

Hawthorn Park Community Primary

Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 5QN

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2019

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although there have been significant improvements since 2017, there is still more work to be done by leaders and governors to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is good.
- Although improving, leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics is new and therefore it is too early to see an impact on improving pupils' outcomes in these subjects.
- Leaders' systems have not held teachers to account well enough for the progress of all pupils. As a result, too few pupils reached the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018.
- Pupils' work does not demonstrate that they have opportunities to build on their prior learning in subjects other than English and mathematics. This remains a priority for leaders.
- In mathematics and writing, some teachers do not always plan activities that help pupils to make the good and better progress they should. Therefore, not all pupils are catching up as quickly as they could in their learning.
- In most lessons, pupils behave well and engage positively in their learning. However, on occasions, when activities are poorly planned, pupils go off task and become fidgety.
- Teachers do not always provide activities that sufficiently challenge the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged. Too few pupils are reaching the higher standards of attainment at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils do not write well enough across the curriculum. In addition, in some year groups, teachers' expectations are too low and the quality of writing is poor.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has developed a strong leadership team that is having a positive impact on current pupils' outcomes.
- The teaching of phonics is good. A high proportion of pupils can confidently use their phonics knowledge to read by the time they leave Year 1.
- Children get a good start in the early years. Children develop into confident learners and most make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils' well-being is given a high priority by leaders. Pupils are safe, happy and well looked after by all adults.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that pupils' progress and attainment by the end of key stage 2 are at least in line with national averages and sustained over time
 - increasing the proportions of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, especially the most able pupils, attaining greater depth or the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that teachers are held precisely to account for the progress of all pupils in their care
 - continuing to develop leaders' skills at all levels, particularly leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics, so that more are making a significant contribution to school improvement
 - continuing to develop a curriculum that enables pupils to build on their prior learning, skills and knowledge.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of work and of what pupils can do, particularly in writing
 - adapting learning activities to ensure that all groups of pupils are challenged, particularly the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - making sure that teachers use information that they know about pupils to plan learning that moves pupils on from their individual starting points.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of writing by providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills across a range of subjects and at length.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection in 2017, there has been much instability within the teaching staff. Until recently, leaders have not been able to recruit staff with the relevant knowledge and skills to help the school move forward. As a consequence, this has severely hampered the progress that pupils make.
- Leaders have systems to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, until recently, they have not set precise targets for teachers to ensure that all pupil groups make sufficient progress, many of whom need to catch up and reach age-related expectations.
- The school's curriculum ensures that pupils experience a range of subjects, New subject leaders have worked with the Department for Education's 'New to leadership' programme and carried out audits of teachers' knowledge and skills. They have developed action plans in line with their findings. Although they have started to monitor their subjects, it is still too early to see the full impact of their work.
- The headteacher has invested in appropriate training, which has enabled her to share leadership roles across the school. Teachers have been given clear responsibilities for improvement areas. Strong leadership has been well deployed. This has been particularly successful in the early years and Year 6.
- Leaders are working successfully with specialist leaders and teachers from the local authority. This is helping to develop strong and committed leadership at all levels within the school. There are strong signs that many leaders are having a positive impact on improving pupils' outcomes and helping pupils to catch up, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. Pupils are taught about different religions and understand their roles in society as good citizens. Those spoken with could speak confidently about different types of families and all people being equal. School council members are elected democratically and have a good understanding of individual rights. Pupils have a say in school improvement, such as in the development of the extensive outside school space.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have developed a 'team around the family' that has led to a much more child-focused approach. This has enabled leaders to see the bigger picture when working with vulnerable pupils. Leaders now work even closer with families to understand pupils' needs more precisely. Much of the funding is spent on ensuring that pupils attend school and that they are supported effectively in readiness for their learning. This focused support has ensured that attendance is improving for these pupils.
- Sport funding is used well to ensure that pupils experience as much outdoor activity as possible. The new artificial surface has meant that pupils can be active outside all year round and enjoy the facilities at break and lunchtimes. In addition, funding is used for specialist instructors to help teachers develop their skills so that they can deliver high-quality physical education (PE) lessons. All pupils spoken with enjoy sport and have many opportunities to take part in competitive events.

- Funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well considered by leaders. A whole-school well-being audit identified pupils' specific needs and led to counselling sessions for young carers and those pupils with social, emotional and mental health concerns. Monitoring information is detailed. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points to draw near to age-related expectations.

