

Backworth Park Primary School

The Park, Backworth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE27 0AH

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, there has been a notable decline in pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics so that, by the end of Year 6, they are well below those found nationally. Pupils are not well prepared for secondary school as a result.
- While overall standards are now improving quickly, gaps remain in pupils' knowledge and skills as a result of a legacy of historically weaker teaching.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils still lags behind other pupils nationally.
- Subject leaders lack the skills needed to lead and manage their area of responsibility effectively. Subject-specific skills are not taught well across the curriculum.
- Teaching has not been consistently strong over time. New initiatives to improve the quality and consistency of teaching are not yet embedded among staff. Teaching remains variable.
- Work set by teachers is not always well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and sometimes lacks challenge. This is especially the case for the most able pupils.
- Low-level disruption in some lessons persists and distracts pupils. Some teachers do not follow the agreed school policy to promote good behaviour.
- The quality of provision in the early years does not allow children to make strong progress in their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Following a decline, the school is improving very quickly. Under the inspirational leadership of the new executive headteacher, extremely well supported by the new head of school, an ethos of high expectations has been created.
- Pupils are happy and say that they feel safe. Pupils are polite and show respect. The school has ensured that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and as a result their personal development and welfare are good.
- Leaders' and the revitalised governors' ambition to provide the best experiences for pupils is translated into effective action. This is transforming teaching and learning.
- The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good as they make sustained progress in their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - continuing to embed and refine the range of new initiatives to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning already in place
 - enhancing the skills of subject leaders in developing and monitoring their subject or area of responsibility
 - ensuring that the ongoing review of the curriculum includes developing the assessment and tracking of subject-specific skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that work in all subjects challenges pupils' thinking and stretches their understanding, especially for the most able
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and engagement in lessons to make sure that pupils do not lose concentration and/or distract others
 - checking that all teachers follow the agreed school policy to promote good behaviour and address low-level disruption in lessons swiftly.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that improved teaching continues to raise attainment and accelerate pupils' rates of progress in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics in every year group
 - continuing to diminish the difference in the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils and the standards they attain compared to other pupils nationally
 - ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils work at a greater depth in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of provision in early years by:
 - ensuring that planned independent activities for children always provide appropriate challenge in order to deepen children's learning, including when outdoors
 - checking that children always have a range of opportunities to develop their understanding and skills in writing and number
 - ensuring that planned actions allow children to make even more progress in their learning so that they are ready to face the challenges of Year 1.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leadership and management has not addressed entrenched weaknesses in the quality of teaching. This has resulted in a significant decline in the standards reached by pupils in their work, and the rates of progress they make in learning. Until recently, the governing body did not hold senior leaders to account for standards well below those found nationally, or provide the challenge required when interrogating assessment information that was obviously weak.
- Since her appointment, the experienced and determined executive headteacher has been unwavering in her mission to secure an excellent standard of education for pupils in this school. She has worked with spirit and vigour. She has been extremely well supported by the new head of school, a significantly strengthened governing body, leaders from nearby outstanding schools and officers from the local authority. Swift and decisive action to address weaknesses in the quality of provision has been taken. This has included a number of changes to the teaching staff and the introduction of many new initiatives. However, not all of these are consistently incorporated across the school and some are in need of further refinement.
- As a result of ongoing improvements to the quality of teaching, current pupils are now starting to make improved rates of progress in their learning. There has been too little time to see improved outcomes for pupils in published data from statutory assessments, or to plug gaps fully in some pupils' knowledge and skills that have resulted from historic weaker teaching.
- Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's performance through checking the quality of teaching are incisive and detailed. The school's self-evaluation is frank and honest. Leaders' understanding of current weaknesses allows them to plan improvements to tackle and eliminate them. The school development plan is extensive, detailed and carefully monitors the impact of planned actions on outcomes for pupils in their learning. Regular evaluation and the tracking of actions ensure that no time is wasted before making further improvements. Leaders unquestionably have the capacity to continue the current improvements and secure higher levels of attainment for pupils.
- Although the school's curriculum is broad and balanced and all areas are covered, it does not yet ensure that subject-specific skills are planned and taught effectively and progressively across year groups. In addition, the role of current school-based subject leaders requires significant development. They do not monitor or evaluate the quality of provision in their subjects or area of responsibility effectively, or assess and track pupils' progress in subject-specific skills.
- The school provides a range of after-school clubs that further enhance pupils' access to the wider curriculum. These include science, yoga, modern foreign languages, dance, computing and music.
- Following careful analysis of accurate assessment information, leaders are now managing pupil premium spending effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. A number of different initiatives and programmes, mostly

delivered by well-trained teaching assistants, are regularly evaluated for their impact on pupils' learning, and amended or changed as a result. The positive impact of these actions is now seen through the rapidly improving progress and attainment made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school. Disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment overall now outstrip those of their classmates in most year groups.

