

Parkwood Academy

Melbourne Avenue, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2DX

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have created a school where pupils thrive in most areas.
- Children make a flying start in the early years foundation stage, which prepares them very well for key stage 1.
- There is a great deal of consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teaching assistants have played an important role in maintaining pupils' very positive attitudes to learning through a period of teacher shortage.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is superb. Until recently, some pupils did not attend school regularly enough. Leaders have worked hard and imaginatively to reduce absence and there are early signs of big improvements.
- During last year's shortage of teachers, leaders attempted to ensure that pupils covered a range of subjects. They acknowledge that they concentrated on English and mathematics and the curriculum lacked richness. Leaders' plans to ensure a broader and more balanced curriculum are beginning to be realised.
- Pupils love mathematics and make remarkable progress in the subject. They also do well in writing. While improving, outcomes still require improvement because, by Year 6, reading is not good enough. Leaders recognise this and have put in place appropriate strategies to enable pupils to acquire basic reading skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes in reading by widening pupils' vocabulary and deepening their ability to read critically.
- Ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced, with the application of basic skills evident in a wide range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and those responsible for the school's governance have taken decisive action to address weaknesses in teaching and attendance.
- Leaders at all levels exude passion for the school's improvement and the well-being and academic outcomes of all pupils.
- Leaders now ensure that pupils experience a range of subjects. During the last academic year, when the school was short of teachers, the remaining teachers worked hard to help teaching assistants deliver lessons in the core subjects, such as English and mathematics. Leaders provided opportunities for pupils to experience other subjects across the curriculum, but pupils' experience and progress across the wider curriculum were not monitored.
- This year there is much better provision across all subjects. A new leader has been appointed with responsibility in this area and teachers each have a subject to lead. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and can explain how they are improving their subject knowledge. Inspectors saw pupils enjoying a range of subjects, including art, information technology and physical education (PE), in addition to English and mathematics.
- Communication with parents is improving. There is a parental representation panel with a representative from each class. Strategic changes, such as alterations to the timing of the school day, are discussed. Parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire are overwhelmingly positive about the school. A few raised concerns about communication and staff turnover.
- Leaders have carefully analysed the spending and impact of additional funding through the pupil premium and the PE and sport funding. Money has been used effectively to fund additional staff, which directly benefits pupils, and to support pupils to improve their attendance so that they receive more teaching.
- Training and professional development have been very effective. New staff are very positive about their induction. Leaders are proud that all leaders are engaged in gaining formal national college qualifications. In return, they bring back initiatives to the school, such as the current focus on the 'growth mindset'.
- The multi-academy trust brings a range of support and challenge. The quality of training is enhanced through the economies of scale offered through regular joint events, and information technology is used to enable staff to share expertise and plan together.
- Pupils are increasingly learning about life in modern Britain and developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Citizenship lessons have focused on fundamental British values, and organisations such as 'Show Racism the Red Card' visit the school. There are improved links with the local church, with regular visits from the clergy and visits to the local church to celebrate festivals. Teaching seeks to dispel myths and misconceptions about other faiths and cultures.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used

effectively. As a result, these pupils are well supported and do well.

- Performance management has been used to identify and reward the most effective teachers and to robustly tackle less effective work. Leaders, the remaining qualified teachers and teaching assistants worked well together to minimise the disruption to pupils' education. The school is now fully staffed. While the hiatus was unavoidable, it has, to some extent, slowed the school's improvement journey.

Governance of the school

- The board of directors provides governance for the school.
- The board brings a wealth of experience and expertise of education and well-being to the role.
- The board regularly visits the school and holds leaders to account for the quality of education, pupils' welfare and safeguarding, measuring progress against the school's 'single plan'.
- The board knows the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the school well and provides effective challenge and support.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe. For some, the school is a much-needed oasis of calm and security. Statutory requirements regarding recruitment of staff are met and checked by leaders and external visitors.
- Contact with families and with external agencies to support the welfare of pupils is well documented. There are clear and effective systems. All staff are well trained and are alert to potential welfare concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- There now exists a very good level of consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Leaders have clear expectations and check that these are shared by others.
- Teachers are adept at analysing the gaps in pupils' learning and are using this analysis to plan their teaching.
- Effective relationships between teachers and pupils are palpable and, in many cases, these have been established very quickly.
- Teaching assistants provide effective and often very effective support for learners. They are managed well by teachers and are very skilled. During last year's staffing turbulence, they provided stability for pupils so that it has been easy for new teachers this term to make a swift start with pupils used to well-established routines.
- Teachers' use of questioning is very effective at developing pupils' understanding and moving on their thinking.

- Teachers are skilled at identifying and anticipating pupils' misconceptions, correcting them and moving learning forward.
- Teachers skilfully assess pupils during lessons and adapt their lessons accordingly, for example by spotting that a group of pupils are making common mistakes and drawing them together to provide additional teaching. As a result, pupils return to their work with renewed vigour and enthusiasm. Pupils respond enthusiastically to teachers' assessment and guidance.
- The learning environment and strategies such as 'working walls' are used by pupils to support their learning.
- Pupils at the initial stages of reading are very effectively taught strategies to work out words. For many children, the application of these skills in reading ensures fluency and the ability to work out meaning from texts very effectively. This aids comprehension and understanding, which foster independence in reading, enabling children to make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils take great pride in the school. They are great ambassadors for the school, for example in their conduct and their dress. Their work is presented well.
- Processes from the start of the early years foundation stage ensure that children are well cared for.
- Pupils learn how to look after themselves. For example, inspectors saw lessons on healthy eating and on cyber bullying. West Ham Football Club provides a coach who works with pupils across the school in a variety of ways to promote fitness.
- Very nearly all parents responding to Parent View reported that pupils are happy and looked after well. One parent whose child had moved to the school commented: 'In just half a term, Parkwood has transformed my child into the happy, confident kid we know at home. I cannot praise Parkwood highly enough.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves around the school very calmly. During breaktimes and at the beginning and end of the school day, pupils behave well and get on well together. The dining hall at lunchtime is very orderly.
- Pupils told inspectors that there is no bullying because the headteacher deals with it very quickly. Parents agree.
- Any occasional misbehaviour by individual pupils is managed effectively by staff. Teaching and support staff have had training in behaviour management. They are well equipped to manage pupils who display challenging behaviour and do so very effectively.

