

Python Hill Primary School

Kirklington Road, Rainworth, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG21 0JZ

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Since the previous inspection, shortcomings in leadership, teaching and assessment have led to a significant decline in standards. Too few parents and carers would recommend the school or are fully supportive of its work.
- In Years 1 to 4, pupils make insufficient progress in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are below average.
- Teachers sometimes do not expect enough of pupils, especially of the most able.
- There are weaknesses in the curriculum for reading, writing and mathematics. These weaknesses have led to too many pupils making insufficient progress and showing too little interest in these subjects.
- In the early years, staff do not sufficiently tailor their teaching to meet children's needs fully, especially the needs of the most able.
- The quality of teaching and the use of assessment are inadequate because teaching is not consistently good enough in Years 1 to 4 to ensure that all groups of pupils do well.
- In Years 1 to 4, some pupils demonstrate poor attitudes to learning. This disrupts the learning of other pupils in the class. Teachers do not consistently require pupils to do their best or work hard enough. Some teachers do not set high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Over time, senior and middle leaders have not had sufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good throughout the school.
- Leaders, when checking the quality of teaching and pupils' work, place too little emphasis on the progress being made by different groups of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and the progress made by all pupils are consistently good in Year 5 and Year 6.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have a clear and accurate view of where improvements are needed. Pupils are making better progress this year than last. Leaders this year have demonstrated a sound capacity to improve the school in the future.
- Many Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are mature, polite and hard working. They are considerate to each other and to visitors.
- The school keeps pupils safe in the school and looks after them well.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate weak teaching in Years 1 to 4 and ensure that the quality of teaching and the use of assessment are consistently good by:
 - disseminating the consistently good-quality teaching and use of assessment evident in Year 5 and Year 6 to all year groups
 - ensuring that all staff in these year groups have high expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve so that they make the progress of which they are capable
 - ensuring that staff consistently expect pupils to do their very best, to work hard, behave well and concentrate in class
 - providing pupils with tasks which fully challenge and interest them and build on previous learning
 - ensuring that staff demonstrate to pupils how to carry out their work, and guide pupils to identify and overcome misconceptions and to make improvements in the light of the guidance they receive
 - ensuring that the teaching of phonics is consistently effective.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, particularly of the curriculum, by:
 - raising the profile of reading in the curriculum by ensuring that pupils read, widely and often, books that spark their interest and imagination
 - increasing the prominence of problem solving and reasoning in the mathematics curriculum in Year 1 to Year 4 and, in these year groups, ensuring that the mathematics curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all learners
 - developing a school-wide approach to ensuring that the particular skills pupils are learning in mathematics and writing are not only developed in English and mathematics lessons, but also in other lessons such as science and topic
 - introducing more opportunities for pupils to write at length, particularly about aspects that capture their interest and imagination, and more purposes for their writing
 - ensuring that leaders, when monitoring teaching and pupils' work, concentrate on the progress being made by different groups of learners
 - raising parental confidence in the school by communicating to parents the actions leaders and governors are taking to improve the aspects of provision which most concern them.
- Improve teaching, the use of assessment and progress in the early years by ensuring