- The commitment of the special educational needs coordinator, coupled with effective support from senior leaders, has resulted in good quality provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They are now supported well. Their needs are identified early and their progress, which is improving, is tracked accurately. Consequently, the special educational needs funding is used increasingly effectively by leaders.
- The physical education and sports funding for schools is now being used well. Teachers benefit from professional development opportunities such as the teaching of dance. The sports leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in improving pupils' health and well-being through involvement in exercise and sport. There has been a 73% increase in pupils' participation in sports activities offered by the local authority.
- The school has benefited from strong support offered by the local authority, which was the initial catalyst for change. There are strong and purposeful links to nearby outstanding primary schools.

Governance of the school

- Governors' desire to improve their own effectiveness has resulted in a recent review of governance of the school, its membership and changes in the way that it operates. Following new appointments, governors now bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school. The school and the governing body have benefited hugely from the appointment of two co-chairs. Scrutiny of minutes of recent meetings shows that governors now rigorously challenge and investigate the actions of leaders, while also offering good support.
- Governors are playing a significant role in enabling school improvements and eradicating weaknesses. Leaders are held to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for the quality of outcomes for pupils seen in statutory tests and school data. Governors are passionate to see all pupils fulfil their true potential. They are also skilfully managing the challenges presented by the imminent move into a new building.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a tangible ethos that is positive and caring, putting the welfare and well-being of each pupil at the heart of all that it does. The well-established culture of keeping pupils safe remains very evident. Leaders leave no stone unturned in fulfilling their duty to keep pupils safe, which is appreciated by parents and carers.
- Policies, procedures and records are of good quality and up to date. Summary records of incidents of concern are kept in the newly introduced online system. All staff have a

secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding as a result of regular updates and training and access to well-written policies and guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has been weak. It has resulted in pupils not reaching the standards of which they are capable or fulfilling their true potential. There are still variations in the quality of teaching across the school, with examples of strong teaching but some teaching still not being up to scratch.
- Teaching requires improvement because, in some lessons, expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are not high enough. On some occasions, a minority of pupils lose concentration and distract other pupils' learning. The school's behaviour policy is not consistently applied, and teachers can be too slow to notice and then address low-level disruption.
- Work is now usually pitched well according to pupils' abilities, and the pace of learning allows pupils to be engaged in lessons and productive, but on some occasions this is not the case. Over time, teaching has lacked sufficient challenge, especially for most-able and most-able disadvantaged pupils, preventing them from developing their ability to work at a greater depth in their skills and knowledge in all subjects.
- As a result of the recently introduced rigorous and systematic teaching of phonics, children get off to a fast start in their reading skills. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at delivering well-structured reading lessons, such as in Year 1, where a group was learning to read the digraph 'oi'. Pupils who read to an inspector used their phonics skills well to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils are now given regular opportunities to write at length, such as in Year 3, where pupils used a thesaurus to find exciting words to write a character description of the 'Birdman', a character from their class novel 'Why the whales came' by Michael Morpurgo. Pupils in Year 4 enjoyed identifying features of writing that cause suspense before writing their own short story.
- In mathematics, basic skills of number and calculation are taught well and consolidated regularly. Teachers make good use of practical resources to allow pupils to grasp patterns and relationships in number, such as in Year 1, where pupils used cardboard money to make different amounts or find missing quantities. In Year 6, pupils were able to find the links between fractions, decimals and percentages.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has identified four key words which capture their approach to developing pupils' personal development and welfare – 'respect, motivation, pride and truth'. The executive headteacher and head of school exemplify these qualities, 'walking the talk' as they model what these values mean to the pupils.

