

Parsons Heath Church of England Primary School

Templewood Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 3EZ

Inspection dates	15–16 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not good enough across classes in Key Stage 2, pupils do not make consistent progress and there is too much catching up to do in Year 6.
- Teachers do not plan and provide the right sort of work to help pupils develop their understanding of a subject.
- Some work teachers set, particularly in mathematics, is too easy for most-able pupils and too difficult where pupils have not grasped the learning to start with.
- Not all teachers have the same high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and their accuracy in spelling.
- Pupils are not always helped to develop their skills as readers by being given the right level of reading book or written instructions that they can read and understand.
- Governors are fully informed about the quality of teaching. They have taken effective action to eradicate inadequate teaching. However, the weaker teaching that remains has not improved quickly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has established a clear vision for improving the school. The positive changes she has made are recognised by pupils, parents and staff.
- The teaching of the early years and Key Stage 1 is good because high-quality teaching ensures that children make good progress – better progress than elsewhere in the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good; they engage well with their learning and have good attendance as a result of the school's high expectations.
- Pupils feel safe in school because teachers look after their welfare, and parents agree that children are looked after well.
- Pupils find the curriculum stimulating, which engages their interest. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 so it is consistently good, by:
 - setting work for pupils at the right level of difficulty
 - providing appropriate work so that pupils develop their understanding in subjects
 - raising expectations of pupils' presentation and the correction of spellings in their books
 - teaching pupils skills so that they understand the meaning of unfamiliar words and can enjoy a broad range of literature.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly gained the trust and confidence of parents, staff and pupils to establish a clear vision for the school to improve pupils' achievement and raise expectations. This is recognised by parents, who described the headteacher as a 'very positive, effective and vibrant leader of the school'. All the parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) would recommend the school to other parents.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have driven forward much-needed improvements in the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance, which has successfully improved the quality of teaching in most, but not all, of the school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher demonstrate the skills and commitment to bring about the improvement that is required. They have an accurate view of the school; the school improvement plan includes all the right elements to bring about improvement. Actions are monitored frequently and evaluated with rigour. Action has been taken to eradicate inadequate teaching. Support for the weak teaching which remains has been successful in the short term but has not been carried out consistently or in a sustained way.
- Senior leaders have been effective in developing the expertise of subject leaders to form a strong team with a high level of energy and expertise. Subject leaders have a thorough understanding of strengths and weaknesses of teaching and the impact on pupils' achievement. Leaders have identified what needs to be done and taken action to remedy any shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning; this has been highly effective lower down the school.
- Improvements in the teaching of phonics, the early years and the end of Key Stage 1 are now resulting in better achievement for younger pupils. Observations of lessons and checking of pupils' work show that younger pupils are developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills more quickly than previously. In Year 6, there is real momentum to accelerate progress through high-quality teaching. However, this good teaching is not as evident in the middle of the school.
- The school has actively worked in partnership with other schools, as well as brokering support through the local authority. Senior leaders and governors reflect on the school's effectiveness and are not afraid to take difficult decisions to improve outcomes for pupils, so that every child gets the best.
- The curriculum is well planned and lessons effectively incorporate a range of subjects which are well taught. Classrooms provide vibrant places to learn with good resources for learning. Displays provide useful learning prompts in English and mathematics as well as attractively celebrating pupils' work across subjects such as history, art and technology.
- Lessons and assemblies promote effective reflection on faith, culture and personal choices. For example, an assembly theme on acts of kindness helped pupils to consider their own behaviour and that of others. The opinions of pupils are central to many of the recent changes in the school. This helps pupils to gain an understanding of democracy and reflect on the views of others, considering equality and fairness. Pupils show respect for people from all backgrounds and demonstrate a good understanding of British values, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium funding to provide additional teaching and welfare support for the most disadvantaged pupils, some of whom have emotional and behavioural needs. The school has given high priority to working with these pupils and their families so pupils gain the most from their schooling. The additional teaching support and improvements in the quality of teaching, for the younger and oldest pupils, are making a difference in raising the achievement of the most disadvantaged pupils.
- Primary school sports funding has been used effectively to improve the skills of teachers to deliver good-quality physical education lessons, mentored by coaches who bring to the school a high level of expertise. Additional extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for all pupils to participate in more sports and represent the school in competitive games.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are very well informed; they know the school well. Governors come into school and monitor its work to see for themselves what is happening to improve the quality of teaching.
 - A committee of governors has worked closely with the local authority improvement board to regularly monitor the work of the school and its action plan. This close working has provided a sharper focus on governors' roles in holding the senior leaders to account.

