

Garston Church of England Primary School

Holman Road, Garston, Liverpool, Merseyside L19 5NS

Inspection dates

4–5 April 2017

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	Requires 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

- Current pupils do not make rapid enough progress across most years and subjects.
- The new senior leaders have taken action to bring about improvements, but the impact of their work is not yet evident.
- Subject leaders do not have a clear view of standards in their subjects.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent, with teachers sometimes giving pupils tasks that are not demanding enough.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons does not consistently support their progress.
- Children in the early years do not make strong progress from their starting points.
- The most able pupils do not consistently receive work that challenges them.
- Teachers do not follow the school's marking and feedback policy consistently.
- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is typically below national averages.
- Leaders do not make the best use of funding to support pupils who are disadvantaged or pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' attendance is in the lowest 10% nationally.
- Governors have only recently been appointed and do not have a comprehensive view of standards in school.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of the leadership and management may be improved.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and the head of school are dynamic and thoroughly committed to bringing about improvements in the school.
- Senior leaders have secured good progress in mathematics across most year groups.
- Pupils' conduct around school is good and teachers keep them well informed about how to stay safe.
- Most parents are positive about the work of the school and say that their children feel happy and safe.
- Leaders are aware of the school's priorities for improvement and have devised appropriate strategies to tackle them.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that subject leaders have a clear overview of standards in their subjects and can drive continuing improvement by careful monitoring of progress
 - making sure that the funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used to best effect to secure rapid progress for these pupils.
- Secure consistently rapid progress across all year groups and subjects, so that attainment, especially in English and mathematics, moves closer to national averages, by:
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment improves by planning teaching that interests and challenges pupils and promotes good behaviour for learning
 - regularly providing challenging work to the most able pupils across a range of subjects so that they deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills
 - providing consistent feedback, in accordance with the school's policy, so pupils know how to improve their work.
- Improve the achievement of children in the early years by:
 - making sure that the new assessment procedures produce an accurate picture of children's progress and attainment
 - providing tasks for children, including the most able, with an appropriate level of challenge to secure faster progress from their starting points.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Recent leadership issues have caused instability at Garston Church of England Primary School. The previous federated governing body, the diocese and the local authority took decisive action and arranged for an executive headteacher from a local multi-academy trust and a new head of school, recruited from the same trust, to take over the leadership of the school. They have been carrying out these responsibilities since October 2016. There is also a new governing body in place, following the de-federation of the school, which was constituted in February 2017.
- The new executive headteacher and head of school are capable and energetic and are already beginning to have a positive effect on the school. They have been honest in their evaluation of the quality of education that the school currently provides. However, their judgement of leadership and management was somewhat optimistic, since it considered their actions but not the limited impact so far and the need for other leaders to develop stronger leadership characteristics. They have drawn up a suitable action plan for improvement, the overarching theme of which is improving teaching and learning, and they have been unwavering in implementing it.
- Leaders of subjects, including English and mathematics, are keen to support the new senior leadership team and are beginning to collaborate and to seek support from other schools, such as those in the local multi-academy trust. However, they are in the very early stages of leadership, and do not have a clear view of standards in their subjects or of the effectiveness of new strategies, such as increased opportunities to check on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The head of school has very recently become the school's special educational needs coordinator, after the previous incumbent relinquished the post. She has made a brisk start to revising procedures and ensuring that staff are fully aware of the needs of their pupils. However, current pupils make progress that is no more than steady. The new leadership team anticipates that this will improve as they establish themselves and secure the most effective use of the funding. They have targeted money on interventions to develop areas such as numeracy and self-confidence and, while they report early positive signs of effectiveness, they recognise that it is too soon to evaluate the impact on pupils' progress.
- Increasing proportions of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding are improving in their achievement. However, their progress is not as rapid as it needs to be and the new leadership team is getting to grips with the most efficient way to target the funding. They now provide support for those pupils who need to catch up with their English skills and to encourage better attendance. The full impact of these actions, however, is still to be seen.
- Senior leaders have revised the systems for managing teachers' performance and checking on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers now have clear targets that relate to the school's improvement plan and leaders provide training to support teachers' development. They carry out frequent visits to classes and analyses of pupils' work and make recommendations for improvement. As a result, the quality of teaching

is improving.

