

# Pennington Church of England Junior School

Priestlands Road, Pennington, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 8HX

## Inspection dates

14–15 November 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, turbulence in leadership has led to a decline in standards in the school. The newly established leadership team has not been in place for long enough to improve notably the quality of teaching or pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The proportion of pupils achieving at least age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics is well below the national average.
- Pupils make inconsistent progress over the course of key stage 2. Too many make slower progress than is typically seen from pupils nationally.
- The quality of teaching is variable across the school. Many changes of staff over the past year have reduced the overall quality of pupils' learning experiences over time.
- Where teaching is less effective, it does not closely meet the needs of pupils or help them to build rapidly on their previous learning. Some work is too easy, and other work is too hard for pupils to understand and engage with.
- Although behaviour in the school has improved recently, pupils do not manage their own behaviour consistently well. Too often, they are not ready to engage with learning, and need the skilful support of adults to remain focused on their work.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has brought clear vision and direction to the school. With effective support from the deputy headteacher, she has brought about rapid improvements, particularly to behaviour in the school. Staff share leaders' determination to improve the school.
- Pupils are very well cared for. The ethos of nurture and high aspiration is evident. Pupils report that they feel safe and happy.
- Governors bring a wealth of experience and expertise, which places them well to support and challenge leaders effectively.
- Leaders have re-energised sports provision, with a clear focus on improving physical and mental health. Pupils enjoy opportunities to participate in a range of extra-curricular sports and activities.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is planned to meet the needs of pupils more closely, so that they are challenged appropriately and so make good progress.
- Share best practice effectively across the staff, so that the quality of teaching becomes consistently as effective across the school.
- Accelerate pupils' progress over time, so that a greater proportion achieve at least age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Embed recently established behaviour strategies, so that pupils learn to make positive choices independently about their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2017. Ably supported by the deputy headteacher, she has acted swiftly and effectively to address the decline in standards that has happened since the last inspection. Pupils, parents, staff and governors reflect a shared confidence in the new leadership team and the difference they are already making to the quality of pupils' school experience.
- Leaders have quickly re-established a positive culture in the school. Staff are united in their commitment to provide the very best opportunities for pupils to succeed, academically and socially. Pupils welcome the improvements to behaviour across the school, which have resulted from clear and consistent expectations.
- Appropriate and structured systems are now in place that enable leaders to hold staff to account for the difference their work is making to pupils' achievement. Leaders make careful checks on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. They use what they learn to identify pertinent next steps for school improvement, adapting their plans according to emerging priorities.
- Leaders make effective use of extra help from other schools and the local authority to support school improvement. They balance this carefully, to ensure that the additional support is timely and not overwhelming. Staff welcome leaders' high expectations. They value the support they receive, which helps them to improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy learning a suitably broad range of subjects. The development of their literacy and numeracy skills is incorporated carefully into their wider learning, which gives it a context and purpose. During the inspection, upper-school pupils used their topic on castles to develop their literacy skills, by practising how to write a newspaper article about the Battle of Hastings.
- Leaders' clear vision about the importance of the school's values is evident through the wider curriculum. Pupils make effective use of opportunities to learn about rights, respect and responsibilities. They understand the importance of wider issues linked to life in modern Britain, and talk animatedly and maturely about issues that are relevant to them. This helps them to be thoughtful and considerate of each other.
- Leaders use the sports premium funding well. Since September 2017, they have established a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, involving increasing numbers of pupils. Pupils enjoy competing against pupils in other schools, such as in a recent cross-country competition. Leaders have clear plans to develop sports provision further.
- This academic year, leaders have relaunched their work to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Their careful thinking, supported by advice from beyond the school, has resulted in clear plans to make effective use of additional funding for these groups of pupils. It is currently too early for some of their planned actions to have been put in place.
- Although leaders have clearly made a notable difference in recent times, they recognise that they are in the early stages of the school's journey of improvement. It is currently too soon to see the full impact of some of the actions taken to improve the