Governance of the school

- Until recently governors have not been strategic enough in their actions to raise standards and support school leaders to improve pupils' outcomes. However, with a new chair of governors, they have now ensured that the governing body has the necessary skills and experience to take the school forward.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's priorities, and clear plans are in place to support school improvement. Governors spend time in school, ensuring that they have an accurate understanding of school leaders' work and the impact it is having on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are doing their utmost to gain experience and knowledge so that they can carry out their roles effectively. As well as attending all aspects of safeguarding training, they also make good use of the local authority governor training available. In addition, they share their individual areas of expertise with each other. For example, governor internal training on understanding data has ensured that governors are more confident to challenge school leaders on the performance of all pupil groups.
- School leaders welcome the support and challenge from governors. Governors' questioning has helped leaders to be more detailed in their analysis of pupils' absence. For example, pupil attendance has been a high priority for governance. Governor meeting minutes show that they requested more detail about barriers to pupils' attendance and the different pupil groups most affected. This approach has led to a much-improved allocation of resources and subsequently helped to understand and improve the attendance of specific groups of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff and governors are appropriately trained, in line with current national requirements. Records are well kept, and staff are very clear that they all have an important role in safeguarding pupils. Staff say that pupils are safe, and pupils agree.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a strong safeguarding culture within the community. The most vulnerable pupils who are a concern to the school are tracked thoroughly in terms of their attendance and well-being. Staff are aware of the potential dangers of county lines, all forms of child abuse and those who may be at risk from radicalisation.
- Leaders and staff have an acute understanding of their school and the local community. Meetings to help pupils and their families are held termly with external support agencies, such as early help, family intervention services and agencies that provide support for emotional and mental health well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across year groups. Although there has been effective support provided by the local authority, some teaching is not having the required impact on helping pupils catch up. In Years 5 and 6, teaching and learning are more secure. In other year groups, some teachers do not consistently provide precise enough guidance to move individual pupils on quickly in their learning.
- Teachers monitor closely the progress of pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. These pupils are supported effectively to access their learning by teachers and trained additional adults. However, in some lessons, other pupils' starting points are not taken into consideration well enough and therefore pupils are not always given tasks that match their abilities or challenge them sufficiently. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. As a consequence, too few pupils make the progress they should or reach the higher standards of attainment.
- Small-group interventions to teach reading comprehension skills are beginning to have a positive impact on improving pupils' reading skills. Staff training is also helping to improve the teaching of reading. There are still, however, significant gaps in pupils' understanding. These mean that such pupils are unable to build up a greater depth of understanding through a range of texts.
- Subjects other than English and mathematics are not taught thoroughly enough across the school. Therefore, pupils do not build effectively on the skills they have been taught. In some classes, pupils have opportunities to carry out science experiments and build up their scientific knowledge. However, many pieces of work seen in pupils' books are a one-off activity that do not help develop skills and build depth of knowledge over time.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Pupils are becoming more confident at recalling number facts, such as knowing their times tables and number bonds. Teachers encourage pupils to justify their answers and record their workings systematically. This is helping most current pupils to make strong progress in reasoning and problem-solving tasks.
- The teaching, learning and assessment of writing are taught inconsistently across the school. Pupils' workbooks show that in some classes they take pride in their work, handwriting is neat and characters are well formed. In others, presentation is variable. In addition, pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length and practise their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills routinely.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils develop a love of reading early and are taught to read fluently. They enjoy reading books from a wide selection of different genres and authors offered in the school library.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.

- Leaders have worked hard at helping pupils to have positive attitudes to school. Whole-school training has helped staff better understand pupils' needs. Leaders widely consult pupils about how they feel. Pupils come across as happy and confident individuals.
- Pupils are thoughtful about the environment and recycling. They take part in litter picking and look after their own school environment well.
- Pupils spoken with were polite and respectful. In most lessons, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and participate well. When activities are not matched closely to pupils' skills and abilities, they get bored and low-level disruption occurs.
- The school council is very active and members take their responsibilities seriously. They worked with leaders on improving the outside area. This included reorganising the lunch schedule to reduce the queues, helping to create quiet areas and deciding on play equipment and facilities to be used on the playground.
- Leaders ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are well looked after. They work diligently with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and get the support they need to access their learning.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and they know the potential dangers of giving out personal information while on the internet. However, there is more work to do with parents, carers and pupils around the appropriateness of some online games that pupils play at home.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils behave well in school. They are sociable, polite and respectful to each other and adults. Playtimes are energetic affairs. Pupils play with a range of resources. However, when pupils are not engaged in a game, they can become boisterous.
- A very few parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, have concerns about pupils' behaviour. Pupils who responded to Ofsted's online survey had mixed views, but indicated that behaviour is not always good in lessons. Most pupils responded that bullying does not happen at the school, but if it did, teachers were good at resolving it. They all said that they have someone to speak to if they have concerns about bullying.
- Although attendance is improving, increasing levels of attendance and reducing persistent absence remain a high priority for leaders.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, attainment and progress for pupils at the end of key stage 2 were significantly below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected and higher standards. However, due to an improved leadership team and a far more focused and strategic approach, attainment and progress for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are improving for current pupils both at the expected and higher standards.
- Leaders work with the local authority to ensure that the information they collect on how well pupils achieve is accurate. In 2018, the number of pupils in key stage 1 that