- Staff, including newly qualified teachers, are highly supportive of the approach of the senior leaders. They appreciate the change in the culture of teaching and learning that leaders have brought about and find the new approaches to training helpful. For example, leaders make video recordings of lesson observations and share them with teachers as part of their feedback. Staff say that they have found this approach to be a powerful tool in improving their practice.
- Leaders make effective use of the primary school physical education and sports funding. They provide after-school sports clubs to encourage pupils to take part in physical activities and they employ a specialist sports coach to teach pupils and to improve teaching skills.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and leaders enhance it with a range of extra-curricular activities that contribute well to pupils' development. These activities include clubs, such as craft, art and football. The curriculum also contains a programme of lessons in personal, social and health education, which, along with religious education, effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of fundamental British values, such as tolerance and mutual respect. Pupils can explain the rule of law and democracy in simple terms, referring to activities such as elections for members of the school council and the 'pupil leadership team' that the school has recently established.
- The local authority and the diocese provide effective support for the school. They addressed leadership issues and brokered new leadership and support by liaising with the local multi-academy trust. They are also part of a 'project group' that regularly checks on the progress that leaders are making to secure the necessary improvements.
- The large majority of parents who expressed a view were positive about the work of the school. They appreciated the improved communication channels and had noticed the changes in school. They said that their children felt safe and that teachers were very approachable. They typically commented that there was 'a great sense of community' and that the new management 'clearly care about the school'.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a range of skills, such as those gained from experience in education, that are useful to their roles. However, the current governing body was only constituted in February 2017, which means it has had little time to establish an effective degree of challenge to the work of senior leaders.
- Although the chair of governors has little experience in the role, she has long prior experience in education and shows a good understanding of the school's priorities.
- Governors have been suitably checked for the purposes of safeguarding and have either received recent training in safeguarding or are due to receive updated training.
- There are some omissions from the school's website that make it non-compliant. Leaders have remedied many of the issues, but some still remain.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's records of checks and vetting of staff are thorough and compliant. There is an effective system for recording concerns raised with the designated person for safeguarding. Responses and referrals to other agencies are prompt and followed up.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are knowledgeable about types and signs of abuse and understand the school's systems for reporting concerns. Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep safe because staff give them the information they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders have recently acted to improve teaching. The support and training that are taking place are contributing to an improving picture, but teaching, learning and assessment are not yet good because pupils do not make consistently strong progress in nearly every year group and across a wide range of subjects.
- Although teachers mainly plan lessons that sustain pupils' interest, in some year groups the activities provide too little demand or allow pupils to come off task. On these occasions, pupils lose valuable learning time, because, for example, they are waiting for adults to give out books or they have finished their task earlier than the teacher anticipated and do not know what to do next. Sometimes pupils start to misbehave in these circumstances and this prevents them from making as much learning progress as they could.
- Teachers mainly provide challenge for most-able pupils in mathematics, but they do not do so consistently across other subjects. In geography and history, for example, pupils do not have opportunities to use their writing skills with any degree of challenge, as teachers structure the work in such a way that pupils cannot make their own decisions about the presentation or content of the writing.
- In some year groups, pupils do not take pride in their work and teachers do not consistently challenge them to improve their presentation.
- Most teachers adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy and use it to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning. However, there is some inconsistency, including instances in one year group where the teacher had not marked work or given feedback on several occasions.
- Most teachers set appropriate expectations for work and behaviour in class. They encourage pupils to have positive attitudes to their work. Pupils have good relationships with adults and with each other and they respond well to adults' instructions.
- Teachers give opportunities for pupils to develop English and mathematics skills in other subjects. For example, pupils write factual reports about the Stone Age in history, or use their mathematical skills in science to record measurements as part of an investigation into the benefits of exercise.
- Teachers ask good questions of their pupils, frequently inviting them to justify responses they have given. They also use questions well to reshape tasks when pupils do not understand. Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively, especially when

supporting less-able pupils and guiding them with appropriately searching questions.

- School leaders provide parents with clear and accurate information about how well their children are progressing. There are termly parents' meetings and pupils' homework has objectives linked to work they are doing in school. They now provide workshops to explain teaching methods in subjects such as phonics and they hold 'come and see' sessions every few weeks, where parents are invited to observe their children learning a different subject each time.

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 feel safe in school and appreciate the recent improvements made by the current senior leaders. These include an intercom at the entrance door, electronic gates and a more-secure boundary fence to stop 'bad people getting in'.
- Pupils understand the different types of bullying that exist, but they say that there are very few examples of them in school. They have a good awareness of the risks posed by the internet, including cyber bullying, because adults regularly remind them how to keep safe. They understand that they must never give personal information, such as their address, to anyone on the internet.
- Pupils trust the adults in the school to be able to respond appropriately to any concerns they may have. They appreciate the warm relationships they have with their teachers, making comments such as 'all the teachers' words are positive, never negative'.
- The school's breakfast club provides a caring and safe environment for the pupils who attend.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although many pupils display positive attitudes to their learning, there are occasions when they misbehave during lessons and lose important learning time. This has a direct impact on the variable progress of current year groups. Pupils themselves say that interruptions happen 'quite often', although they also say that teachers manage them effectively.
- The attendance of pupils, including those who are eligible for pupil premium, is currently in the lowest 10% nationally. However, leaders are taking all reasonable steps to improve attendance, including new rewards and incentives alongside close involvement with the local authority's attendance officer. They have analysed attendance information and identified a small number of pupils who are adversely affecting the figures. They are currently focusing on ways to engage with the parents of these pupils to encourage better attendance.
- Pupils' conduct around school is good and school is mainly an orderly environment. Pupils play well at playtime and lunchtime and adults supervise them well. They are