- In lessons, pupils are very well behaved. They listen to each other and are kind to one another. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and a thirst to improve. The highly positive classroom climate for learning that new staff have inherited is testament to the effective work done by leaders and other staff over the past year of staffing instability.
- Attendance last year was below average. The attendance of a group of pupils with exceptionally high levels of absence has shown marked improvement and the actions and innovations of leaders are well placed to ensure that this improvement is sustained. A range of actions are proving successful. Term-time holidays are not sanctioned and financial penalties are imposed. Since the start of this term, staff visit the homes of absent pupils and bring them to school in the new minibus. This has already resulted in a very significant improvement in the attendance of some individuals. The first week of this term has seen very high attendance. While this is normal in most schools, it represents a major breakthrough for this school. Other interesting initiatives have been put in place, such as reorganising the school week and the school year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders recognise that outcomes are not good enough because pupils' progress and attainment in reading are below national averages. Disadvantaged girls do noticeably less well in reading than other girls nationally. The below-average national test results at the end of key stage 2 in reading have led to the combined score for reading, writing and mathematics being below where it should be.
- During last year's staffing difficulties, support for some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was less regular than for others. As a result, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is inconsistent.
- Last year, the progress of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics was not prioritised. Pupils had some exposure to a range of subjects, including science, geography and art. For older pupils, subjects such as music and foreign languages had little coverage and, as a result, pupils were less well prepared than they should be for secondary school. The situation is improving this year because the school is fully staffed with enthusiastic teachers who are passionate about providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Some disadvantaged pupils have a limited vocabulary, which inhibits their ability to make consistently good progress in reading. Leaders have introduced strategies to address this. They recognise that it is the main barrier to pupils achieving better outcomes.
- Despite last year's staffing difficulties, there was improvement in the summer 2017 national tests on the previous year in each subject.
- Pupils achieved in line with other pupils nationally in writing.
- Pupils love mathematics and excel at it. Pupils make much better progress in mathematics than in reading, because progress in mathematics is less reliant on language development than reading is.
- The small number of pupils with high prior attainment, including those who are

disadvantaged, do very well at key stage 2. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than their peers.

- Disadvantaged pupils make a little better progress than other pupils in the school. As over half the pupils are disadvantaged, comparisons with other pupils with similar points nationally follow the pattern of achievement for the whole school, that is more progress than other pupils nationally in mathematics, similar progress in writing and less progress in reading.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively identified. All children have a detailed plan which outlines needs, desired outcomes and targets. These link to a range of personalised support to ensure inclusion and overcome barriers to learning. This approach is particularly effective in the early years, Year 1 and Year 2, where children make similar progress to other pupils from different starting points. Children who have an education, health and care plan are well supported with imaginative and effective provision. This supports them and helps staff to manage their needs and remain in school.
- Since the school opened in its current form, there have been some spectacular improvements in outcomes, but from a very low base. For example, results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have risen from 11% in 2014 to 72% in 2017. The proportion of pupils in the early years foundation stage achieving good levels of development has increased from 37% in 2014 to 69% in 2017, a figure in the line with the national average for 2016.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership in the early years foundation stage is good. It is enabling children to make good progress from low starting points. Based on thorough assessment and evaluation of what is successful, a range of activities are planned to meet the children's needs and enable them to make good progress.
- Children learn in a stimulating environment, both inside and outside, which promotes all areas of the early years curriculum. A mixture of planned and independent activities provide opportunities for children to choose resources and learning. Staff build up children's learning through modelling and questioning. Children are focused and stay on task, which helps to develop the skills and characteristics of effective learners.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a safe environment with a well-developed outdoor provision to which children have regular access. Children are well behaved and polite and follow expectations. An effective range of transition processes are in place to ensure that children settle quickly, are cared for well and are supported into Reception. Children who had only been in Year 1 for eight days at the time of the inspection were settled and had managed the transition between the early years and key stage 1 well.
- Children enter the early years provision with abilities that are below, and in some cases well below, those expected for their age. This is particularly evident in communication and language, where many children are monosyllabic in conversation. Effective baseline assessment enables staff to plan with a focus on closing the gaps in pupils' abilities. This enables pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Children are well supported in developing language skills through an effective speech and

language programme. Disadvantaged pupils are supported well.

- Effective use of the pupil premium funding and effective partnerships with parents and external agencies ensure that most children make good progress from below-average starting points. As a result, the proportion of children that achieve good levels of development is in line with the national average. Pupils are ready to settle very quickly into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	141355
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10036097

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mike Simmonds
Headteacher	Andrew Lucas
Telephone number	01245 354 605
Website	www.parkwood-academy.org
Email address	admin@parkwood-academy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is part of the South Essex Academy Trust.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector over two days.
- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence from lesson observations carried out with the headteacher or deputy headteacher, short visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and staff, meetings with staff, directors and the chief executive of the multi-academy trust, reviews of pupils' work in books, reviews of the school's website, documents and assessment information and general observations of the daily operations of the school, including social areas.
- Inspectors analysed the 25 standard responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, alongside the 13 free-text responses to the same questionnaire.

Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Beverley Hall

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017