reached the expected standards was below national averages in reading and mathematics and significantly below in writing. However, a higher than average proportion of pupils reached greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.

- The strong focus on language and communication across all key stages is helping pupils in some year groups develop their writing skills. More pupils are now on track to reach expected standards by the time they leave Year 6. Some teachers, however, are not giving pupils specific enough guidance on how they can make better progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are given specific support to access their learning. They are closely monitored by leaders and teachers and are provided with small-group support to help them catch up. In key stages 1 and 2, too few have reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils, however, are making better progress.
- Adults are skilled and provide effective support to pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Outcomes for pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics are variable. New leaders are passionate and committed to developing their subjects, and there has been some improvement in the frequency with which some subjects are being taught. However, there is not enough teaching and learning that builds on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding.
- A high proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1. This is because of the focused support that children receive in the early years and into Year 1.

Early years provision

Good

- There have been a number of significant staffing changes in 2018 that have affected the achievement of some children during the past year. However, the leaders of early years are highly skilled and determined. They have high expectations of all children. Although the proportion of children who reach a good level of development is below the national average, current children are making good or better progress from typically low starting points.
- Leaders in the early years are ambitious for the children. They identify children's needs early on entry into Nursery and carefully plan activities so that children settle well and make good progress, academically and emotionally.
- The early years environments are well thought out. Children's next steps are visibly shared with all staff, and children are provided with inspiring activities to develop skills in all areas of learning. The outside area has been recently revamped, with safe and inviting places to encourage and support children's physical development.
- Adults' expectations of children's behaviour are high. Clear routines are well established, enabling children to access activities with increasing independence. Nursery children are very well prepared for Reception.
- Leaders and teachers in Nursery and Reception work very effectively together to ensure that transition is smooth and that there is consistency in the teaching of

reading. Children are enthusiastic about their books and want to read to adults and talk about their stories.

- During independent activities, inspectors observed that children chose to read to each other. As a result, the most able children have started reading in Nursery and read fluently in Reception. Those who find reading more difficult are resilient and keen readers. They use their phonics knowledge well to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Writing is a focus for the school. Early years leaders are ensuring that children begin to develop the skills needed to be able to write when children are ready. Children in the Nursery are provided with activities that help develop an accurate pencil grip and they begin to form letters with increasing accuracy. They successfully build on these skills further in Reception.
- The school's chosen approach to writing develops language first and foremost. By the time children leave Reception they are writing independently, some self-editing, with many using capital letters and full stops correctly.
- Leaders adopt a successful approach to preparing children for thinking and recalling number rules, facts and patterns, using enjoyable and memorable songs. Approaches to word problems and how to tackle them are discussed and explained very effectively by adults, using a wide range of physical resources. This leads to children being able to understand difficult concepts and tackle complex mathematical problems with confidence.
- Children are safe and well looked after in the early years. Safeguarding is effective and welfare requirements for the early years are met. Children develop well in all areas of learning in the early years, and by the time they leave Reception they are ready for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	109524
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10057804

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	378
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Cotton
Headteacher	Jeni Houghton
Telephone number	01582 863859
Website	www.hawthornparkcps.co.uk
Email address	d.hall@hawthornpark.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 January 2017

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The early years provision has a separate Nursery. It has a Reception class and a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is slightly above that found nationally.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first inspection since the school was judged inadequate in January 2017.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and school staff. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority and the school's external consultant.
- The inspection team looked at pupils' written work, information on pupils' attainment and progress, curriculum planning, and records of behaviour and safety. They also looked at 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 Years 3 and 4 and the school council. Informal conversations took place during lesson times.
- The inspector took account of 18 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and 13 comments on the free-text service. An inspector also spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also considered 29 pupil and 22 staff responses to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Turner	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Leach	Ofsted Inspector

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