polite and courteous to adults and those who spoke with inspectors said that they enjoyed coming to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The most recently published assessment information shows good progress in reading and mathematics, but based on prior attainment at key stage 1 that was significantly below the national average. The information also shows that attainment in some areas across both key stages is below the national average. The progress of current pupils is not consistently strong across almost all year groups and in a range of subjects. Senior leaders have recognised all these issues and have taken quick action to strengthen teaching to tackle pupils' underperformance. However, the full effectiveness of their strategies is not evident as senior leaders have only been in post since October 2016.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make consistently rapid progress across a range of subjects and year groups. They make the best progress in mathematics, but teachers provide work in other subjects that does not stretch them enough or allow them to think more deeply. For example, in mathematics in Year 6, most-able pupils answer complex questions on algebra, but in writing in Year 3 there is very little evidence of writing tasks that challenge most-able pupils, as they complete the same activities as other pupils.
- Senior leaders do not use pupil premium funding effectively because pupils who are disadvantaged make inconsistent progress. The school's own assessment information indicates that there have been improvements in the proportions of pupils who are on track to meet the expected standards in English and mathematics, but their progress is still not rapid enough and is less strong in a range of other subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not currently make rapid progress. However, senior leaders have begun to target resources more effectively on developing basic skills in mathematics and English and are beginning to build on the steady progress that pupils currently make.
- Progress in mathematics for most pupils is good, with pupils acquiring the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills for their age groups in most cases. However, progress in writing is less strong. For instance, pupils in Year 6 do not have secure knowledge of more-advanced punctuation and sentence structure. For example, when writing myths and legends, typical sentences in more recent work include 'Zeus didn't want him to be, he said you are not handsome enough.' In science in key stage 2, pupils have learned about too few topics to ensure that they will have the knowledge, understanding and skills they need by the end of the key stage at their current rate of progress.
- Pupils enjoy reading and many of them show appropriate fluency and comprehension for their age and ability. Leaders have chosen to introduce guided reading sessions in class to strengthen pupils' skills, and these are having a positive effect. Recently published assessment information shows that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 was below the national average in 2016. Leaders introduced new teaching strategies to tackle this, including organising pupils into groups by ability. These are effective, as current pupils make good progress in this

subject.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are broadly below those that are typical for their age and stage of development. During their time in early years they make typical progress, but too few children make better progress to catch up quickly, especially in literacy and mathematics.
- Published assessment information shows that, usually, just over half the children in Reception achieve a good level of development. This means that a substantial number of children each year are not ready for Year 1.
- Less than half the pupils who are disadvantaged reached a good level of development in 2016, which indicates that pupil premium funding has not been used effectively.
- Until recently, there has been a lack of effective assessment in or clear direction for the early years provision. The recently appointed early years leader has recognised that there is a need for improvement. With support from the local multi-academy trust, she has established more-efficient assessment and planning systems and has begun to improve the quality of teaching.
- Current teaching is improving, but there is still sometimes a lack of demand in the tasks that children are asked to do, with some children, particularly the most able, becoming bored with a task if they find it too easy. Teachers' questioning varies, but at its best it challenges children to think more deeply. For example, while pupils were making play-dough worms, the teacher asked children questions to help them think about comparing different lengths.
- The Reception learning environment is purposeful and supports children's development of language and number skills well. Resources are of good quality and are accessible to children. Teachers now plan a range of curriculum opportunities that interest and engage children.
- Children's relationships with adults and with each other are warm and positive. Children show that they feel safe in their behaviour and adults support their personal development and welfare effectively. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding and have received appropriate training.
- There are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements.
- Staff have an increasingly strong partnership with parents. Leaders provide information evenings and have regular sessions during the school day when they invite parents to come into school to see the work children are doing. They also have regular communications about how well their child is progressing.

School details

Unique reference number	104620
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10032338

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Bayes
Executive Headteacher	Jonathan Nichols
Head of School	Sarah Knipe
Telephone number	0151 427 7517
Website	www.garstonceprimary.co.uk
Email address	sknipe@garstonprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about some aspects of the school's provision for special educational needs.
- Garston Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support in school for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is nearly twice the national average.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils that leave or join the school at times other than the start of the Reception Year is above the national average.
- The school operates a breakfast club that was part of this inspection.
- The school accommodates a pre-school nursery that is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- In 2016, the school became de-federated from another local Church of England primary school. It is currently receiving support from the Rainbow Education multi-academy trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in all year groups. Some of these were joint observations between the head of school and the lead inspector. The executive headteacher and the head of school were also present at inspection team meetings.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors had discussions with various stakeholders, including the executive headteacher, the head of school, subject leaders, other members of staff, the chair of governors, representatives from the local authority and the diocese, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed pupils' work in writing and mathematics, as well as their work in other subjects. They also looked at the work of children in the early years.
- The lead inspector evaluated 16 responses received through Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, six responses to the staff questionnaire and 19 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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