

Park Academy

Robin Hoods Walk, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 9LQ

Inspection dates

22–23 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	Good
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

- Although improving, the quality of teaching, the use of assessment and pupils' achievement are not yet consistently good.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able pupils, have not been high enough. Too few pupils attain and exceed the standards expected for their ages.
- In some classes, pupils are not helped to be able to write at length or to develop their writing skills in other subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils lack problem-solving and reasoning skills. Pupils do not apply these skills sufficiently, for example in topic work.
- Too few pupils attain or exceed the expected level of development by the end of Reception.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching of phonics. This means that too few pupils are successful in the national phonics screening check.
- In some classes, particularly in mathematics, pupils lack a clear understanding of where to focus their efforts to improve.
- Teaching assistants are not fully utilised during whole-class inputs by the teacher.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the school joined the Boston Witham Academies Federation, the school has improved considerably during the last year. The fall in standards has now been arrested.
- The recently appointed headteacher provides very effective leadership and the school is well placed to continue to improve in the future.
- Pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour are good. Pupils enjoy school, show positive attitudes to learning, work hard and concentrate well in lessons.
- Leaders have eradicated inadequate teaching and rates of progress are accelerating.
- The well trained and effective governing body now carries out its role well.
- The school cares for and supports pupils well. Those pupils who join the school with very little English soon gain in confidence with their spoken English. This prepares them well for life in school and their new country.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and the use of assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils, particularly of the most able
 - improving the teaching of phonics
 - ensuring that pupils are clear about where to concentrate their efforts to improve their work, particularly in mathematics
 - improving the deployment of teaching assistants during whole-class lessons.
- Improve the curriculum and pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that activities and the curriculum are suitably modified to provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils so that more pupils exceed standards expected for their ages
 - placing greater emphasis on developing pupils' extended writing and helping pupils to improve their writing skills in other subjects
 - ensuring that the curriculum and teaching place sufficient emphasis on problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics.
- Ensure that more pupils attain and exceed standards expected for their ages by the end of Reception.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Over the last year, since the school joined the Boston Witham Academies Federation and appointed a new headteacher, the school has improved well. The trust has been a source of extensive support to the school and has been instrumental and highly effective in setting the school on a much-improved path. The contribution of the trust provides a good model for school support.
- The decline in performance, due to previous weaknesses in leadership and management has been arrested. Teaching and learning are now more effectively managed, and although these are not yet consistently good throughout the school, they are improving.
- Staff morale is high and staff very much appreciate the much stronger support and guidance they receive from senior leaders. All share a common aim of working hard to improve the school and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders know the school inside out and have a well-developed sense of exactly what needs improving and in what order. Planning for school improvement is effective and involves staff appropriately.
- Leaders have effective ways of knowing about the progress and attainment of pupils throughout the school. This knowledge is being used to provide extra help to those most at risk of falling behind. Leaders are aware that these procedures do not currently place sufficient emphasis on the most able and plans are already in hand to address this weakness.
- Middle leaders, over the last year, have made a much better contribution to improving the school. The senior leadership team focuses its work closely on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- Due to effective staff training and work with other schools, teachers' assessments of pupils' learning are now accurate.
- Additional funds, such as those for pupils who have special educational needs, funding for disadvantaged pupils and primary sports funding, are used well. Each of these additional funds are having a better effect on the progress made by pupils.
- Much attention has been placed on ensuring that pupils enjoy school, are kept safe and work hard and concentrate well in lessons. Pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning equip them well to improve the standards they achieve. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are given appropriate attention in the curriculum. Pupils are also taught key British values such as fair play and democratic decision-making.
- The curriculum is modified well to meet the learning needs of pupils who join the school with little English. They soon grow in confidence in English and this equips them well to benefit fully from school. The curriculum is also much better modified to meet the learning needs of those who find learning difficult and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and the progress of these pupils is accelerating.

- The curriculum is not sufficiently modified to fully meet the needs of the most able and these pupils are not yet reaching their full potential.
- Although improving, there are remaining weaknesses in the curriculum for reading, writing and mathematics. For example, in writing and mathematics, pupils do not sufficiently practise or develop these skills in other subjects, such as history, geography or science. In reading, there are remaining weaknesses in the teaching of phonics and non-fiction texts are not sufficiently used to support pupils' learning.
- Leaders are effective in providing a wide and interesting curriculum. There is a good range of clubs and activities, including sports coaching and competitive sport. These opportunities, as well as others to encourage social and emotional development, including residential visits and the breakfast club, are enjoyed by pupils.

Governance of the school

- Weak governance was one of the factors that led to the decline in the school's performance prior to its joining the Boston Witham Academies Federation. Over the last year, governance is much improved and is now very effective.
- Governors are well trained and are fully aware of the extent of their roles and responsibilities.
- They know how to use data to challenge the school to improve and are aware of where further improvements are needed. They work in close partnership with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also check the extensive information they now receive from the headteacher with school visits by governors, including visits to classrooms and analysis of pupils' work.
- The governing body ensures that any weaknesses in teaching are dealt with and that teachers' pay is closely linked to the performance of pupils. They also check that school funding and any additional funds are used to good effect.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school ensures that staff training results in everyone understanding their responsibilities for keeping the pupils safe in school. A strong culture has been established where all take these responsibilities seriously. Governors check that safeguarding is effective.
- Staff know how to make referrals if any safeguarding concern should arise. Parents feel confident that their children are kept safe in school. Pupils act safely and with respect for the safety of others. They say that they feel safe and demonstrate clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although improving, the quality of teaching and the use of assessment are not consistently good throughout the school.

