

# Parsons Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Templewood Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 3EZ

## Inspection dates

7–8 February 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher is leading the school outstandingly well and is relentless in her pursuit to make the school the best it can be.
- The headteacher is very well supported by her deputy headteacher, with whom she works in close partnership. Together they are working on the right priorities to raise standards.
- Pupils are making good progress in their learning. Standards of work are improving well, especially in pupils' writing in English. However, not all pupils who could do so are achieving the higher standard in reading or mathematics.
- Pupils are successfully developing their skills to carry out routine calculations in mathematics and getting better at explaining their work.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make strong progress because their individual needs are well understood.
- Teaching is good across the school, especially in key stage 2, and teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. However, in lessons, work is not always pitched at the right level for pupils, especially in mathematics.
- Children in early years enjoy the rich and exciting activities teachers provide. Their work in Reception prepares them well for Year 1.
- Pupils are mature and thoughtful. They have well-developed social skills, which enable them to get on with one another. Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons.
- Pupils feel safe at school because they are well cared for. They enjoy school and like learning. However, boys do not attend as well as girls.
- While the school covers all the subjects it should, the wider curriculum beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is underdeveloped.
- Governors have a strong understanding of the school's performance. This is because they are actively involved in its work.
- Some subject leaders are well established and having a positive impact on their subjects. However, others are still developing their roles.
- The school has made good use of the support from the local authority and schools locally to help it to improve.

## Full report

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

- Increase the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading and mathematics by ensuring that:
  - the most able pupils are consistently well challenged in mathematics
  - teachers pitch work at the right level, especially for middle-ability pupils, so that it is not too hard and enables them to make faster progress
  - pupils more routinely explain their thinking in mathematics
  - the school continues to support pupils in developing the skills to analyse texts in more depth when reading.
- Improve the wider curriculum by:
  - increasing the depth of work covered in subjects such as history, geography, French and religious education
  - developing the consistent use of writing and mathematics in other subjects
  - ensuring that all subject leader roles are equally effective in promoting developments in their subject areas
  - providing pupils with effective opportunities to learn about the cultural and ethnic diversity in Britain today.
- Improve the attendance of boys so that it is as good as that of girls.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and has established a culture of high expectations across the school. She and her deputy headteacher ensure that there is a warm and positive atmosphere within which pupils thrive as learners.
- Staff are proud to work at Parsons Heath and all staff responding to the Ofsted survey strongly agree that the school is well led and managed. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are also very positive about the school.
- School leaders have put in place simple but very effective systems and procedures to support the work of staff. Hence, the day-to-day running of the school is smooth and staff are consistent in how they apply the school's policies.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor the school's work and its effectiveness thoroughly. They involve other leaders well in checking standards of work, including teaching, and act quickly to improve any shortcomings or weaknesses identified.
- School leaders also involve pupils on the school council, 'The Learning Council', in reviewing the school's work. For example, members of The Learning Council have looked at topic books to comment on the quality of work and tasks.
- Staff benefit from good-quality professional development, including working with other schools locally, to help them improve their roles and particularly to improve the quality of teaching across the school. In addition, the school's systematic approach to managing staff performance ensures that pupils are well taught and staff continuously improve their practice.
- Leaders have made very good use of the support from the local authority to help them to secure improvements.
- Schools leaders make good use of assessment information to ensure that pupils are making good progress. They use this information in a dynamic way to pick up underachieving pupils quickly and provide additional support to close any gaps in learning that pupils have.
- Additional funding, such as that for disadvantaged pupils or for those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is spent well so that it has a positive impact on the achievement of these groups.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is enriched well through visits out and visitors to the school.
- British values are largely well promoted, so that pupils understand democracy, the importance of rules and the need to respect others, especially those who are different. While pupils learn about different religions, the curriculum does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to learn about cultural diversity in Britain today.
- The curriculum provides good depth and breadth of learning in English, mathematics and science, especially in key stage 2. However, not all other subjects are as fully developed. In subjects such as history, geography, French and religious education, the

range of work provided to pupils often lacks sufficient depth. Pupils on The Learning Council who looked at topic books came to a similar conclusion, indicating that the work in topic books could be more interesting.

