

Kenton Bar Primary School

Ryal Walk, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 3YF

Inspection dates

5–6 October 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Significant staff changes and absences since the previous inspection have had a detrimental impact on the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and behaviour. The learning trust and governors were too slow in recognising this and taking urgent action.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 2 is well below average. The progress pupils make from their often below average starting points, while improving, is still not good.
- The most able pupils are not stretched sufficiently. Sometimes pupils repeat work that they can do easily. Teachers do not always challenge pupils' spelling errors, presentation skills or the amount of work they complete. The school's homework policy is not always followed.
- Leaders' recent actions to improve the quality of teaching have not had time to eradicate inconsistencies, particularly in key stage 2. The pace of learning is sometimes too slow. Middle leaders' roles in monitoring and reviewing the impact of school priorities are just developing.
- The quality of teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is too variable. Pupils in the communication centre do not achieve as well there as when included in classrooms with their key worker.
- The proportion of early years children achieving a good level of development remains too low. Recent improvements to leadership, provision and assessment of children's learning have yet to make their full mark.

The school has the following strengths

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is above that of their peers by the time they leave. Differences between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally is diminishing quickly.
- The new headteacher's decisive action halted the decline and is driving improvement. Her uncompromising hunger to ensure that pupils get the best deal possible has energised staff and governors. All are working to improve their effectiveness, but it is too soon to see their full impact.
- Improved phonics teaching has led to a rise in the number of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected level in national tests. Year 2 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has also improved and is now broadly average.
- Pupils readily embrace the new 'school values' of respect, honesty, perseverance, friendship and teamwork. This is contributing to their improving behaviour in class and to their understanding of the qualities they need to become responsible citizens in modern Britain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement across the school by ensuring that:
 - work set by teachers takes into account pupils' current levels of understanding so that they can move on quickly from these starting points across the curriculum
 - teachers' expectations of what pupils can do is consistently high, including of their presentation skills and the amount of work they produce
 - simple grammar, spelling and punctuation errors and misconceptions are identified and tackled in pupils' workbooks, including topic books
 - the pace of learning is brisk in lessons so that precious learning time is not wasted
 - staff in Reception capitalise on the good start that children in the Nursery make
 - assessments of children's work in the early years and in their learning journals identify what children need to do next; and ensuring that activities enable them to make good progress in their learning and development, particularly in reading, writing and number
 - activities in the centre are adapted to meet the specific individual education plans of each pupil, so that no time is wasted at the start of lessons; this includes the more effective deployment of teaching assistants.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that the actions identified in the school improvement plan are carried out and checked for impact, so that they have the desired outcome of delivering the required improvements
 - developing the role of middle leaders beyond their current subject roles, so that they can contribute more effectively in monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions to drive improvement
 - making sure that staff comply with the school's homework policy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- On appointment in April 2016, the headteacher got to grips rapidly with the issues. Detailed analyses and reports ensured that the trust and governors were left in no doubt about the decline in the school's effectiveness and the failure to tackle fully the areas requiring improvement at the previous inspection.
- The headteacher's enthusiastic and uncompromising vision for improvement secured the confidence of staff and governors quickly. Together with governors, she has developed and implemented an ambitious, unequivocal improvement plan. The headteacher models by example. The high expectations she has of herself and others are evident in the improvements already seen and on which staff and pupils report.
- Rigorous checks on teaching identified weak practice, and decisive action has been taken where it was not up to scratch. Actions taken by the headteacher have improved the quality of teaching across the school. However, it is not consistently strong enough to tackle fully the decline in key stage 2 since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher and governors have set systems in place to tackle the budget deficit and improve the effectiveness of additional funding such as pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils and sports and physical education (PE) funding. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 often make better progress than their peers. Differences between their achievements and those of other pupils nationally are diminishing well. However, the headteacher and governors know that progress across the school is too variable. Changes in the way that the funding is being spent are tackling this inconsistency.
- Similarly, changes are being made to the deployment of sports funding. This is to upskill teachers in delivering PE so that they are not dependent on sports coaches. Nevertheless, pupils say that they enjoy PE and the range of sporting activities they can take part in after school and with other schools in the trust.
- Wholescale changes have been made to the way teachers assess pupils' work, set targets and monitor pupils' progress. Improvements can be seen in teachers' planning, work in classes and pupils' progress in books. Changes are too new to have had the full impact intended. There is still inconsistency in teachers' use of assessment information to plan pupils' work precisely. Occasionally, the most able pupils are insufficiently stretched and lower-ability pupils struggle with work that is too hard for them.
- Improvements to the curriculum, to motivate boys as well as girls and to energise their application to learning through interesting cross-curricular themes, are being embedded across the school. Extra-curricular experiences are also developing and broadening pupils' horizons and expectations. Assemblies and the curriculum are supporting improvement in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Arrangements to manage the performance of staff have been tightened. Staff report that they are held to account more robustly through sharper targets and reviews of their progress in meeting them. Regular 'pupil progress' meetings identify what is working well and the actions that teachers need to take to help pupils who have fallen behind to catch up to where they should be. Training and development activities for staff are now closely aligned to the school's improvement plan; this is helping to tackle weaknesses identified. Staff value these changes and the opportunities provided.