that staff tailor their work to the needs of individual children, especially the most able, in the light of the assessments they have made.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not sufficiently addressed the decline in standards that has taken place since the school was last inspected.
- Although teaching and learning are now effective in Year 5 and Year 6, significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching remain in other year groups. Leaders have not been effective in ensuring that all teaching is of acceptable quality.
- Over time, leaders have not seen their improvement plans through to successful completion. The current raising-achievement plan focuses on remedying weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that leaders have accurately identified. The plan is monitored effectively by leaders and governors.
- Until recently, there have been gaps in leadership. Subject leadership, although much improved this year, has only recently begun to have a positive effect on pupils' progress. The work of subject leaders has not contributed substantially to improving the quality of teaching in some year groups.
- There are significant weaknesses in the curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Year 1 to Year 4.
- The school does not give reading sufficient prominence in its curriculum. Pupils receive daily guided-reading sessions and many pupils read in line with the school's policy to read at home at least three times per week. Despite this, pupils are not sufficiently inspired to enjoy reading and develop it as a hobby. Reading as an activity is not sufficiently valued, rewarded or celebrated. Some pupils expressed regret that authors never visited their school even though they visited their friends' schools. The school has a sound collection of books, but pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to dip into and use non-fiction texts.
- Leaders have introduced improvements to the curriculum for writing this year. The school's new scheme has had a powerful impact on improving the quality of writing in Year 5 and Year 6, but considerably less effect in other classes. The school lacks a systematic approach to developing pupils' writing, especially their extended-writing skills, in other subjects. Pupils' interests are not used sufficiently to inspire them to write.
- There are also weaknesses in the curriculum for mathematics. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils are expected to solve problems frequently and are shown how to do so. However, in other year groups, the lack of a school-wide agreed approach to helping pupils tackle mathematical problems means that they are weak in this aspect of mathematics. Younger pupils often repeat calculations that they can already do. The school lacks an effective system to assure the development of pupils' mathematics skills in other subjects such as science and in their topic work.
- The curriculum is not tailored well enough to meet the learning needs of the most able

in Year 1 to Year 4. In Year 5 and Year 6, the most able pupils are fully extended, enjoy being challenged and make good progress.

- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is of variable quality, particularly when they are withdrawn from working with the full class.
- Despite these continuing weaknesses in the curriculum, there have been considerable improvements in important aspects of leadership and management. Leaders now have a clear and accurate understanding of the range of weaknesses in teaching and outcomes and have established a sound plan to tackle them. Some improvements have come about this year, but leaders, including governors, are aware that serious weaknesses remain and are yet to be fully addressed.
- A particular strength is the pattern of pupils' progress meetings that are now held each half term. At these meetings, leaders work with teachers to identify underachievement and draw up a plan to accelerate the learning of particular pupils. They then review the impact of this plan at the next meeting. These meetings are helping staff become accountable for the progress that pupils in their classes make. They have had the greatest impact in Year 5 and Year 6, where the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.
- Senior leaders have done much to reduce the effect of long-term staff absence on pupils' learning. They know that parents are concerned about how such absences have affected their children's learning. They also recognise that too few parents are fully confident in the school or would recommend it to another parent.
- The school is spending specific funds such as the pupil premium funding to better effect this year, and the progress of disadvantaged pupils has accelerated. Disadvantaged pupils are now making progress at least in line with that of other pupils but they continue to attain standards which are below average.
- The effect of the use of additional funds for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is variable, depending on the quality of teaching. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils make good progress but pupils make considerably less progress in other year groups, where the curriculum places too little emphasis on their academic development.
- The school's work to teach pupils British values such as respect, kindness and tolerance is good and many pupils, especially in classes of older pupils, act in a mature and sensible fashion. Pupils are appropriately prepared for life in modern Britain and they show sound spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There have been improvements in the curriculum to support pupils' personal and social development. There is a sound programme of after-school clubs, a programme of residential visits and many new topics, such as the current topic on the Second World War, start with a visit to inspire pupils' interest. Pupils enjoy and benefit from the growing emphasis on sport and health brought about by the school's wise spending of the primary physical education and sports premium funding.
- Pupils' behaviour around school has improved over the last year due to the introduction of a more systematic approach to managing behaviour.
- The school has an effective partnership with the local authority, which has done much to support the headteacher in bringing about the improvements in the school that are currently under way. The school has also formed a valuable partnership with another