- Leaders acknowledge that they need to develop the wider curriculum further and the current school development plan prioritises this. In addition, school leaders are working on improving subject leader roles for foundation subjects. These roles are not all well enough developed to have the impact needed to raise standards further across the curriculum.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well to provide a wide range of sporting activities in the school. These make a good contribution to pupils' health and fitness.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have played a very effective role in supporting and challenging leaders to take the school from requiring improvement to good. They are proactive in their roles and ensure that they visit the school regularly to check on its performance. In addition, the governing body has appropriate procedures in place to manage the headteacher's performance and to ensure that any staff recommended for a pay rise merit it.
- The governing body has effective oversight of safeguarding matters and all members of the board have received training in preventing extremism. Members ensure that the school has the resources it needs to provide a good education. In particular, governors keep abreast of how well pupil premium funds are being spent and the impact these are having on pupils' learning.
- Governors are fully engaged in planning for the school's future development and in helping leaders to identify and pursue the right priorities.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters so that they know what to look for. Concerns, no matter how small, are reported and appropriate action taken to support individual pupils, and where necessary, their families. Records of concerns and follow-up actions are well maintained.
- School leaders have established a culture of care where pupils are known to staff. Strong working relationships with external organisations and agencies mean that staff are quick to involve professionals from social services, healthcare or the police as required.
- Adults working at the school are thoroughly vetted to ensure that they are fit to work with children. Overall, the school's systems and procedures are fit for purpose.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils. Classrooms are orderly and calm, and pupils know the routines well.
- Teaching is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6, where it is helping pupils to make accelerated progress. This is especially the case in Year 6, where pupils are rapidly making up gaps in prior learning.
- Teachers generally plan lessons well and make it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. Consequently, pupils are able to talk knowledgeably about their work, what they are doing and what they have to achieve.
- Teaching assistants work very effectively in lessons to support pupils. They question pupils well to ensure that they understand the work and make good use of additional resources to support learning. Teaching assistants are also skilled in working with small groups of pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, to help them close identified gaps in their learning.
- Teachers question pupils well to check their understanding and also to extend and deepen it. They provide helpful guidance and support as pupils work and explain the work clearly to pupils.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities to share ideas with others in pairs and small groups. They work together well to help one another understand key ideas.
- In most lessons, pupils are given work that is relevant and helps them to develop their skills. This is especially so with writing tasks for 'The Big Write', where pupils produce good-quality extended pieces of writing.
- While teachers often provide pupils with work at different levels of difficulty, the work is not consistently pitched at the right level for all ability groups and is, at times, too easy for the most able, especially in mathematics.
- The work provided to middle-attaining pupils in mathematics is often too difficult. Sometimes, it is too difficult for the most able too. This slows pupils' learning.
- Staff teach basic skills in literacy and numeracy well. Younger pupils, including children in early years, receive good teaching in phonics and this helps them to develop early reading skills in a systematic way, as well as to spell words correctly.
- In English, teachers are developing pupils' knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling well and pupils are applying the new skills they are learning in their writing.
- Teachers use guided reading sessions in a systematic way and give the most able pupils more demanding books to read. This is helping pupils to develop secure understanding of character and plot. However, the more focused approach to teaching reading has not been in place long enough to enable more pupils to work at a higher level.
- In subjects across the curriculum, there are some good examples of the use of writing and mathematics, particularly in science. However, on balance, pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise or develop a wider range of writing in foundation subjects.

- Lively displays in classrooms provide pupils with a stimulating learning environment, but also examples and exemplars they can learn from. Pupils actively use the displays, especially in English and mathematics, to help them with 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 enjoy their time at school and get on well with one another.
- Pupils are polite and pleasant. They socialise with one another at lunchtimes and during breaks. In lessons, pupils work hard most of the time and are keen to do well. Occasionally, especially when work is too easy or hard, some start to lose focus or slow down the pace at which they are working.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are also proud of the work they produce and this shows in the good quality of presentation in pupils' books.
- The school's positive atmosphere helps to create a good sense of belonging and this gives pupils the confidence to be themselves. They understand the importance of being kind to one another.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility around the school, such as being head girl or a member of The Learning Council.
- The school and its staff take good care of pupils. They are well supervised during break- and lunchtimes. Pupils agree that they are well cared for and are confident to go to a member of staff if they are worried or concerned.
- Attendance is a little above the national average and persistent absence is below it. The school has effective systems for encouraging good attendance and to check on the attendance of different groups of pupils. This shows that boys do not attend as regularly as girls. The school has not yet looked in more depth at the reasons why, or the impact of this on boys' learning and achievement.
- The school focuses well on individual pupils whose attendance is not regular enough. Staff work closely with families to identify and help remove the barriers to good attendance. In these cases, attendance has improved.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move around the school in an orderly way and behave well in lessons.
- Pupils are clear that bullying is not a problem and, on the rare occasions that it occurs, they are confident that teachers deal with it well.
- The school's records show that bullying is rare and that it is unusual for pupils to use derogatory language or to behave in a discriminatory way towards others. Pupils are again clear that teachers step in and reinforce that 'it is not acceptable' to be unkind to anyone because they are different.