- Governors have a detailed understanding of the quality of teaching across the school and are committed to ensuring that the staff they appoint provide value for money and that the quality of teaching is nothing less than good.
- Governors understand that the progress pupils make should be the main driver for rewarding the headteacher and for teachers' pay. They use appropriate processes where teaching has not been good, rewarding only where teaching is strong.
- They receive and analyse the school's data which track pupils' achievement, and can talk about how well different groups of pupils are doing across the school and where improvements need to be made.
- Governors are aware that the most disadvantaged pupils have not always achieved as well as other pupils. They talk about the resources they have put in to support this group and which of these are starting to make an impact.
- The nominated governor for safeguarding ensures that the school's safeguarding procedures are robust and fully meet requirements. Regular and focused monitoring is reported to the full governing body.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school works closely with external agencies and the school's pastoral staff ensure that pupils are well supported and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is not consistently good, so pupils do not make the progress they should. The good teaching in Year 6 accelerates pupils' progress but, by that time, there is too much catching up to do for pupils to make up lost ground.
- Although teachers' input is often lively and engaging, sometimes pupils are asked to tackle tasks that are not at an appropriate level. This means that pupils do work that is too difficult; they may try their best but achieve little. In some cases, work is too easy for most-able pupils, particularly in mathematics, so able pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- In some lessons, teachers are not fully prepared, which means that teachers' questions are sometimes superficial and do not help pupils to grasp a new concept. This problem is further exacerbated when pupils are not given suitable work to help them to consolidate their understanding before they are pushed on to do something different or more difficult.
- The quality of work in pupils' books is variable because not all teachers expect high standards of presentation. The school has identified and started to address weaknesses in pupils' spelling but the approach to teaching and correcting spellings in pupils' work is not applied consistently. Mistakes are not always picked up fast enough, for example when pupils copy spellings incorrectly from the board to learn for a test.
- The school is in the process of developing a school library to promote an enjoyment of reading and to teach pupils the skills of selecting information books. Older pupils talk about the kinds of books that they enjoy and authors that they prefer. Younger pupils enter Key Stage 2 with good decoding skills but do not always understand some of the words they are reading because texts and books are not always well matched to their needs.
- Teachers have not always had sufficiently high expectations of the most-able pupils. The structure of lessons has been changed and teachers are now starting to provide tasks to help pupils to master mathematics, which is improving the achievement of some of the most-able pupils in some classes.
- Teachers adhere to the school's comprehensive marking policy. At the pupils' request, 'flick back' time has been introduced. This is a chance for pupils to look back at teachers' marking, make corrections or try a further challenge which the teacher has set. Pupils explained to inspectors how this helps them to improve their work. They also explained that their targets are regularly reviewed and amended according to teachers' assessments, so that pupils know what to improve.
- In the early years and Year 6 there is good teaching, so pupils make good progress. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were getting to grips with ratio. The teacher's clear explanation and step-by-step modelling helped pupils to grasp this concept. By the end of the lesson, pupils could solve a problem confidently, applying their knowledge of times tables to multiply quantities in correct proportions.
- The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is good, where teaching is good. Tasks are well planned and teaching assistants are effectively deployed. Teaching assistants lend support and intervene only when necessary. The use of interventions and additional group work tailored to the learning needs of individual pupils ensures that this group of pupils make good progress.