school, particularly in relation to teaching, learning and outcomes.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body provides effective support and challenge to school leaders. Governors share leaders' commitment to improving the school rapidly. They have worked hard to try to minimise the impact of recent leadership turbulence, and to find a way to move the school forward.
- Governors bring a suitable range of expertise and experience to their roles. They make effective use of support from the local authority to ensure that they understand and fulfil their legal responsibilities. They are proactive in considering how to strengthen the way the governors work together for the benefit of the school, through auditing their skills and identifying appropriate training.
- As for other aspects of school leadership, there have been numerous changes to the composition of the governing body since the last inspection. Consequently, some of the accountability measures are only recently in place, which limits their impact at this point.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has taken prompt and effective action to secure the school site. Staff and governors receive useful training that ensures that they know what to do if they are concerned about a child. Leaders use rigorous systems to make and record relevant checks on adults in the school, to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. Safeguarding policies and processes are appropriate, and reflected on regularly to identify if and how they can improve further.
- Leaders work sensitively and determinedly to identify and then support pupils they have concerns about. They are proactive in contacting the local authority when appropriate, and tenacious in their work to keep potentially vulnerable pupils 'on the radar'. They keep careful records of their safeguarding work and work in a 'joined-up' way with other local schools to support families who may need extra help.
- Pupils appreciate feeling safe in school. Planned activities, such as assemblies, develop pupils' understanding of how to manage situations that might put them at risk. They learn important life skills to help keep themselves safe, both in and beyond school, for example by practising fire drills or learning how to ride their bicycles safely.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is variable across the school. Pupils do not benefit from a consistently high-quality learning experience throughout their time at the school. The large number of changes of staff over the last year has contributed to this inconsistency over time.
- Although activities in lessons build on pupils' learning over time, they are not typically matched precisely to pupils' starting points. Consequently, some work is too easy and

does not enable pupils to move on rapidly. In other instances, work is too difficult for pupils to be able to access successfully.

- Pupils enjoy reading. They typically read with fluency and confidence, using their phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. Leaders recognise the need to make the teaching of reading more explicit, so that those whose reading skills are less well developed catch up with their peers rapidly. They have taken early steps to raise the profile of reading and add structure to how it is taught.
- Teachers know pupils well, and manage them sensitively. This has established a secure working environment, where pupils feel increasingly confident to participate in learning. Sometimes, however, pupils need frequent reminders and encouragement to remain focused on their work, which impedes their rates of progress.
- Additional adults work effectively with teachers to assist vulnerable pupils in lessons. Staff work closely together to plan this help carefully, which supports learning as well as pre-empting potential disruptive behaviour and reducing pupils' anxiety.
- Teachers use a range of resources carefully to support pupils' learning. Their secure and broad subject knowledge is evident in how well they teach literacy skills using wider themes. They give pupils the opportunity to apply their learning, such as in mathematics, when pupils use the skills they have learned to solve word problems.
- Where teaching is most successful, pupils concentrate hard on the task in hand. Their conversations about their work help them to learn from each other. They write in a range of genres, presenting their work carefully and accurately. This is currently more often the case in the upper part of the school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This is a real strength of the school.
- Staff know pupils and their families well. They understand the particular challenges that some of them face, and work hard to meet their social and emotional as well as their learning needs. As a result, pupils typically feel safe and happy.
- Leaders make effective use of opportunities to support pupils' personal development. They raise the profile of relevant issues and topics, such as environmental pollution, so that pupils are suitably informed. Their work with the local hospice shows how sensitively they develop pupils' understanding of challenging topics. Consequently, pupils are thoughtful about the world around them, which is evident from their interactions with each other and with staff.
- Leaders work closely with experts from beyond the school to support pupils with specific additional needs. Where provision in the school is not proving successful for individual pupils, they explore and make good use of alternatives that meet particular needs more effectively.
- Other pupils who need extra help benefit from spending time working in 'The Nest'. This mixed-age group provides pupils with a short-term opportunity to develop the

skills they need to be able to work and cooperate with their peers and with adults. Pupils respond positively to this nurturing environment, while staff working in this area retain their high expectations for pupils' learning and achievement.

