

Pirton Hill Primary School

Butely Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 9EX

Inspection dates

4–5 July 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, leaders and governors have not ensured that the quality of education is good. As a result, pupil achievement over the last three years has been too low.
- Until recently, leaders and governors have not ensured that pupil premium funding has had sufficient impact on raising pupil achievement for those who are disadvantaged.
- Subject leaders, many new to their roles, are not consistently effective. They do not know well enough how pupils achieve in their different subjects.
- Leaders and teachers do not focus well enough on developing pupils' language and speaking skills to ensure that they build a wide vocabulary that they can use well across the curriculum.
- Teachers are not providing pupils with enough regular opportunities to practise their writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too inconsistent across the curriculum, including in reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2.
- In lessons where learning is not matched well enough to pupils' capabilities, learning is weak and pupils become distracted, resulting in their poor attitudes to learning.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils, particularly the most able, with sufficient challenge to ensure that they make the progress of which they are capable.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including governors, know what changes need to be made. They are already having an impact on raising standards.
- Pupils are well cared for and there are secure systems in place for keeping them safe.
- Pupils are at the heart of the leaders' work. Staff do all they can to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils and families get the support they need.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - leaders evaluating fully the impact of additional government funding, including the pupil premium funding, so that it has a greater impact on improving pupil progress
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they are better equipped to carry out their roles well.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that pupils practise their skills in, and deepen their knowledge of, English and mathematics across the curriculum so that more are able to achieve at the higher standards
 - using opportunities to share skills and expertise in teaching across the school so that pupils receive consistently high-quality teaching
 - providing children and pupils, particularly the most able, with more challenging work so that they make at least good progress in all subjects
 - providing pupils with a wide range of experiences and opportunities to help develop their vocabulary and speaking skills from the onset so that they learn to be confident and articulate speakers in all areas of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that their work has secured good outcomes for pupils over the last three years. Pupils have not made the progress they should by the end of key stage 2. However, the newly formed governing body and leadership team are demonstrating the necessary capacity to raise standards at a good pace. They have an accurate view of the school and are taking decisive actions that have already begun to drive improvement and raise standards across the school.
- The headteacher joined the school at the beginning of the academic year and comes with a wealth of experience, ambition and determination. During that time, he has recruited an experienced deputy headteacher and restructured his teaching team to form an enthusiastic leadership team whose members share the school's vision. The new leaders told inspectors they felt empowered and have already made a strong contribution to improving standards across the school.
- The current headteacher's monitoring and evaluation accurately judges the quality of teaching and learning as requiring improvement. He is already making use of his knowledge and experience to be able to make significant improvements that will raise standards across the school. He recognised that developing teachers' subject knowledge was a priority and has since invested in extensive high-quality staff training and development in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving across the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a broad and creative curriculum and pupils' work shows that all the national curriculum subjects are being taught. Pupils respond well to the creative opportunities afforded to them in music, sports and drama. The quality of teaching and learning in subjects other than English and mathematics varies across year groups and is rightly highlighted as a priority in leaders' plans for improvement.
- Some subject leaders, new to their roles, do not have a clear grasp of how well pupils are doing in their subjects. This is limiting their ability to bring about the changes needed in some subjects. The headteacher has quickly put in place training to support the development of subject leadership. There are early signs that leaders of phonics and mathematics are already making a difference to pupils' outcomes in their subject areas.
- The school provides many enrichment opportunities and experiences to help support vulnerable pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. However, leaders are not yet evaluating well enough the impact of their work. As a result, they do not confidently know what is working well and what is not. Leaders have wisely commissioned a review of the spending of the government funding they receive so that their actions can be more precise.
- Leaders work well with agencies to get the right support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, including those with social and emotional needs. Teachers and additional adults provide good-quality small-group support and, in some cases, nurture provision. This work prepares pupils well for their learning and enables them to more confidently access the curriculum.

- Physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively to support the development of pupils' skills. The funding is used to provide a range of resources that ensures that pupils experience a wide range of different sports. An experienced coach works with pupils regularly and there are many after-school sporting activities. The school hosts sports events and sport is an area pupils excel in. The vast collection of trophies and shields adorn the school's reception area to demonstrate pupils' achievements in this area of the curriculum.
- Leaders have prioritised their work sensibly and are already having success in achieving a love of reading for pupils. Pupils are eager to read, and some pupils inspectors heard were able to read at an age beyond their years.
- The new library is described as 'a blessing' by one parent and is inspiring and exciting. Carefully chosen books lure the young readers in and the school's approaches to motivating pupils through quizzes, certificates and reading bugs are ensuring that the vast majority of pupils read books at home regularly.
- Through the school's core values, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported. Through the reading focus, pupils experience a range of books that help them to learn about cultures and challenging issues. Through the book 'Wonder', pupils are exposed to important messages about respect, inclusion and acceptance, and in 'A Monster Calls', courage, faith and truth.
- School residential trips for the older pupils help them to learn about teamwork and promote their personal development. Messages are reinforced regularly in assemblies which are a celebratory affair where pupils were heard and seen singing in groups, together and individually.
- Staff and new leaders are enthusiastic. Staff value the development and training opportunities they are receiving and are wholeheartedly behind the headteacher. They recognise that the school is on a journey and know precisely what they need to do to get it to good in a timely fashion. A high proportion of staff who responded to the Ofsted staff survey said they were proud to be a member of the school staff.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is effective.
- Although governors can confidently talk about the provision for disadvantaged pupils, they do not have a full understanding of the impact of pupil premium spending on the progress and attainment of these pupils. They have, quite rightly, commissioned their own pupil premium review so that they can support school leaders in raising standards for this group of pupils.
- Until recently, the governing body did not hold school leaders to account for the achievement of pupils. The governing body has now been restructured and undergone a governance review. Governors can now demonstrate they have the capacity to support school leaders on their journey to good.
- The governing body is ambitious for the pupils at the school. Recent governing body minutes show that they are now effectively supporting and challenging leaders while holding them to account.
- Governors have undergone a wide range of training and have been proactive at

developing their skills and knowledge. For example, they recently attended courses that give them a better understanding of pupil progress and attainment data.

- Governors now regularly check on the actions of phase and subject leaders who are invited to governor meetings to present their strategic reports and show the impact of their work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff know their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding. Processes are clear and any concerns are followed up immediately. There is extensive and ongoing safeguarding training for all staff.
- All staff, pupils spoken with and almost all parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that pupils are safe. There is a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. Behaviour logs show that where pupil incidents have been recorded, secure systems ensure that they are followed up immediately and appropriate actions taken.
- The school's pastoral team works well with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need. Parents commented positively about the effective support they and their children receive.
- The school's single central record and employee files are meticulously maintained and contain all statutory information. All adults have undergone the necessary checks to be suitable to work with children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable across the school. While there have been clear improvements, pupils' work and progress information demonstrate that pupils make inconsistent progress across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to apply skills learned in English and mathematics to their work across the curriculum. For example, pupils' work shows that writing tasks are limited in subjects other than English, as are opportunities to practise mathematical reasoning and problem-solving tasks to reach the higher standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In some lessons, teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently or start pupils earlier on an activity so that they make as much progress as they should. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- The school's chosen approach to teaching writing has had success in raising standards since the previous inspection. However, in some cases, particularly in Years 5 and 6, it has limited opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able, to demonstrate what they are able to achieve. This is evidenced by the small number of pupils achieving at the higher standards across the school.
- Leaders have successfully raised the profile of reading, and guided reading activities are beginning to have an impact on raising standards. However, there has been too little emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary and speaking skills. For example, in some year groups, pupils found it difficult to articulate to inspectors their learning and

their understanding. This is evident from the low attainment seen in the end of key stage 2 national reading test results, where some pupils did not have confidence, knowledge and understanding to reach the expected standards in reading.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in class to access the curriculum. Evidence suggests that provision for these pupils is well matched to their abilities and that they make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils across the school have a good grasp of number skills and calculation. In some year groups, pupils are able to confidently apply these skills to multi-step word problems. However, the teaching of mathematics varies across the school. Not all pupils have opportunities to apply their thinking to more complex tasks that would develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- There has been a significant improvement in the teaching of phonics. This year, pupils made good progress from their starting points. Evidence suggests that the proportion of current pupils reaching expected standards by the end of Year 1 will be in line with national averages.
- Some teachers skilfully adapt teaching and learning to meet the needs of their pupils well. Leaders have started to share this best practice across the school as well as ensuring that teachers' training needs are continuously monitored.
- In key stage 1, emphasis on talk in lessons, before pupils write, has given pupils confidence, particularly those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils inspectors spoke with in key stage 1 were confident and articulate and demonstrated that they are making good progress from their starting points.
- There is much evidence that leaders' recent actions are beginning to show an improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils' outcomes are improving across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are well looked after. All staff are vigilant, and the pastoral team is well led to ensure that pupils get the immediate support they need in readiness to come to school and learn. The school's 'hang out' after-school club is well attended by pupils who know that they can play and socialise. This provides pupils with a safe place after school hours.
- There is a lot to motivate pupils to be good learners at Pirton Hill. The 'reading bugs' have been a huge success in getting pupils to read. They are keen to collect as many as they can and can only do so by reading.
- The school's behaviour policy supports pupils to be polite and respectful to adults and each other. The respect is mutual and can be particularly seen through the school's embedded values. House points are not only given to pupils for their consideration to others, but also the headteacher makes a point of giving house points to staff who may wait to hold doors open for other adults and pupils.

