

Parkfield School

Hurn, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 6DF

Inspection dates

18–19 October 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school is currently being led by an interim headteacher and an interim academy board (IAB). Sustained leadership, in the form of a permanent headteacher and a fully functioning board of governors, has yet to be established.
- Recent changes in the school's leadership have seen improvements in monitoring systems. Some initiatives, however, have not had the chance to reveal their full impact.
- The roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of senior leaders are not clear or well understood by staff.
- Middle leadership in the secondary phase of the school is not as strong or as well organised as it is in the primary phase. As a result, its impact on improving the progress of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 is limited.
- Evaluation of the impact of additional funding lacks precision in places.
- Teaching does not consistently meet the needs of learners in the secondary phase. Work is not pitched accurately at the appropriate level for pupils, and they are not routinely challenged by it, whatever their starting points.
- Historic outcomes at the end of key stage 4 have been poor, although pupils currently in the school are making better progress.
- In key stage 4, many pupils have gaps in their basic literacy which are not being addressed effectively across all subjects.
- Rates of absence and persistent absence are too high in the secondary phase, although the school is having some success in improving the attendance of pupils with very high rates of absence.
- Outdoor learning opportunities in the early years are underdeveloped.

The school has the following strengths

- Interim headteachers and the IAB have brought a greater clarity of vision to the school's work.
- Staff work well to promote pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Middle leadership in the primary phase is strong. As a result, pupils make good progress in the early years and key stages 1 and 2.
- Children get off to a good start to their learning in the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - sustained leadership is established in the form of a permanent headteacher and governing body
 - systems for tracking pupils' progress and attendance are fully embedded
 - the monitoring, evaluation and development of the quality of teaching focus more precisely on the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress
 - senior leaders' roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clear and well understood by staff
 - middle leadership in the secondary phase improves to match the strengths of that seen in the primary phase
 - the evaluation of the impact of the use of additional funding is sharper.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, especially in key stages 3 and 4, by ensuring that:
 - teaching meets the needs of all pupils, including the most able, by accurately pitching the work they are asked to do at an appropriate level for their ability
 - pupils face appropriately challenging activities, whatever their starting points
 - the gaps in some pupils' basic literacy in key stage 4 are rapidly and effectively filled.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by rapidly and sustainably reducing rates of absence and persistent absence, especially in the secondary phase.
- Improve the provision for the early years by further developing the opportunities for outdoor learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has been through a considerable period of turbulence in its leadership in recent times. The current interim headteacher has only been in post since Easter 2017 and he was preceded by another interim headteacher for two terms prior to that. In addition, school leaders have been managing a complex and much-delayed move out of temporary accommodation to the school's current permanent home. This instability in leadership and the logistics of the move have occupied a large amount of the time and attention of leaders at all levels and limited the impact they have had on improving the school.
- The successive interim headteachers have, nonetheless, brought a clarity of vision and purpose to the school, providing it with much-needed strategic direction. Important initiatives have been taken to improve the way the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and attendance are monitored. Some of these developments are in their infancy, however, and have not had the chance to reveal their impact over a sustained period of time.
- The roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of senior leaders are unclear, and responses to the staff survey indicate that they are not well understood by staff.
- Middle leadership in the secondary phase is not as strong or as well organised as it is in the primary phase. This is limiting its impact on the progress that pupils make in key stages 3 and 4, which needs to improve rapidly.
- By contrast, the phase leaders of early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 are providing strong leadership in the primary phase. They work very well together, sharing ideas and good practice. This is an important reason behind the recent improvements in pupils' progress and attainment in the primary phase of the school.
- The appraisal of teachers' performance has recently improved. Teachers are now given meaningful targets that tie in with the school's development plan. For example, all teachers have a target related to improving attendance. This is the first cycle in which effective performance management arrangements have been in place and, consequently, their long-term impact cannot be judged, as is the case with other recent initiatives.
- The curriculum is well organised. In the primary phase, the national curriculum is followed, augmented by Montessori methods in the early years and key stage 1. In the secondary phase, leaders have decided to step back from the use of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme to focus more closely on preparing pupils for GCSEs.
- As a result of the recent move to new premises, the school's extra-curricular programme is temporarily in abeyance. It is clear, however, from the records of the extra-curricular programme at the previous site and the plans for the new site that pupils will be offered a wide range of sporting and cultural opportunities to support the formal curriculum.
- The school makes effective use of additional funding it receives. It has relatively small numbers of pupils eligible for the pupil premium or the Year 7 literacy and numeracy

catch-up funding. This funding is used appropriately to help these pupils, although the evaluation of impact could be more precise, especially for the Year 7 catch-up funding. The analysis of the impact of the Year 7 catch-up funding currently published on the website is very poor.

