the school meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils. Senior staff make sure policies and procedures are rigorous and robust.
- The local authority and external consultants have provided effective support to the school, specifically in identifying underachievement of pupils and identifying areas for school development. This has made a good contribution to the improvements that have been made.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a strong core of experienced governors who have successfully supported the school in making considerable improvements over the last two years. Governors have a good and accurate understanding of how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally.
 - Through visits to classes, talking to pupils and meeting with leaders, governors have a good awareness of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. They know that the school is improving rapidly and are ambitious for continued improvement. They use this, and the information provided by senior leaders, to ask challenging questions about the improvements being made to teaching and pupils' achievement.
 - Governors oversee the performance management of leaders closely. They support the headteacher in ensuring that good teaching is rewarded and also support the withholding of pay rewards where performance does not meet the expected standard.
 - Governors closely monitor the finances of the school to ensure financial stability and good value for money. Governors ensure that additional funding is used appropriately. They check its impact very carefully, ensuring that it benefits the different groups of pupils for whom it is intended.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. There is an exceptionally welcoming atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils take great pride in their school and high levels of respect are shown to other pupils and adults. They behave well in lessons and have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils use their initiative and discuss tasks together very well so that little time is lost in beginning activities. Their positive response to the high expectations staff have of them in lessons makes a powerful contribution to their own learning and progress.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is outstanding. During the inspection, older pupils waited in silence to enter the lunch hall so that they would not disturb the learning of younger pupils who had started back into lessons.
- Pupils take the roles and responsibilities they are given very seriously. Play leaders have a very positive effect on playground behaviour and safety, while other responsibilities, such as serving on the school council and becoming sports and curriculum leaders, provide excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills outside the classroom. These experiences prepare them well for the next stage in their education.
- Parents, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly supportive about the behaviour and safety within the school. School records indicate that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour and, when they do occur, they are dealt with effectively. Parents and staff agree that the exemplary behaviour seen during the inspection is typical.
- The school's breakfast club and after-school club keep pupils safe at the start and end of the school day. Pupils enjoy the activities that are on offer; for example, drama, music and film club, together with a very wide range of sporting activities. Breaks are well supervised and pupils are encouraged to play games and make use of the equipment provided, including the opportunities to fly kites.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Robust procedures ensure that staff are well trained in how to keep pupils safe. Visitors are thoroughly checked. Parents and staff are very positive about the school's ability to keep their children safe. Pupils say they feel very safe at the school and that everyone cares for each other.

- Pupils have a very clear idea of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as when using the internet. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are unreservedly confident that, should there be an issue, this would be rectified immediately. Homophobic language is taken very seriously and not tolerated. Pupils say these incidents are always dealt with and never ignored.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average as a consequence of the effective school strategies. The work of the family support worker is helping to reduce even further the small number of pupils who do not attend school regularly.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school, including in the early years. It contributes much to pupils' rapidly improving standards and good levels of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books, checks carried out by leaders, and evidence gathered during the inspection, demonstrate that the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Pupils respond well to teachers' clear expectations of their behaviour and they quickly learn to follow the well-established routines in their classrooms. They discuss their learning with each other and they benefit from hearing each other's ideas. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils were preparing to write up an account of the visit they had made the previous day to an outdoor activity centre. They eagerly discussed together what they had learnt from bush-craft practitioners about the art of making shelters.
- Pupils who have been identified as needing extra help, including the most able, those who are struggling with their work, those at an early stage of learning English, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are given support to help them improve. Pupils new to the school are helped to settle into their new environment; any gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and their individual learning needs, are quickly identified and met.
- Reading is promoted well across the school. The school has changed the approach to teaching phonics and this is having an impact on pupils' knowledge and confidence. Pupils write confidently, fluently and at length, benefiting from regular opportunities to talk through their ideas and improve their word choices. The system of 'Think it, say it, write it' is consistently used across the school.
- Pupils are actively interested in their mathematics work and practise problem solving and mathematical reasoning with enthusiasm. They are increasingly able to draw upon a range of methods in order to carry out mathematical tasks independently.
- Attractive displays of classwork and homework throughout the school celebrate pupils' achievements and show them that their work is valued. Parents especially appreciate the regular end of theme 'wow days', where pupils share their work with parents and carers.
- Well-organised and accessible resources enable pupils to help themselves if they are stuck. They are very well supported by information on the walls and useful equipment, like number lines for mathematics, which they can find for themselves if they need them.
- When marking pupils' work, teachers give clear advice about how to improve. Pupils respond to their teachers' comments and edit their work.
- The new curriculum provides staff with very clear guidance on what pupils are expected to learn and greatly assists their planning to provide for pupils' various abilities. The needs of the most-able pupils are catered for well. Activities are planned to challenge their thinking. All staff are involved in the analysis of pupils' progress to help support the next steps pupils need to take to move their learning on. However, the targets for progress of different groups of pupils are not always high enough to ensure that their progress is as rapid as it could be.
- A few pupils do not make as much progress as they should because tasks are not always adjusted to ensure that work is neither too easy nor too hard. However, the majority of work is engaging, builds

