

Park Junior School, Kettering

Wood Street, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN16 9SE

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Inadequate |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Inadequate |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Since the last two section 5 inspections, when the school was found to require improvement, leaders and managers have not brought about sustained improvements. Pupils continue to underachieve across the school.
- Wide gaps in achievement persist between disadvantaged pupils and others, and between pupils who have special educational needs and/or disability and others.
- Teachers are not using assessments well enough to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Some pupils frequently find work in lessons too easy while others do not receive the help they need when they are stuck.
- Pupils are often distracted from their work because their teachers do not have high expectations for what pupils can achieve and how pupils should behave.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, appointed in January 2016, has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. She has acted swiftly to introduce new systems for assessment that have started to improve the quality of teaching.
- Leaders ensure that the personal development and welfare of pupils is good. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - teachers are taught to use assessment systems confidently and regularly to review the progress of the pupils they teach and to refine their planning accordingly to ensure that pupils and groups of pupils do not fall behind
 - teachers respond productively to leaders' feedback on ways in which they should improve their teaching, and receive the right levels of support and training they need in order to achieve this
 - where good practice exists in the school, this is shared effectively across the school
 - new leadership roles are established effectively so that subject leaders and team leaders are accountable for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas
 - the governing body acts on the findings of their most recent review to ensure they are best placed to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations for what their pupils can achieve
 - teachers' explanations and feedback to pupils are clear so that pupils are in no doubt about what they are learning and need to do to make progress
 - pupils are challenged, supported and motivated to make good and rapid progress, take pride in their work and are rarely distracted from their studies.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate because leaders have not secured the required improvements to the school since the last two section 5 inspections. Pupils continue to underachieve. The gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, and between those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils, persist.
- Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes to staffing at the school, including at leadership level. The changes in leadership since the departure of the previous headteacher have been unsettling to staff. While both the interim headteacher and the acting headteacher put in place relevant systems to address areas for improvement, these have needed to be changed or adapted to be effective. New and revised systems, for example to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, have not been in place long enough to have made a substantial difference to how well pupils are doing.
- The headteacher, who joined the school in January 2016, has rightly identified the immediate priorities to be addressed and has led a concerted drive towards improvement. She recognised that the school's assessment system was not fit for purpose and consulted appropriately with all teachers to see what was needed. As a result, she launched the current assessment system. Leaders have started to track the progress of individual pupils and analyse the performance of groups. While this process has enabled leaders to identify more promptly those pupils who need extra help to make progress, this greater focus has not made a difference for pupils in this year's Year 6, who have underachieved.
- Senior leaders' monitoring records indicate that they identify rightly the key aspects of teaching that need to improve. However, they have not ensured that teachers have reacted promptly to the feedback they have received by, for example, incorporating greater levels of challenge into their planning. This means that improvements to the quality of teaching have not been made quickly enough. Leaders acknowledge that further training is needed to enable teachers to apply assessment information routinely to their planning.
- Team leaders and subject coordinators have a developing role in monitoring and evaluation and so have acquired an overview of where teaching is strong and where it needs to get better. They are starting to improve some aspects of the quality of teaching, for example by identifying when curriculum coverage needs to be strengthened. They acknowledge that they need more training to help them understand the new assessment systems better. Their records of pupils' progress are not sufficiently detailed to enable them to evaluate rates of progress and to use this information to make judgements about the quality of teaching. The headteacher recognises where subject leadership needs strengthening and has planned appropriate training, recruitment and redeployment for the forthcoming academic year. The capacity of the new subject leadership to drive improvement therefore cannot be evaluated as it is not currently in place.
- Leaders have introduced a new system this academic year for recording behaviour incidents. This provides an informative overview of behaviour across the school. Leaders have not used these records to analyse patterns of behaviour incidents or to assess how well the behaviour policy is working to improve behaviour.
- Leaders have chosen and revised appropriate schemes for the delivery of the curriculum and have supplemented these to make sure that important aspects of different subject areas are not missed. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted well across the curriculum, through assemblies and extra-curricular opportunities.
- Leaders ensure that the primary school physical education and sports premium is invested well. Pupils enjoy opportunities to try out a wide range of different sports, including basketball and golf. Pupils are taking part in more competitions and sporting events. The funding has also supported appropriate professional development opportunities for teachers.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that policies and practice meet requirements. The single central record shows that all required checks are made of staff. Performance management of the headteacher and all staff reflects the school's priorities and is subject to appropriate scrutiny by the governors.
- The headteacher is supported strongly by the local authority. She also receives valuable support from the local teaching alliance, including mentoring in her new role. She has responded promptly to advice received.
- The headteacher's evaluation of the school is accurate in identifying the strengths and the areas for improvement of the school, although in places her judgements in terms of grades are generous. She has