school, and the headteacher has worked closely with the headteacher of the partner school to steer the improvements taking place in the school. These partnerships have increased the school's capacity to improve in the future.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, governors have not been sufficiently stringent in challenging school leaders, but this is far from the case now. Governance is much improved and quickly becoming fully effective.
- The chair of the governing body provides effective leadership, and governors have reorganised and improved their work so that they are now carrying out their role effectively.
- Governors have a clear awareness of where they need to improve their work. For instance, they recognised that they needed a member who was very confident in analysing school data to ensure that pupils were achieving well. A governor with expertise in this area has been appointed and is strengthening the skills of all governors in this aspect of their work.
- Governors show a clear and detailed awareness of where the school needs to improve and regularly check that the plans for improvement are carried out and have an impact on improving the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Procedures and record-keeping are effective and are fit for purpose. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding, and training is fully up to date. Staff know what to do should they be concerned about a child or an adult, and are alert to the range of risks that pupils can face.
- The school's breakfast club is run well. Secure routines for keeping children safe are in place.
- Safeguarding arrangements are checked each month by the safeguarding lead on the governing body. Leaders and staff recognise the importance of safeguarding in reducing the risk of harm to pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching has declined since the previous inspection and is inconsistent. It is still not sufficiently good in Year 1 to Year 4 to help pupils progress rapidly enough to make up for a legacy of underachievement and attain the standards of which they are capable.
- In classes of younger pupils, teaching rarely fully extends or challenges the most able. Staff do not expect enough of pupils. Poor-quality work is sometimes too readily accepted. Low-level disruption, uninvited pupil chattering and poor concentration slow the pace of learning in some lessons.
- The teaching of phonics was recently reviewed and pupils are making better progress

in phonics than last year. However, the teaching of phonics is still not fully effective in classes of younger pupils.