successfully on pupils' positive attitudes towards learning and is usually pitched at the right level of challenge for most pupils.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a gradual increase in the attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 2. In 2014, attainment in writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling showed a marked improvement on previous years' results; the proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding the expected levels in writing by the end of Year 6 was broadly average. This is a direct result of the determined action taken by senior and subject leaders to tackle previous underperformance.
- Achievement data and pupils' current work confirm that most pupils are now making good progress across the school. Rapid improvements in teaching and increased expectations of the progress pupils should make are leading to more pupils reaching the standards expected for their age.
- Children start in the early years with skills that are much lower than those typical for their age. This is due to some children being at the early stages of learning English and others having low levels of communication and language skills. Children make good progress from their different starting points. By the end of the Reception Year, an increasing proportion of children reach a good level of development, ensuring they are ready to start Year 1.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in the Year 1 screening check on phonics is just below the national average. However, there is evidence of a year-on-year improvement, reflecting the improvements in teaching to support pupils and develop their confidence in both reading and writing.
- An above-average proportion of pupils leave or join the school within each year group. Pupils who join the school at different times are well supported and they settle quickly.
- The provision put into place for pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English meets their needs well. By the time they leave the school, there is little difference in the attainment of pupils learning English as an additional language, those who come from different minority ethnic groups, and boys and girls, all of whom achieve well.
- There are significantly improved rates of progress for the most-able pupils, especially in writing. However, the most-able Year 2 pupils did not achieve as well as they could in the 2014 tests. Leaders have improved provision for this group and teachers' assessments indicate that, currently, the most-able pupils are on track to attain higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers. Staff quickly identify pupils' specific learning needs, and work closely with outside agencies to address gaps in understanding and remove any barriers to learning.
- The school is now effectively closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. In 2014, these pupils were six months behind in writing, and just over 12 months behind in reading and mathematics when compared to all pupils nationally. The in-school gaps were much smaller, being approximately just over six months behind. This was an improvement on previous years. Current school data shows the gap is continuing to narrow because disadvantaged pupils are making good progress across the school. The pupil premium is used effectively and the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is improving.
- In order to better support pupils, the school has made the decision to group pupils for mathematics according to their ability and understanding. Current work shows that pupils are making good progress in mathematics and standards in this subject are rising quickly.

The early years provision is good

- Children start school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below those typical for their age. This is especially so in speaking, listening, and recognising letters and sounds. As a result of good teaching, most children are well prepared for Year 1 because they make good progress during their time

in the early years.

- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good. The early years leader accurately and thoroughly assesses children's skills on entry to the school and as children progress through the Reception Year. Her evaluation of children's abilities and needs is used well to carefully plan the provision for each child.
- There is effective use of both the indoor and outdoor spaces, with planned activities that capture children's interest and imagination. Children develop their ability to play and learn on their own and to co-operate with each other.
- Behaviour in the early years is exemplary. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and there are well-established routines which are consistently applied. The high-quality care and nurturing by staff allow children to thrive in this environment. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

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

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| Unique reference number | 109574 |
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 441982 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 410 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jeni Byrne |
| Headteacher | Debbie Thompson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 23 April 2013 |
| Telephone number | 01582 507924 |
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