assessed well what staff need to do in order to improve the quality of education provided at the school. While advice and support has been given to the school from a range of sources, some staff have found this to be overwhelming, especially alongside a period of considerable leadership changes since the last inspection. The headteacher is working hard to boost morale and teachers' confidence. Teachers note that their work is more focused under her leadership and they feel more positive about their work. She has introduced new systems which are appropriate to the priorities she has identified. She recognises rightly that these are not fully embedded or used securely enough by staff to give rise to improvements in outcomes for pupils. She maintains a realistic view of the urgent work that remains to be done and is rewriting the school development plan accordingly.

■ **The governance of the school**

- The governing body has not acted swiftly to improve leadership and the quality of teaching at the school since the last inspection. While governors have developed the skills necessary to be in a more informed and confident position and to hold leaders to account for the improvements needed, they have not done this soon enough to have had a sustained impact on pupils' achievement.
- Governors have responded to recommendations following external reviews of governance and visits from the local authority since January. They are aware of their training needs and the need to broaden their expertise to enable each member of the board to offer appropriate challenge and support to leaders and to align their responsibilities with the school's priorities. They have reorganised their committee structure and recruited appropriately.
- Governors know their responsibilities and are realistic about their strengths and the areas needing to be developed further. They are rightly aware of the importance of being independently informed about the school's performance and so have sensibly commissioned a range of external reviews, including on safeguarding and the expenditure of pupil premium. They are using the findings of these reviews appropriately to inform their decision-making. They have identified the most effective interventions to support disadvantaged pupils as they make plans for next year and are mindful of their responsibility to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because while there are pockets of good practice in some classes around the school, this good practice has not been effectively shared across the school.
- Pupils typically have too few opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills appropriately because their work in lessons is either too easy or too hard.
- Teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve are not sufficiently high. Teachers do not use time in lessons productively, including in the deployment of teaching assistants, to enable pupils to make progress at the rate at which they are capable. Pupils routinely spend too much time on the same task. While challenge is incorporated into teachers' planning, as expected by leaders, this does not stretch some of the most able soon or far enough. Meanwhile, some pupils remain inactive while needing support and are sometimes unable to move on because they have not received clear guidance on what to do next or how to resolve any difficulties. This leads to low-level disruption. Pupils report that their lessons are often disturbed by a small number of their peers.
- While teachers are growing in confidence in using the new assessment system, analysis of pupils' progress is not being effectively related to teachers' planning to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers use learning objectives to help pupils understand the purpose of their tasks in lessons and, in some cases, to recognise the increasing challenge of their activities. However, too often pupils are not sure about what they have to do as their teacher's explanations have not been clear.
- Pupils who need to improve the presentation of their work are rarely encouraged to do so by their teachers. As a result, pupils' work is sometimes untidy and they do not take pride in their work.
- In a few lessons, where teachers have high expectations for their pupils' attentiveness and achievements, pupils focus well on their work. They engage enthusiastically in group discussions and question-and-answer sessions. They are particularly motivated when teachers apply topics to real-life scenarios, and pupils are able to make links with their studies in different subjects.
- When teachers have secure subject knowledge, they use thoughtful questioning to develop pupils' use of technical terminology and articulate their reasoning. When teaching assistants use questioning well, they

encourage pupils to focus on their tasks and help them to work out what to do when they are stuck.