- A small number of pupils describe being concerned about bullying. They are confident to report it and say that teachers help to try and sort it out, but that their actions are not always effective. Parents are typically positive about leaders' work to try and resolve any concerns they report. During the inspection, staff's focus on the anti-bullying week theme was evident through assemblies, references in class and in conversations between pupils and staff.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although behaviour has improved notably in recent times, this is a result of the skilful way that staff defuse or pre-empt disruptions. Pupils are not sufficiently independent in managing their own behaviour, in order to be consistently ready to learn.
- Leaders have put effective systems in place to monitor patterns in poor behaviour, identifying hot spots and triggers promptly. Their considered actions have led to a rapid reduction in behavioural incidents since the start of term. Pupils value how staff manage their behaviour consistently well, using clear and simple systems.
- Most pupils come to school regularly. Where attendance falls below expectations, leaders understand the underlying reasons. They work closely with families to provide appropriate support, with help from other services, such as education welfare, while maintaining high expectations for pupils to attend regularly.
- The breakfast drop-in club supports pupils in starting the day well. This is helping to improve attendance and punctuality for some pupils who were often absent or late to school in the past.
- During the inspection, pupils typically behaved well in lessons and when moving round the site. They were courteous, confident and friendly. They responded well when adults made them aware that they were not meeting expectations.
- Leaders have only very recently begun to make use of alternative provision at Eaglewood School. As such, it is not possible to comment on attendance and behaviour of pupils using this resource.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Outcomes by the end of key stage 2 are not good enough. The proportion of pupils achieving at least age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 declined from 2016 to 2017 and is well below the national average. This is because pupils do not consistently make good progress across their four years at the school. The impact of turbulence in staffing during the last academic year is a contributing factor.
- Where work in lessons does not match pupils' starting points closely enough, progress is limited, because pupils are repeating work they can already do. As a result, the percentage of pupils currently on track to achieve the higher standard in reading,

writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2018 is below that likely to be achieved nationally.

- Progress and attainment are not consistently strong across the range of subjects or for different groups of pupils. Boys do not achieve as well as girls. Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they should, particularly across the lower part of the school.
- Leaders have promptly ensured that teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements are more accurate than in the past. Leaders now have systems in place that enable them to track pupils' attainment and progress carefully over time.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are making more-rapid progress than other pupils in the school. This is because of the high-quality extra help they are receiving to help them catch up.
- The school's performance information indicates that there are some improvements in the progress and attainment of pupils currently in the school. In particular, the overall proportion of pupils achieving at least age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics is increasing, notably in Years 4 and 6. The pattern in this information is supported by the quality of work in pupils' books.

## School details

Unique reference number	116307
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024651

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	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Ford
Headteacher	Mrs Kirstie Richards
Telephone number	01590 672104
Website	<a href="http://www.penningtonjunior.com">www.penningtonjunior.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:adminoffice@pennington-jun.hants.sch.uk">adminoffice@pennington-jun.hants.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 July 2013

## Information about this school

- Pennington Junior School is a smaller than average-sized maintained Church of England junior school. There are six classes in total – two in Year 3, one each in Years 4, 5 and 6, and a joint Year 5/6 class.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average, as is the proportion who are disadvantaged. There are higher than typical percentages of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language.
- The headteacher who was in post at the last inspection left in April 2015. Since then, there has been notable turbulence in leadership, with a series of short-term or interim headteachers in place. The current substantive headteacher joined the school in September 2017. The chair and vice-chair of governors took up their roles in October 2017.



- The deputy headteacher has recently returned from maternity leave. Another senior member of staff is currently away from school long term due to illness. A large proportion of staff left the school over the last academic year, although the school is now fully staffed.
- The school meets the floor standard for what the government expects pupils to achieve in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school has very recently begun to use alternative provision at The Eaglewood School to provide support for a very small number of pupils' additional needs.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classrooms to observe learning, talk to pupils and look at their work. Some of these visits were carried out alongside school leaders.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, and with groups of staff, pupils and governors. The lead inspector spoke to two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' school self-evaluation and improvement plan, behaviour and attendance records, and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching. Policies and other information on the school website were also scrutinised, along with safeguarding arrangements, including the central record of checks on staff working in the school.
- Inspectors considered current pupils' progress, by reviewing leaders' information about pupils' performance. They also worked alongside the English and mathematics leaders to look at work from a range of pupils in Years 3, 5 and 6.
- Inspectors took into account 24 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, including 20 free-text responses. They considered confidential questionnaire responses from nine pupils and 13 staff. Inspectors also spoke informally to pupils during the course of the inspection, and to parents in the playground at the start of the day.

## Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kate Redman	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Praetig	Ofsted Inspector

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