- The sharp focus on pupil achievement in Year 6 means that teachers and pupils are highly motivated and committed to improving the quality of learning. An early morning voluntary session for pupils to follow up work or practise their skills is very well attended. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed this study period. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from additional online mathematics support at the end of the school day, which is met with equal enthusiasm and as a result is accelerating their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. All parents who contributed to Parent View agreed that the school looks after their children well. Funding is used to provide opportunities for extra-curricular clubs for pupils who would otherwise not get the chance to participate in out-of-school activities. Access to a family support worker and a counselling service provides help for vulnerable families and those experiencing difficulties.
- Pupils say that they feel secure; they have a good understanding of the school's systems for reporting accidental injuries. One pupil told an inspector, 'I am confident I will always get help if I need it.' The Buddy Bench is well used so that all pupils feel included at playtime and the older pupils appreciate having a separate area to play in, so that they do not put younger pupils at risk when they play ball games.
- The inspection of the school's bullying log shows that there is hardly any bullying and when there is, it is swiftly dealt with – a view supported by pupils and parents who are confident in the school's systems to sort out any problems.
- Pupils have good relationships with each other and with adults. The subject of bullying and the different forms it takes has been explored through lessons and assemblies. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, including any related to gender or race, and firmly believe that you treat others the way that you would like to be treated.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet. They talked knowledgeably about clicking on the e-safety alert sign in the form of a blue dolphin if they think there is something on the internet they should not see.
- Pupils talk meaningfully about British values and show a good understanding and respect for people's differences. The school actively promotes pupils' understanding of themselves as part of a democratic system and their views are genuinely taken into account when changes in the school are implemented.
- Pupils have a good grasp of the importance of living in harmony with people of different races and religions. Pupils explained that they had learned in assembly that if you do not have tolerance, it can lead to extreme views. The ethos of the school, underpinned by consistent reinforcement by staff, prepares pupils well to develop into good citizens in a tolerant and diverse Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All parents who responded to Parent View agree. The school has been very effective in changing the culture of the school and raising the aspirations of pupils. The school's expectation that pupils take responsibility for their own learning, and persevere has been pivotal in developing their good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' growing confidence as learners was clearly evident in lessons, where they showed resilience even when they found something difficult. They were able to clearly explain their journey of progress with their work and showed a well-informed understanding of how well they are doing – explaining their targets to inspectors.
- Pupils are well mannered and courteous. They are attentive, listen well to the adults and their peers, and show respect for the views of others. They play cooperatively in the playground and move around the school in an orderly way.
- The school's focus on celebrating good attendance and addressing persistent absence with focused intervention means attendance is good and better than the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- At the end of Key Stage 2, when compared to the national average, pupils achieved broadly in line in reading and mathematics, but results for the spelling, grammar and punctuation tests were significantly lower than nationally. Unlike the end of Key Stage 1, there is no sustained pattern of improvement in pupils' achievement by the time they reach the end of Year 6.
- Although the quality of teaching in Year 6 is good, teaching throughout Key Stage 2 is not sufficiently strong to ensure that pupils enter Year 6 fully prepared for their last year. However, once in Year 6, because of the good teaching, pupils catch up quite quickly and make at least expected progress in mathematics, reading and writing.
- The most-able pupils at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 achieve broadly in line with the national average. Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils could achieve. Where teaching is good, lessons are planned well to meet the needs of the most able and as a result these pupils are now achieving a higher standard.
- The gap between the attainment of the most disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school has narrowed at the end of Key Stage 1. Disadvantaged pupils in school are catching up with national averages. Between Key Stage 1 and 2 in 2015, 100% of this group made at least expected progress in reading and in writing but progress in mathematics was not as good. Too few pupils made better than expected progress in writing. Achievement in spelling, grammar and punctuation was weak. At the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2, there are still too few of the most disadvantaged pupils achieving the higher levels.
- The school tracks the progress of all pupils much more rigorously and support is now well targeted where it is needed. Additional teaching and focused group work to support the most disadvantaged pupils, some of whom also have specific learning needs, is resulting in better outcomes, particularly where the quality of teaching in the classrooms is also good.
- Parents speak positively of the school's support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. A series of specific interventions, well-planned provision and effective oversight ensure that pupils make good progress. Observations during the inspection showed this group of pupils to be well integrated and working without needing direct supervision all the time.
- Last year saw a real improvement in the attainment of the younger pupils. In phonics, Year 1 pupils achieved above the national average; previously their attainment had been well below what should have been expected. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieved broadly in line with the national average. This continued and sustained improvement since the school's previous inspection is due to consistently good teaching.

Early years provision

is good

- Children get off to a good start as they enter school. Children settle well because the Reception class offers a safe, bright and stimulating place to learn. Children have good relationships with adults as well as with each other; routines and expectations are established from the start. Children cooperate well in pairs, take turns, listen carefully and follow instructions.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge typical of their age. The quality of teaching and high expectations result in children making good progress to achieve standards above the national average when they leave the early years. They are well equipped for Key Stage 1. The teaching of phonics is effective and pupils are confident in saying and writing words and breaking them down into sounds. Children use their skills to read and write simple words using cursive script as they start to join up their handwriting.
- The basic skills of mathematics and language are well planned throughout the curriculum, inside classrooms and in outdoor areas. This results in children effectively applying their new-found knowledge in different contexts. For example, one reception child decided to 'test' out her subtraction skills on an inspector. She asked her how old she thought she was; when the inspector replied, the child corrected her by announcing that she was one less than five which meant she was four.
- Children's behaviour is good, in the classroom and in the outside area, which provides a safe place to learn. Children are excited by the activities provided such as the superheroes den where they escape from imaginary 'baddies'. They are able to handle trowels and gardening tools with precision to make mud pies in the mud kitchen. They enjoy climbing and jumping on new equipment, showing good spatial

awareness and due regard for their own safety and that of others.

- The leadership in the early years has brought about a clear focus on improving the quality of learning for these young children. Adults make frequent checks on what the children can do and what they need to learn next. This is particularly evident in the activities which are provided for them to choose and practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Challenges are provided for children to solve problems, act out in various role play areas, or construct something using a range of equipment.
- Teaching is good and the needs of individual children, including children who have special educational needs or disability, are well met. Those pupils needing additional support with speech and language are well catered for by the adults around them who model good language and articulate clear speech.
- Relationships with parents are strong. They are effective partners in contributing to their child's learning profile through an internet-based assessment tool where parents and teachers can share children's learning development. Effective arrangements for the children as they are admitted into the Reception class ensure their smooth transition into school.

School details

Unique reference number	115088
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10001938

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Sanford
Headteacher	Claire Newson
Telephone number	01206 860612
Website	www.parsonsheathprimary.org.uk
Email address	head@parsonsheath.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 December 2013

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. This funding provides additional support for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is lower than average.
- There is a new headteacher in post since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all classrooms, some with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with subject leaders. They heard pupils read and spoke to pupils about their enjoyment of school and their opinions of behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, governors and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, behaviour and attendance records, governing body documents, and documents relating to the monitoring of teachers' performance, and safeguarding.
- The views of the 48 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, as well as discussions with parents.

Inspection team

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