- The physical education and sports premium is used well in the primary phase of the school to increase pupils' participation in physical activity and to encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles. For example, specialist dance coaching is brought in to help pupils use the school's brand-new dance studio. However, the analysis of the impact of this funding is not sharp enough, especially regarding the success with which pupils are encouraged to sustain participation in sport.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is secure. The special educational needs coordinator has a good understanding of the requirements of her role and the needs of the pupils for whom she is responsible. As a result, additional funding is used appropriately to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, largely through the deployment of teaching and learning assistants.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The personal, social and health education curriculum supports this aspect of the school's work effectively. Fundamental British values are actively promoted. Class charters, for example, introduce the pupils to concepts such as individual liberty, the rule of law and democracy.

Governance of the school

- The governance role for the school is currently carried out by an interim academy board, which was established in 2016. This body includes a national leader of governance (as chair) and a national leader of education. The IAB has brought more rigour to the role of governance and established a clearer strategic vision. Members of the IAB have a good understanding of the challenges the school faces, as well as the strengths it already possesses. Despite this improvement in the quality of governance, the IAB's desire to facilitate the school's move to a multi-academy trust has not yet come to fruition.
- The IAB recognises the need for the school to have a permanent, sustainable governing body. As a result, it has clear plans to augment the IAB and the governing body with a cohort of new governors who will bring additional expertise to the governance role. These developments are ongoing, so it is not possible to make any meaningful judgement about the impact these changes will have.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a well-established culture of safeguarding at the school. The designated safeguarding lead demonstrates a strong understanding of child protection and safeguarding and oversees a culture of vigilance by all staff. Records are well maintained, and communication with other agencies, including the local authority, is well managed. Staff training is up to date and thorough. All the required checks on

teaching and other staff are carried out before they start to work at the school. These are recorded efficiently in the single central record.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too inconsistent across the school. It is strongest in the early years and key stages 1 and 2, but in the secondary phase it is nowhere near as effective. As a consequence, across the school as a whole, teaching, learning and assessment require improvement.
- Teaching does not consistently pitch work at the appropriate level relative to pupils' prior attainment or aptitude, especially in key stages 3 and 4. Moreover, the level of challenge that pupils are presented with is not consistently high, whatever their individual starting points may be. While true for all pupils, this is particularly the case for the most able. Too often, teaching emphasises task completion rather than focusing on the quality of work that pupils produce.
- In the secondary phase, the quality of teachers' subject knowledge and their ability to deploy it effectively is not consistently high enough. As a result, pupils are sometimes confused or misconceptions are reinforced. Teaching is having a better impact on pupils' progress in English and mathematics than it is in science or humanities.
- Many pupils, especially in key stage 4, have gaps in their basic literacy that are not being identified or plugged by effective teaching across the curriculum.
- Teachers' use of the school's assessment policy is not consistent across subjects in the secondary phase.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the primary phase is good. As a result, pupils are increasingly developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching in the primary phase is well planned and supported by accurate assessment of pupils' abilities and their stage of development or learning.
- Phonics is well taught in the early years and key stage 1. As a result, pupils get a very secure grounding in initial sounds and the skills of segmenting and blending. This sets them up well for later study.

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 have good attitudes to learning. Most are successfully developing the characteristics of effective learners. They have good relationships with their teachers that are marked by mutual respect.
- Pupils typically take pride in their work, although this is less consistent in the secondary phase, where some exercise books are not well maintained or presented. Pupils are

smartly turned out in their uniforms.

- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. For example, primary pupils show a good understanding of the potential dangers of social media platforms and an awareness of the age restrictions on their use.
- Pupils say there is little or no bullying in the school and are confident that teachers would deal with it well if it did occur. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online survey felt the same.
- Pupils in the secondary phase receive appropriate, impartial careers guidance in order to help them make informed decisions about the next phase of their education, employment or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Rates of absence and persistent absence are too high in the secondary phase of the school, and this has a detrimental impact on the school's overall attendance figures. Attendance is better in the primary phase, although in 2016/17 it was still higher than the national average for primary schools. Persistent absence rates for disadvantaged pupils remain stubbornly high. The school's work with pupils who have very low attendance indeed is beginning to improve their attendance.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They listen to each other respectfully and treat each other kindly. There is very little low-level disruption and, when it does occur, teachers deal with it calmly and efficiently.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because the achievement of pupils in the secondary phase is not good enough, given the pupils' starting points. Pupils in the primary phase make better progress and attainment is in line with national levels.
- Provisional overall progress scores for pupils who completed key stage 4 in 2017 are poor, well below the national average. There were, however, particular features of this cohort that help to explain these outcomes. A significant number of pupils in what was a very small cohort arrived in the school very late, either after the start of Year 10 or in Year 11. In addition, many had a history of disrupted education prior to joining Parkfield. These pupils had a disproportionate negative effect on the overall progress figures. Nonetheless, even when this is taken into account, the outcomes still indicate a need to improve the progress that pupils make in the secondary phase.
- The work of pupils currently in key stages 3 and 4, however, indicates that progress is improving, although there is still some way to go before this is the case in all subjects. Progress in English and mathematics is stronger than, for example, that being made in science.
- Inconsistent levels of challenge in teaching mean that the most able do not make the progress of which they are capable across all subjects and year groups, especially in the secondary phase.