- The school's values are teaching pupils to have a good understanding of what it is to be a good citizen. These values are addressed and shared each week in assembly. Staff and pupils nominate pupils who they believe are displaying the school's values to receive the relevant 'value band'.
- Pupils learn about e-safety and know how to keep themselves safe when online.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and are confident that adults in school will deal with any concerns if they have any.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some parents raised concerns about the behaviour of a small number of pupils. In some lessons, a small minority of pupils display low-level disruptive behaviour, particularly when the teaching does not challenge them or is not interesting enough.
- Despite leaders' best efforts, pupils' attendance is still just below the national average for primary schools. Leaders monitor attendance closely and carry out home visits when necessary. Pupils' persistent absenteeism is speedily being reduced.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons and show an enthusiasm for learning. They work well with each other and are keen to show what they know.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the past three years, pupils' reading, writing and mathematics attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 were too low. However, leaders have been effective in their plans to raise standards through improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils are now making better progress across the key stage in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In key stage 1, although attainment has improved over time, there are still too few pupils meeting expected standards. This is particularly so in reading and mathematics, even though the proportions of pupils achieving at greater depth in reading and mathematics are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' work, and school progress and attainment information, suggest that more pupils should reach expected standards at the end of key stage 1 this year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most-able pupils are not challenged or stretched enough to make the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly the case in key stage 2, as reflected in the end of key stage results, with only a small proportion of pupils achieving at the higher standards at the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment within subjects other than English and mathematics varies too greatly across key stages. Pupils' inconsistent progress is a reflection of this variability.
- Teachers carefully check the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Small-group work and after-school boosters are helping pupils to catch up and more pupils are making expected progress. However, disadvantaged pupils' progress still varies too widely across year groups.

- Outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in all classes are supported well so that they are ready to access the curriculum, particularly those with social and emotional needs. This helps pupils to typically make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils are making good progress in phonics. In key stage 1, pupils apply their phonics knowledge well to their writing. Pupils are now making better progress, as evidenced in leaders' attainment information for current pupils.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Although improving, the percentage of children who achieve a good level of development by the time they leave Reception has been below the national average for the past three years. In addition, the proportion of children reaching the early learning goals in reading, writing and mathematics has been too low.
- The emphasis on developing children's personal, social and emotional needs is a big focus for leaders when they enter the Nursery. The safe and nurturing environment supports children to play and work together. This was seen throughout the early years. For example, two children happily played together with a bat and ball, while two others enjoyed filling different measuring containers with water, experimenting with number. Children are happy and calm and can sustain interest for long periods of time.
- Adults monitor children's progress and record observations to gauge how children are progressing over time. Staff share this information with parents, who often provide useful information about their child's learning at home. However, there are instances when children, particularly the most able, could move on to an activity quicker. For example, in their sentence work, most-able children are not routinely corrected to start their sentences with a capital letter and end with a full stop. As a result, some children still lack those skills when they enter Year 1.
- Both the Nursery and Reception areas are well organised. There is a good balance between adult-directed learning and independent learning. Children are encouraged to try things out and adults use skilled questioning techniques to help children think about their learning. One child was supported well to explore balance while testing out how many tyres would stack up before they overbalanced.
- Children enjoy reading and those who read to me were able to use their phonics knowledge well to sound out and blend words. Some children were able to read fluently and were proud of their achievement. Others, who were less able, displayed resilience and confidence, demonstrating that they are making good progress and had sufficient skills to progress further.
- It is expected that more children in Reception this year will reach a good level of development by the time they move up to Year 1. Although this proportion is likely to be below the national average, there is much evidence to show that most children demonstrate they are making good progress from their different starting points. Teachers' nurturing approach ensures that children's most important needs are addressed immediately. This gives them the necessary skills to cope with their learning and means that they are set to make good progress in key stage 1.
- Children are well looked after. This is because staff and children have positive, trusting

relationships, and all statutory requirements are fully met.

School details

Unique reference number	109574
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10046220

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	530
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry Davis
Headteacher	Glenn Booth
Telephone number	01582 507924
Website	www.pirtonhill.com
Email address	head@pirtonhill.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 March 2015

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post as substantive headteacher in September 2017. There has been a new leadership team in place since Easter.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Early years provision consists of one Nursery class and three full-time Reception classes.
- The school serves a diverse community. The majority of the pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual time.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.

- An above average proportion of pupils are supported by pupil premium funding.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school, based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2015 to 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning across all year groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and looked at pupils’ written work, information on pupils’ attainment and progress and records of behaviour and safety. They also scrutinised the minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents, including mandatory checks made on the recruitment of new staff, and the school’s website.
- Discussions were held with pupils from the school council and informal conversations took place during lesson times.
- The inspection team listened to pupils from across the school read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- The inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and the 19 free-text responses. In addition, inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of and during the school day. The inspection team also took into consideration the 54 responses to Ofsted’s online staff survey.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Al Mistrano	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Debbie Griggs	Ofsted Inspector

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