Middle leaders have developed their subject roles effectively, but are just beginning to develop their roles in monitoring and evaluating whole-school improvement priorities. The headteacher is working with them to support the collective drive for improvement.

- Leaders have used the 'school values' as a lever to promote a caring and respectful atmosphere, to provide pupils with an understanding of the qualities that they need in order to be active citizens in their local and wider community, and to promote equality and diversity. This has resulted in improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes in class and around school and in creating a more harmonious school community. It is still early days and there is still a legacy of occasional bullying behaviour, racist comments and physical aggression by a few pupils that is being tackled by leaders robustly.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear understanding of the needs of pupils and families; parents value her work. She has identified actions to drive improvement more consistently for different groups of pupils so that all groups achieve equally well. Although most make at least similar progress to their peers, there is variability in the progress of pupils requiring additional support in classes and year groups and of those in the communication centre.

Parents recognise the headteacher's work to build stronger partnerships with them. An open door policy, texts, regular letters and a 'parents forum' are aiding improvements.

Governance of the school

- Following the headteacher's arrival, governors quickly understood what needed to change. They have learned from their mistakes, undertaken training and developed their skills in challenging information they receive and in asking questions of leadership more directly. The addition of an executive headteacher from the trust has added capacity and knowledge to the team. Governors have a much clearer view about the work of the school and pupils' progress and achievements, including for different groups of pupils. This is as a result of the detailed reports provided by the headteacher and the accurate reports from the recently appointed school improvement partner.
- Governors understand the school's pay and promotion arrangements and the performance of staff. The annual cycle has yet to be completed, but governors are well informed about the progress of staff towards targets. Systems to enable governors to evaluate the impact of work to reduce incidents of poor behaviour are recent. The headteacher is taking action to use this system to ensure that governors receive timely, evaluative reports.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff are well trained and have an up-to-date understanding of what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. They are vigilant in identifying pupils at risk of missing school, from harmful actions on social media, and of the range of risks in their local community, including harm from potential extremist behaviour. Safe recruitment practices are in place. Case files and discussions with leaders show the range of actions they take to identify, report and then minimise risks to pupils' safety and care, at school and at home. Difficult and uncompromising decisions are taken by the headteacher, with timely referrals to agencies such as children's social care, the police and medical professionals as required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but it is not yet consistently good enough to make sure that all pupils achieve their best. Teachers are becoming more adept at using information they have about pupils' current abilities to plan work from their varied starting points. There are still occasions when work is not set precisely enough.
- Teaching is stronger in key stage 1 and this can be seen in the improvements in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics assessments in 2016 and in pupils' current workbooks. Due to past weaknesses, in lower key stage 2 pupils' basic skills in mathematics are not secure, which is hindering faster progress. Leaders have recognised this and teachers are working closely with pupils to tackle key gaps in their knowledge.
- Leaders have worked to improve pupils' attitudes to learning; classrooms have a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and pupils are usually keen to apply themselves to their work. There is still some variability in pupils' attitudes, particularly in Year 5. Leaders are taking action to stamp out the occasions where pupils are off-task or not paying attention.
- Strategies to ensure that pupils hone their writing skills in English and other subjects are developing. However, occasionally, pupils' work is not marked in line with the school's policy. When this happens, teachers do not pick up on common spelling or grammatical errors. This means that errors are not tackled sharply enough. Poor handwriting or the amount of work pupils complete is not checked or challenged robustly enough.
- Improving pupils' reading skills is a key priority. Pupils read each day and for a range of purposes. Improved phonics teaching is helping pupils to develop their reading skills more effectively. Lower-ability pupils were seen using these skills to sound out unfamiliar words well. The most able pupils read confidently, retrieve information about the books they read and describe them. In some cases, their other comprehension skills are less well developed. Some parents report that they would like more opportunities to hear their children read at home and for their children to have more homework.
- Not all teaching assistants are deployed effectively. Sometimes they sit for too long while the teacher takes the whole class. This was noted in some lessons and in the communication centre at the start of the lesson. Leaders are tackling this variability.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils say that the new school 'values' are helping them to learn to live up to the positive qualities they represent. Leaders are developing these values in the curriculum, in assemblies and social times to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. They are also being used to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the qualities they will need to be responsible citizens in modern

Britain, including moral issues such as rights and responsibilities. Recent work has celebrated the diversity of world cultures and religions represented by pupils in school.