- In some classes, teachers do not routinely identify pupils' misconceptions. Consequently, pupils are not sufficiently guided on how to do or improve their work, or how to overcome difficulties.
- The teaching of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is of variable quality. In some classes, adults provide good-quality support. On some occasions, when these pupils are withdrawn to work with teaching assistants, staff concentrate solely on providing for their personal development instead of teaching them basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Although teachers provide pupils with daily guided reading and they are expected to read at home, some pupils are not fully motivated or inspired to read. Teachers do not do enough to encourage pupils to develop a love of reading and this slows their progress.
- With the exception of Years 5 and 6, teachers do not ensure that pupils are sufficiently challenged in mathematics. Also, pupils in Years 1 to 4 undertake too many repetitive calculations and too few problems that help them use and apply their calculation skills and develop their reasoning. The teaching of number facts has improved recently and pupils are making better progress towards standards expected of their ages in such aspects as multiplication tables.
- Work to improve the teaching of writing has already had a strong effect on the quality of writing evident in Year 5 and Year 6. However, these initiatives have not had a full effect on pupils' writing in other year groups. In these classes, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop extended writing, particularly in subjects other than English. Consequently, in Years 1 to 4, pupils are not fully motivated to write. The most able pupils are insufficiently challenged in their writing in Year 1 to Year 4 and few pupils exceed standards expected of their ages.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Too often, the level of work is too low and pupils only complete the minimum amount expected of them. They are not motivated to complete tasks well or do their best.
- Some younger pupils lack understanding of what it is to be a successful learner and do not sufficiently challenge themselves to achieve more.
- Although the school has sound procedures to teach pupils about the various forms that bullying can take, some parents lack confidence that the school effectively deals with bullying. Pupils, however, told inspectors that they trust staff to deal with any issues that arise and that incidents of bullying are rare.
- The school soundly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development through its curriculum. Pupils are appropriately prepared for life in modern Britain and show a secure knowledge of and respect for ways of life other than their own.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Around the school, in assemblies and in the playground, pupils often behave well. In lessons, in Year 5 and Year 6, behaviour is invariably strong and pupils show very good attitudes to learning. This is not the case in other year groups, where some pupils' behaviour in lessons sometimes slows the pace of learning and interrupts the learning of others.
- Leaders have improved systems to ensure that pupils attend regularly. Rates of attendance have improved recently, but leaders are concerned that attendance still remains a little below the national average. Some good work is under way to bring about further improvements.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes are inadequate because pupils are not making sufficient progress during their time at the school.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics have deteriorated. Too few pupils achieve their full potential.
- Good-quality provision in Year 5 and Year 6 is now enabling pupils to make good progress but, due to weaker progress in other year groups, standards by the end of Year 6 are still below national averages. Leaders are aware that rates of progress in other year groups, although sometimes better this year than last, are not accelerating at a sufficient rate to make up for previous weaknesses.
- Teaching and progress in phonics are inconsistent from when pupils enter the early years up to Year 2. Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has fallen over the last few years to below-average levels. School records indicate that results are set to improve by the end of this year and more pupils are on track to attain the expected standard.
- Pupils' attainment in national assessments for Year 2 pupils has fallen to below-average standards and few pupils attain above standards expected for their age. Although pupils' work and school records show some improvement in standards in Year 2, this year rates of progress are still not good.
- Few pupils make good progress in Year 3 and Year 4 and too much catching up is left to Year 5 and Year 6.
- The rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils are improving this year and these pupils are progressing at similar rates to those of other pupils, but their progress is still variable, depending on the quality of teaching they receive.
- Except in Year 5 and Year 6, the most able do not achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils with SEN and/or disabilities progress at similar rates to others in their class. Where the quality of teaching is good, such as in Year 5 and Year 6, they progress well, but in other year groups, they do not.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including the early years leader, have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision. Leaders have a sound plan to address weaknesses in teaching, the use of assessment and outcomes in the early years.
- Over recent years, too few children have attained a good level of development by the end of the early years. This year, however, children are making better progress and are being more soundly prepared for Year 1.
- Most children this year are making good progress from their various starting points. The best progress is made by disadvantaged children, who are given the support they need to help them progress well. The least progress is made by the most able, because staff do not routinely use the extensive assessment information they gather to challenge the most able. Sometimes, activities provided for the most able are too easy for them.
- Staff know children well as individuals and provide good-quality care. Children are kept safe and secure, are happy and mostly behave well.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are secure and robust in the early years and consistent with the effective arrangements evident throughout the school.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years has improved this year, and a carefully structured programme enables most children to make progress. A few children are not consistently engaged in phonics lessons and can lose their focus as lessons progress. This limits their learning. Most children are able to apply their phonics knowledge in lessons and in their writing.
- Parents are positive about provision in the early years. They appreciate the good arrangements to settle their children into school and are appropriately involved in their children's learning. Communication with parents in the early years is good.

School details

Unique reference number	133389
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10041597

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Barnard
Headteacher	Joanne Knapp
Telephone number	01623464164
Website	http://www.pythonhillschool.co.uk
Email address	office@pythonhill.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29-30 April 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The great majority of pupils speak English as their home language.
- An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school runs its own breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.
- The majority of classes have been affected by long-term staff absences and staff changes over the last two school years.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, including a joint observation with the headteacher. They carried out shorter visits to classrooms to see aspects of the school's work, such as the teaching of reading.
- A range of other school activities, including an assembly, playtimes and lunchtimes, were observed.
- Inspectors scrutinised past and current work of pupils of different abilities in all year groups. They also discussed reading with pupils and heard some pupils read.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with four members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors analysed documents, including the school's plans for improvement and reports showing the school's view of its own performance. The school's website was evaluated. Safeguarding documents were reviewed. Policies and records relating to pupils' personal development, behaviour, welfare, safety and attendance were scrutinised.
- Information on the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally was analysed. The school's own records of pupils' attainment and progress were also considered.
- The inspectors took account of the 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View, including the detailed written accounts provided by some parents. The 65 responses to the school's most recent survey of parents' attitudes to behaviour and safety were considered. Inspectors spoke briefly with 35 parents of 45 pupils at the start of the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Roger Sadler, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Dale	Ofsted Inspector
Cheryl Lodge	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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