- Primary outcomes are improving. At key stage 2 in 2017, pupils' progress has improved in each of reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in all these subjects doubled to 61%, which is the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved high scores also increased.
- A similar pattern of improving standards is seen in key stage 1. Most notably, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading increased markedly, as did the proportion working at greater depth. The proportion of pupils who passed the phonics screening check in year 1 also increased, with 4 out of every 5 pupils doing so.
- The work of pupils currently in key stages 1 and 2 shows that they continue to make progress consistent with the improved outcomes in 2017.
- The relatively small overall number of disadvantaged pupils means that in each year group the cohort of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is small. This makes generalisations about their progress and attainment difficult. What can be said with some confidence, however, is that, in line with pupils overall, disadvantaged pupils currently make better progress in the primary than in the secondary phase.
- The secure provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities helps them to make progress from their individual starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- The quality of provision in the early years is good. This means that children get off to a secure start to their education in the Reception class and are well prepared to make the transition to Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is strong and has an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision. The early years leader works closely with other middle leaders in the primary phase to ensure that the early years is providing a secure foundation for later learning.
- Teaching is good in the early years. As a result, children make good progress. For example, phonics teaching in the Reception class provides a solid bedrock for further development of reading skills higher up the school. Children develop a secure understanding of initial sounds and can blend them together to help themselves form words.
- Staff in the early years are good at assessing children's stage of development and the next steps they need to take. Very effective use is made of recording systems to continually assess children's progress towards achieving the early learning goals. Parents are actively involved in this and can contribute evidence of their own to the process of assessment.
- Effective, accurate assessment of children's levels of development when they start in the early years means that staff have a very good understanding of children's starting points. This means that teachers can plan appropriate activities for children. For example, the early years leader has identified moving and handling as a key area to work on for the current cohort of children in Reception.
- The proportion of children who attain an overall good level of development at the end of the early years foundation stage has risen consistently in recent years. In 2017,

86% achieved a good level of development, above the national average.

- Behaviour is good in the early years and children work and play together happily and cooperatively.
- Regular communication with home has led to improved attendance. Current attendance in the early years is high.
- As it is in the main school, safeguarding is effective in the early years and there are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements.
- The school has just moved into new premises and, as a consequence, the physical environment for the early years is much improved since the last inspection. Children have greater opportunities to learn outside, although, as the early years leader recognises, this could be developed further.

School details

Unique reference number	139596
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10037073

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Graham Exon
Headteacher	Ian Golding
Telephone number	01202 592530
Website	www.parkfieldschool.org
Email address	office@parkfield.bournemouth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about contact details, pupil premium, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding, the physical education and sport premium, special educational needs report, the accessibility plan and equality objectives.
- Parkfield School is an all-through free school. It opened in September 2013 in temporary premises. In September 2017, it moved into its permanent location. As a consequence, it changed local authorities from Bournemouth to Dorset.
- After the previous section 5 inspection in 2015, the school received two monitoring visits in 2016 and 2017.
- The governance of the school is currently the responsibility of an interim academy board.

- The proportions of pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are below the national average. The proportions of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are higher than the national average.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school meets the current government floor standards at key stage 2. It does not meet the floor standards at key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook a wide range of observations in lessons across all key stages in the school. A large proportion of these observations were undertaken jointly with senior or middle leaders. During these visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' work and talked to them about their learning. In addition, they scrutinised a larger sample of pupils' work across a range of subjects. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector also met with member of the IAB, including the chair. Inspectors also talked to pupils from the primary and secondary phases in group discussions.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, minutes of IAB meetings, records of pupils' progress and attendance, safeguarding records and the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took into account 44 responses to Parent View and also scrutinised the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Stephen Lee, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Nash	Ofsted Inspector
Clair Harrington-Wilcox	Ofsted Inspector

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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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