- However, pupils report, and records show, that racist, derogatory language is used by a small number of pupils. They also report that while incidents of bullying are rare and would be tackled quickly by staff, there are occasions where it still occurs.
- Staff work diligently to ensure that pupils are safe in school and are well prepared to understand risks to their safety in their local community. Pupils and parents report that pupils are safe. Pupils have a good understanding of risks from social media and how to respond should they experience worrying texts or contacts.
- Pupils are given a range of opportunities to experience positions of responsibility, which they value; for example, taking care of the chickens and fish. School council members are elected and pupils are pleased with the work they do in identifying things that could be better in school. They are particularly pleased that teachers respond to their requests where possible. For example, the school council is using the money raised from the school fayre to choose games and sporting activities for breaktimes; supplementing the activities already available and the highly thought of 'Jungle Gym'.
- A warm welcome awaits pupils who attend the free breakfast club. Over half of the pupils attend. It provides a safe, sociable and nourishing start to the day and, as a result, pupils are settled and ready to learn when lessons start.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although pupils, parents and staff report that behaviour has improved markedly in recent months, it is not consistently good. Behaviour logs identify the small number of pupils who regularly present challenging behaviour. Leaders describe, and case files show, the wide range of actions that staff are taking to manage these complex behaviours and reduce re-occurrences.
- Nevertheless, most pupils conduct themselves appropriately. Behaviour was seen to be positive in class, outdoors at break and lunchtime and in the dining hall, where pupils chatted sociably with their friends. Younger pupils were learning how to manage their knives and forks and the social conventions of eating at tables successfully.
- Pupils report that behaviour is improving because of the 'values', and that teachers follow the school's behaviour policy consistently. They consider that the 'traffic light' system works well and pupils are keen to get a green light. When teaching is not well focused, pupils' attention wanes and there are instances of inattentive fidgeting or 'switching off'.
- Although attendance rates are above average this term, this has not been the case previously. Since the previous inspection absence rates have been too high, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils. The proportion who miss school regularly has also been far too high. Rates have reduced by half this term and the headteacher is working closely with external agencies and parents to improve rates further.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Observations of learning, review of pupils' books, discussions with leaders and school assessment information indicate that the progress of pupils currently in the school is improving, but it is not consistently good yet. Recent improvements to the quality of teaching have ensured a better focus on pupils' individual starting points, and more are

working at levels that are expected for their age. However, leaders know that more needs to be done to ensure that more pupils make greater than expected progress.

- Pupils' outcomes have improved in key stage 1. This can be seen in the increasing proportion of pupils gaining national expectations in their phonics assessment. It is also evident in the now average proportion reaching age-related expectations by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, these pupils have made good progress from their below average starting points in Year 1.
- There has been a decline in the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 since the previous inspection. In 2015 the school did not meet the government's floor standards for the expected attainment and progress of pupils in Year 6. Outcomes for 2016 are also below average. However, the progress these pupils made from their low starting points was similar to that of other pupils nationally. Progress was strongest in mathematics.
- Different groups of pupils have made varying rates of progress over time. This is because, until recently, teachers have not used the information they have about pupils' prior achievements to move them on from those starting points quickly enough.
- It is therefore difficult to extrapolate whether one group is achieving consistently better than another. For example, disadvantaged pupils' achievements were above those of other pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, but not in Year 4 or Year 5. The progress of the most able pupils is likewise variable. Not enough pupils of higher prior attainment reached higher standards by the end of key stage 2 in reading, grammar or punctuation, but all of the most able Year 2 pupils achieved highly.
- There is a similar issue for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In Year 1, pupils requiring additional support and pupils with an education, health and care plan made good progress in their learning last year. This was not the case in Year 3, where pupils requiring additional school support did not make the progress expected. The SENCo has already changed the way that she monitors pupils' learning in lessons and the way that small-group work is carried out, to challenge teachers where weaknesses are evident and to iron out these variations.
- Pupils in the communication centre achieve well when they are included in classes with their peers with the support of their key worker. The staff motivate pupils to achieve their individual targets. Sometimes in the communication centre, too much time is spent at the beginning of the lesson on whole-class activities that are not well matched to pupils' different learning needs. This slows the pace of learning. Once pupils work on their individual activities, books show that they make faster progress.
- Pupils' progress in subjects across the curriculum is hard to gauge, as assessment systems have changed this year. Books that record the wider curriculum are new. They show that pupils study a broad range of subjects or themes weekly. However, they also show that teachers do not always plan learning to take into account any differences in pupils' subject knowledge. This limits opportunities for pupils to progress rapidly from what they already know or understand.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Most children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. By the time they leave Reception for Year 1, the proportion gaining a good level of development has remained stubbornly low since the previous inspection. This is mainly

due to children's below-average achievements in their literacy and mathematical development.