- Pupils lack a clear understanding of where to focus their efforts to improve their work and the next steps in their learning. This slows the progress that they make.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching of phonics. Too few pupils are successful in the national phonics screening check by the end of Year 1. For example, pupils are not given enough opportunities to blend sounds and the pace of phonics teaching is sometimes too slow.
- The teaching of reasoning and problem solving in mathematics is not as strong as the teaching of calculation, number facts and measures.
- In writing, the teaching of extended writing is not as good as the teaching of short writing exercises. Spelling is not as well taught as punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils are developing good attitudes to reading and effective daily guided reading lessons are helping accelerate pupils' progress in reading.
- Teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting the progress of pupils when they are working in small groups. This is particularly the case for pupils who find learning more difficult or for pupils who join the school with limited speaking skills in English. Teaching assistants are often underutilised and passive during whole-class sessions led by the teacher.
- All staff promote very positive attitudes to learning among pupils. They are expected to work hard and concentrate well. Relationships in classes are good and pupils are taught, and expected, to behave well.
- Pupils' improved attitudes to work can be seen in the improvement that has been made throughout the school over the last year in the way that pupils present and take pride in their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they act safely in class and around school. They know that there is always an adult to turn to if they are worried about anything or anyone.
- Because of the school's good curriculum and constant reminders, pupils are well aware of the risks presented by the internet. They know how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils talk knowledgeably about British values. They learn to respect differences in other peoples' backgrounds and ways of life through lessons, assemblies and the school's values.
- Attitudes to learning are consistently good throughout the school. Pupils work hard in lessons and sit and listen well. Many older pupils love taking responsibilities and doing jobs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils conduct themselves in a responsible and mature fashion. They move around class without disrupting others and little learning time is wasted. Pupils are well mannered and polite.
- Due to good procedures, rates of attendance have improved recently, but remain a little below average. The school is working effectively to improve pupils' attendance.
- Pupils show good understanding of the various kinds of bullying, such as racist bullying, and say that bullying is very rare in school. They are confident that staff manage any conflict that does arise, both swiftly and effectively.
- Parents are confident that behaviour is good at school and that their children are happy and kept safe.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Standards have declined since the previous inspection and there is a legacy of underachievement in the school. Although standards are beginning to rise, too few pupils attain standards expected for their ages, particularly in mathematics.
- Too few pupils exceed standards expected for their ages and the most able have potential to do better.
- In writing, standards of punctuation, presentation and grammar are better than spelling and extended writing.
- In mathematics, attainment in number and calculation is higher than in problem-solving and reasoning. Pupils are responding well to the recently introduced online multiplication tables teaching.
- Too few pupils attain the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. In key stage 2, standards of reading are rising due to the provision of effective, daily guided reading lessons.
- Rates of progress are improving. The best progress is made by those who join the school with limited English and those who find learning difficult. The least progress is made by the most able. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is improving, as is the progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Too few children attain or exceed standards expected for their age by the end of Reception. The most able do not achieve their full potential in the early years.
- Staff interventions and questions do not sufficiently draw on information about the progress of each child and therefore do not fully meet the learning needs of children.
- Children are not always fully engaged with activities and a few spend too much time wandering between activities. This sometimes goes unchecked by staff. Children are sometimes not sufficiently aware of what is expected of them.
- Leaders show an accurate and clear awareness of where improvements are needed and action is under way to bring about improvement.

- Over the last year, leaders have improved facilities and resources for learning, both inside and outdoors, and this means that the reception area is well equipped.
- Children with limited language development receive focused support from early on and this accelerates their progress in language development.
- All staff provide sensitive and good-quality care for children’s emotional and social development and children are happy and confident in school. They are taught to behave well. Procedures for safeguarding are thorough and children are well looked after.
- Parents are appropriately involved in school and are helped to support their children’s learning at home. Parents regard the quality of provision in the early years highly.

School details

Unique reference number	139191
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10037607

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	383
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	David Spicer (chair of school governing body)
Headteacher	Rachel Hydes
Telephone number	01205 368805
Website	www.parkacademyboston.net
Email address	park@bwaf.net
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2013

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 larger than most primary schools.
- A substantial proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Also, a well above average proportion of pupils' first language is believed not to be English.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school became part of the Boston Witham Schools Federation academy trust in the autumn term of 2016.
- Governance is provided locally through the school governing body and the board of trustees of Boston Witham Schools Federation. The federation provides substantial support for school improvement, mainly through the trust's head of primary division, its chief executive officer and brokered support.
- The vast majority of leaders and staff are new to the school since September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some lessons were observed jointly with a senior leader. In addition, shorter visits to classrooms were carried out to see aspects of the school's work, such as the teaching of reading.
- A range of other school activities, including playtimes, lunchtimes and assembly, were observed.
- Inspectors scrutinised past and current work of pupils of different abilities in all year groups and heard some pupils reading.
- The views of staff were collected through an inspection questionnaire and through meetings with staff. Their views were taken into consideration.
- Pre-arranged and informal discussions were held with pupils.
- The views of parents were collected by analysing the 60 responses to the school's latest survey of parents' views held in July 2017. The 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey, 'Parent View', were considered. Inspectors held short discussions with 57 parents of 79 pupils on the second day of the inspection.
- A meeting was held with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a school improvement consultant employed by the school. A meeting was held with the chief executive of the Boston Witham Academies Federation. Meetings were also held with the trust's head of primary division. Pre-arranged and informal discussions were held with members of staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Roger Sadler, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Lakatos	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Atkins	Ofsted Inspector

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