- Pupils know the school's systems for rewards and sanctions and how they are expected to behave. They respond well to rewards.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Children begin in Reception with variable starting points. In some years, their knowledge and skills, as a group, are in line with their ages. In others, the skills and knowledge of the group are lower.
- From these variable starting points, pupils across the school are making good progress. In some year groups, such as the current Year 6, the progress they are making is more rapid and this is allowing pupils to make up for slower learning in the past.
- Results at the end of key stage 2 are on an upward trend. In 2017, pupils did well in reading and mathematics and an above-average proportion achieved the expected standard. However, compared with pupils nationally, fewer pupils of middle ability or the most able achieved the higher standard in mathematics, and fewer of the most able did so in reading.
- There was a similar picture at the end of key stage 1. Most pupils performed well and achieved the expected standard in reading and mathematics, but fewer achieved the higher standard, particularly in reading. In writing, results were in line with national averages at both the expected and the higher standard.
- Pupils taking the key stage 2 tests in 2017 made good progress from the end of key stage 1, especially in reading and mathematics. Their progress in writing was not as good, though still reasonable.
- Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are working well across the school and that they are making better and more consistent progress. Pupils' writing in English is improving rapidly and is a strength.
- Pupils write for a wide range of audiences and purposes in English and they are using an increasingly varied vocabulary. Their spelling and grammar are accurate and pupils sustain their writing well to produce effective extended writing. This is a good improvement from the time of the previous inspection.
- While the results of the phonics check last year at the end of Year 1 dipped and were below average, this year pupils are on track to achieve well. This is down to improved teaching.
- The school's focused approach to teaching comprehension skills is helping to improve pupils' skills to analyse texts and read between the lines. However, while pupils are enjoying reading and are developing a love of books, some are not reading enough at home to help them to widen their experiences and deepen understanding. There is still work to do to enable more pupils to achieve the higher standard in reading.
- Pupils are developing good skills in solving routine problems in mathematics and have regular practice to sharpen their skills and speed. They are increasingly able to explain their work and their thinking because teachers are asking them to do so more regularly. However, this is not yet as fully embedded in day-to-day work as it could be.
- The most able usually make good progress, but sometimes less so, as they are not



always challenged enough in lessons, especially in mathematics. In addition, middle-attaining pupils who have the potential to achieve the higher standard are not always supported enough, especially in mathematics.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making strong progress because work and support are tailored very effectively to their individual needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils generally make good progress and achieve well, especially those who have low prior attainment. Sometimes, the most able who are disadvantaged are not extended enough.
- Progress across other subjects is more varied. In science, work is well organised and regular practical work is helping pupils to understand scientific ideas well. Pupils are making particularly good progress in science in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Pupils are developing a range of skills in art, design and technology, and PE. They are developing their knowledge in subjects such as history, geography, religious education and French. However, in these subjects, they are not developing deeper understanding or establishing skills systematically enough as they move through the school.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- In the Reception class, children make good progress from their starting points and are prepared well for Year 1. A broadly average proportion of children usually reach a good level of development.
- The interesting and stimulating activities provided for children go some way towards the good progress they make. For example, children enjoyed using different toys to get weighing scales to balance. In doing so, they developed good problem-solving skills, as well as their understanding of balance and mass.
- The activities provided are put together well and often include good opportunities for developing writing. This is a focus for early years as well as the rest of the school in order to improve children's skills in writing before they join Year 1.
- The topics of work chosen have good appeal for boys as well as girls. The current topic on dinosaurs is capturing the imagination of children and they are often excited by activities such as drawing a map of the world dinosaurs lived in.
- Children impressively know the names of many dinosaurs and recognise key characteristics of different ones. A particularly stimulating activity included children drawing their own footprints inside that of a dinosaur, counting how many of their footprints fitted into one dinosaur footprint. This enabled children to not only develop knowledge of dinosaurs but to also consolidate their number work and drawing skills.
- Children are well looked after and safe in early years. The early years area is effectively led and managed. Teaching assistants are deployed well. They are good at questioning children and helping to extend their language skills.
- Good links with parents encourage them to contribute to their children's learning and to use the school's online system to add notes and pictures of their children's development at home.
- Staff in Reception assess children's development well and ensure that they are making



good progress. Children who have SEN and/or disabilities are particularly well supported and encouraged to participate. There is scope for the most able to be challenged even more in Reception.

## **School details**

Unique reference number	115088
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10044755

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Sanford
Headteacher	Claire Newson
Telephone number	01206 860612
Website	<a href="http://www.parsonsheathprimary.org.uk">www.parsonsheathprimary.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@parsonsheath.essex.sch.uk">admin@parsonsheath.essex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2016

### Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to other primary schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. About 17% are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few speak English as an additional language and are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. A broadly average proportion have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in all classes. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with the members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders. They also met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body and the vice-chair. The lead inspector held discussions with a representative from the local authority who has been working with the school.
- Members of the inspection team spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school, as well as holding discussions with representative groups of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to a number of pupils reading in key stage 1, to check how well they were developing their reading skills.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspection team took account of 33 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 21 written responses from parents. In addition, the team considered 22 staff responses and 71 pupil responses to Ofsted surveys.
- A member of the team spoke to some parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Members of the team observed the work of the school. They looked at the school's improvement plan, a range of policies and procedures, documents relating to the work of the governing body and the arrangements for ensuring that pupils are safeguarded. Documentation reviewed included records of assessment information relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance. The school's website was also checked.

## Inspection team

Gulshan Kayembe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Bell	Ofsted Inspector

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