- Staff have been more adept in developing children's communication, personal, social, emotional, creative and physical skills. Children catch up well from their low starting points in these areas and outcomes are at least in line with other children nationally by the time they leave for Year 1.
- Until this year, pupil premium funding for disadvantaged children has not been targeted successfully enough. There remains too wide a difference between the achievements of disadvantaged children and other children in school and nationally.
- Leaders have taken action to tackle weaknesses. They have restructured leadership and improved the quality of teaching and provision, so that the improvements already begun in Nursery last year are developed more successfully in Reception.
- In Nursery, children get off to a good start. They settle in quickly because of the successful transition arrangements into school. Children were seen to have already embraced daily routines enthusiastically and developed trusting relationships with staff. Children are keen to talk and express their ideas to adults and visitors.
- Assessment of children's achievements shows that changes made in Nursery last year resulted in accelerated progress for children. A greater proportion were working in line with expectations than the previous year, particularly in their reading skills. This is due to the systematic way that phonics is taught across the school. Children in Reception were seen mastering their sounds each morning and then taking part in a range of interesting activities that helped them to practise what they had learned with the teacher, in a fun and different way.
- The outdoor areas in Nursery and Reception are exciting extensions of indoors, with interesting activities to entice children to mark-make, explore numbers, extend their language and communication skills and learn while having fun.
- Staff are vigilant and ensure children's safety. They have high expectations of children's behaviour and attitudes and the indoor and outdoor areas are friendly and welcoming places for adults and children alike.
- Welfare requirements are well met. Leaders work closely with parents and key agencies to support children and their families in times of need or when concerns are raised.
- Children are enthusiastic and keen to try new things. They move seamlessly from activities they choose for themselves to activities that teachers and adults have determined. For example, children were delighting in experimenting in the 'squidgy area' without realising they were carrying out a mathematics lesson and counting objects in the area.
- Learning journals showcase children's achievements but show that they have not always moved on quickly enough from their past assessments. Staff do not regularly identify the children's next steps, so opportunities are lost to ensure that activities planned will help children move on quickly from what they already know. Journals also show that presentation, writing and number formation have not been prioritised well enough. Leaders are working with staff to improve this aspect of the school's work.

School details

Unique reference number	108489
Local authority	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Inspection number	10019376

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Mr Paul Cleghorn
Headteacher	Miss Jacqueline Mowat
Telephone number	01912 860 536
Website	www.kentonbar.newcastle.sch.uk
Email address	admin@kentonbar.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 May 2014

Information about this school

- Kenton Bar is bigger than the average primary school. It has expanded since September 2016, from 45 places available for each year group to 60 places.
- A higher than average number of pupils join or leave the school during their primary education.
- The early years comprises a Nursery class and Reception class. Nursery operates for the first half of the week and Reception children attend full-time.
- The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is slightly below average and rising annually. An increasing number of pupils from refugee and asylum-seeking families attend the school.
- Nearly two thirds of pupils are known to be entitled to the government's additional pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and are identified by the school as requiring additional support is above average. The

proportion with an education, health and care plan is average.

- The school has additionally resourced provision for six pupils with an autistic spectrum diagnosis (communication centre). An additional pupil joined the school the day before the inspection following a request from the local authority. Pupils are included in the main school as much as possible with key staff, once their needs are assessed. At the time of the inspection, four other pupils were new to the school and they were spending much of their time in the communication centre.
- The school did not meet the 2015 government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards expected for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- The current headteacher was appointed at the beginning of the summer term 2016. One senior leader was on maternity leave at the time of the inspection. The assistant headteacher is currently the acting deputy headteacher. A middle leader has been promoted temporarily to the assistant headteacher's role.
- In September 2013, the school became a member of the Newcastle North West Learning Trust, which includes seven other local primary schools. The trust is scheduled to cease its work in November 2016 when all schools become part of SMART, a newly developed multi-academy trust.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across the school. A number of lessons were visited jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors looked at pupils' work during lessons and work in classrooms, corridors and halls. They also heard a number of pupils read their reading books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, middle leaders and a group of staff. Inspectors also met with the school's recent school improvement partner and three representatives of the governing body, one of whom was the chair.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons, in the breakfast club, on the yard, on the field and in the dining hall. They also spoke to three groups of pupils formally on day one and day two of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of day two of the inspection and took account of the 23 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. They took account of the school's recent survey of staff.
- A range of documents were reviewed. These included key documents regarding the school's approach to safeguarding, the school improvement plan, the headteacher's reports to the governing body and the school improvement partner's recent report. School assessment information about pupils' learning and progress from the last year for all children, classes and groups of children was also reviewed.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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