- Pupils show respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions and are used to working happily and co-operatively in lessons. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening in paired and group discussions are usually good.
- Pupils benefit from the well-ordered, positive school environment. Displays support learning well. The school's work to ensure that pupils' physical and emotional well-being is valued and promoted is very effective, with quotes and displays around school to promote their resilience, perseverance and independence. The 'welcome' display in classrooms encourages pupils to enter in a positive frame of mind.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at all times, including when working online. They appreciate new security doors and regular fire drills. They are clear about potential dangers outside of school, such as how electrical house fires may start, being safe on roads and never entering a building site or stepping onto train tracks. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development is good.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In some lessons, a minority of pupils quickly lose concentration and engagement in learning and can chatter and distract others. This low-level disruption is not always swiftly addressed by teaching staff.
- On the whole, strong relationships are nurtured in school, and most pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite, friendly and have good manners. Playtimes are generally harmonious occasions where pupils play happily together and no-one is left out. Younger pupils' return from breaktime is not always orderly and can be fussy and noisy.
- The school has worked very hard to eradicate declining rates of attendance, which is now just below average. A small number of pupils are still persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have declined considerably and are well below average. In the last two years, pupils' progress from their previous starting points in these subjects has been much too slow. As a result of historically weak teaching, there currently remains a legacy of inconsistent achievement in all key stages.
- Leaders and staff are working hard to reverse this decline and eradicate remaining gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking data shows clearly that, in all key stages, current pupils are making much stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics this academic year. New approaches to teaching are starting to take hold. Pupils who had fallen behind are catching up quickly. As a result, a much larger proportion are now working at standards expected for their age in most year groups.
- Over time, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has lagged some way behind that of other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. Evidence from the inspection shows conclusively that disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress across the

school has significantly improved. For many, their achievement now outstrips their classmates in most year groups. Even so, gaps between their achievement compared to that of other pupils nationally are still too wide.

- In the past, too few pupils have reached standards of greater depth in their learning, at the end of both key stages 1 and 2. Over time, teaching has lacked the necessary challenge or pace in learning and this has restricted pupils from deepening their skills and knowledge. The most able pupils have not achieved well enough. However, in Year 6 in 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics, although still below average, increased considerably from the very low levels reported in 2016. Inspection evidence shows that this improvement continues. The achievement of the most able pupils is accelerating, as expectations of these pupils rise. Even so, the most able pupils still do not make consistently good progress across the subjects because pupils still complete work that does not challenge their thinking or stretch their understanding.
- Effective leadership and high-quality provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities ensure that these pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Activities are carefully matched to their individual needs and abilities and are skilfully delivered by teaching assistants.
- Over the last few years, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check has been steadily rising. However, in 2017, this proportion was still below that found nationally. The introduction of a more rigorous and systematic approach to the teaching of phonics is paying off. Children are now making a strong start to learning to read.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children do not make good progress from their individual starting points. Leaders acknowledge that the proportion of children that reach a good level of development by the end of Reception, although improving in recent years, is below that found nationally. In addition, the proportion exceeding the expected standard in writing and mathematics is low compared to that found in reading. Too many children are not well prepared to begin Year 1, because their skills, knowledge and understanding have not caught up from their often-low starting points.
- Leaders have an increasingly accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years. Some recent improvements have been made but these have not been rapid enough to address the weaknesses in the setting. This includes improvements to the outdoor learning environment. Children's learning journals show that there are limited opportunities to explore and work independently outdoors other than planned time to learn in the forest.
- Many activities around the setting accessed independently by children can lack challenge and do not move children's learning forward quickly enough or deepen their understanding. There are sometimes limited opportunities for children to access activities that enhance their knowledge and skills in writing and number.
- The early years leader's self-evaluation is accurate because it is based on clear analysis of reliable assessment data. She has worked closely with senior leaders to identify and

focus on key priorities for improvement. This has resulted in high aspirations and expectations for current children who are on track to achieve more positively.

- Most focused teaching activities are interesting and engaging, with emerging strengths in problem solving. Assessment is accurate, and children's independence is being developed well. The teaching of phonics is allowing children to make a fast start in their learning. Children enjoyed reading and writing words with the '-er' sound such as 'ladder'.
- Children's behaviour is good. They respect each other, are able to take turns and have great fun in their learning. Safeguarding practices in the early years are highly effective. Children are taught how to manage risks from an early age and the very effective safeguarding culture that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. There are no material breaches of legal welfare requirements; children are safe and well supported.

School details

Unique reference number	108580
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10042206

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs	Judith Williams and David Simpson
Executive Headteacher	Barbara Middleton
Telephone number	01912008355
Website	backworthpark.com
Email address	backworthpark.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	20-21 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium and the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are above the national average.
- The school does not meet 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's part-time Nursery operates in the morning only. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.
- There have been a number of changes to leadership, governance and teaching staff in the last year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, including lessons observed jointly with the executive headteacher. In addition, an inspector listened to some pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read. Inspectors reviewed a sample of pupils' work alongside senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the executive headteacher, head of school, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and members of the teaching staff. Inspectors also met the office manager and held meetings with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information relating to pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current progress of pupils, and the school's view on how well it is doing. Inspectors also reviewed the school improvement plan, documents relating to performance management and safeguarding, and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online questionnaire for parents Parent View and to the responses to the staff questionnaire. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

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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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