- Teachers' regularly assess work in pupils' books, generally following the school's policy. There is some evidence of pupils responding by correcting their work, but the quality and value of their responses vary. There are few regular examples of pupils extending their answers and making quicker progress because of feedback they have received from their teachers. On occasions, assessment in books is inaccurate, including teachers' checking of pupils' self-assessment.
- The introduction of new schemes for the teaching of writing has been successful, supported with essential training for staff. This has led to some improvements in the content of pupils' writing, with pupils demonstrating resilience and greater confidence in producing extended pieces of writing. Teachers acknowledge, however, that the most able pupils are not stretched far enough to fulfil their potential in writing.
- Teachers provide pupils with a range of helpful resources to support their learning, for example to check their punctuation and spelling, or when doing calculations.
- Teachers set homework that supports pupils' learning in lessons. Pupils say that they have the right amount of homework and usually have something to do every day, although the amount set for different subjects varies considerably.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in all areas of the school. They have a good sense of how to keep safe in a range of circumstances in everyday life. For example, they have received important guidance on road safety in assemblies and a talk from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) on how to keep safe when working online.
- Older pupils relish taking on positions of responsibility such as being young leaders, helping in the library and organising equipment at playtime. They enjoy running clubs for younger pupils. They take turns to be in charge of the tuck shop at breaktimes, doing this sensibly and handling goods and money responsibly.
- Pupils have gained much from a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities and visitors to assemblies. They have recently attended an assembly when a visiting Member of Parliament talked about democracy, and they have learned about the rule of law and justice through a mock trial activity conducted by a visiting magistrate. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong.
- Teachers routinely take opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural education across the curriculum. The assembly programme includes celebrations of festivals from a wide range of cultures and faiths. This, as well as studies in religious education, encourages pupils to be reflective and to have a strong appreciation and respect for those from a diversity of backgrounds. This enables them to be well prepared for the next stages in their education and life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' overall attendance at school is above the national average. Leaders are alert to cases where the attendance of individuals or groups falls and they address the specific circumstances well, which leads to improvements. This sometimes involves a family support worker who fulfils a valuable role, forging stronger links with families so that pupils have a more positive attitude towards attending school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement as pupils are often distracted from their work in lessons and low-level disruption is not unusual.
- Pupils are more immediately responsive when teachers' expectations are high. However, even in the strongest lessons, teachers need to remind pupils regularly to be attentive and to focus on their tasks.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves calmly around the school, although the frequency of rough play is something that some pupils would like to reduce. While there are designated quiet areas in the playground, these are often interrupted by more active play so it is not possible for pupils to sit quietly in them.
- Pupils report that, while bullying does happen, this is infrequent and teachers help to resolve problems quickly. Behaviour logs confirm this to be accurate, showing occasional incidents of bullying, usually in the form of name-calling. Some racist incidents do occur. These are generally isolated and followed up promptly and effectively by teachers.

- Pupils are generally confident and self-assured. Many pupils greet visitors with a smile and 'good morning' or 'hello', opening doors for others and being both welcoming and polite.
- Year 6 pupils say that they feel well prepared for going to secondary school, especially after attending transfer day on the day before the inspection. They report that information they received in school at the start of the year was useful as they decided which secondary school they would like to attend.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Since the last inspection, pupils have continued to underachieve in English and mathematics. The school's own information regarding pupils' outcomes shows that pupils in Year 6 have not made the progress of which they are capable in key stage 2.
- Pupils' books in Year 3 to Year 6 show that progress is very limited in some classes.
- Pupils from all groups are not challenged sufficiently and so do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The gaps in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils continue to be wide, especially in reading and mathematics, because too often the teaching they receive is not good enough. Teachers are not routinely taking into account assessment information in their planning, so pupils do not receive the right levels of support and challenge they need to do well.
- Pupils' test outcomes from the national tests in 2016 were much lower than the school predicted, with substantial gaps remaining for disadvantaged pupils. Combined figures for reading, writing and mathematics were well below national figures.
- There are wide gaps in attainment and progress for almost half the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities compared with other pupils. There also wide gaps in attainment between different classes in different year groups.
- Pupils say that they enjoy reading, but opportunities to read in school vary considerably between different classes.
- Intervention programmes for some incoming Year 3 pupils help them to make good progress in reading and mathematics and to catch up with others.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 121839 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 10011747 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 347 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Trevor Kendrick |
| Headteacher | Ann Walker |
| Telephone number | 01536 411208 |
| Website | www.ketteringparkjunior.com |
| Email address | head@park-jun-ket.northants-ecl.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 15–16 May 2014 |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium grant (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- Most pupils at the school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who represent minority ethnic groups is slightly less than average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The two previous section 5 inspections of this school, in May 2014 and February 2013, both judged the school to require improvement.
- The school has received support from the local authority since the last inspection. This support initially was focused on staffing issues and has been concentrated on school improvement since January 2016.
- The governing body has registered interest in joining a multi-academy trust.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed twelve parts of lessons, some of these jointly with school leaders. An inspector toured the school, accompanied by the headteacher, and all inspectors held informal conversations with pupils and members of staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the subject leaders for literacy and science and the team leader for Year 5, the chair of governors, the chair of the quality and standards committee and the chair of the finance committee.
- One inspector listened to two pupils read. All inspectors met formally with groups of pupils from all year groups.
- One inspector attended an assembly.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime and in the playground.
- Inspectors held informal conversations with parents at the start and end of the school day and took into account questionnaires parents had completed for the school and the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors took into account the questionnaires completed by staff and pupils for this inspection.
- One inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including achievement information, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of governors' meetings, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and examples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Damien Turrell | Ofsted Inspector |
| Tracey Ydlibi | Ofsted Inspector |

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