

Inspection of Parkside Community Primary School

Aycliffe Road, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 4EP

Inspection dates: 14–15 January 2020

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They are interested in the topics they learn about. They talk to each other about their learning and most of them are now achieving what they should be for their age. Any pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly given support to catch up.

There is a real community feeling to the school. At playtimes, the younger pupils play games such as 'duck, duck, goose' or basketball, with older pupils helping. They enjoy the spacious grounds and many activities on offer for their free time. Behaviour is good. Where there are rare cases of bullying, pupils are confident that their teachers sort it out quickly. Parents also appreciate that their children are happy and safe.

All staff share high expectations for the pupils in their care. There is a clear ethos of aiming high, caring for individuals and ensuring that pupils have many opportunities to learn about the wider world. This is summarised in their new vision statement: 'nurturing and inspiring minds towards a brighter future'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Over a relatively short time, there have been rapid improvements to the quality of education in the school. Leaders and governors have not been afraid to make changes where needed. They know that what pupils achieved at the end of key stage 2 was not good enough in the past. They have looked at all aspects of school life and altered practices where needed. Staff have worked closely as a team to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

The rapid improvements in teaching have been achieved as a result of significant investment in training, coaching and support. Senior leaders and external advisors have led professional development sessions. Teachers have attended external courses and had mentoring in school. The leadership team are developing their own confidence in taking on these training roles in due course.

There are a few occasions where teachers have not fully understood the training they have received. They do not completely follow the expectations of how the curriculum should be taught. Where this is the case, teaching is not presented clearly enough.

English is taught well. From the start of Reception, there is a clear focus on knowing letter sounds. Staff teach clearly and precisely. They check that pupils can write the letters correctly and encourage correct posture for writing. As pupils get older, they build on the shorter writing tasks to complete well thought out final pieces.

Pupils are encouraged to have a love of reading. In key stage 2, they focus as a class on quality texts. When used well, the books help pupils understand what they

have read and expand their vocabulary. Teachers ensure that books read by pupils are well matched to their ability.

The teaching of mathematics is well structured. Pupils use apparatus such as number beads to help understanding. They can apply skills from previous weeks and years in their work. They have lots of opportunities to think about and tackle problems.

Leaders introduced a revised curriculum for subjects beyond English and mathematics for September. Schemes of work are structured, ambitious and support non-specialist teachers to help pupils learn well. For a few topics, it is not as clear as in others exactly what will be taught.

In the early years, both the inside and outside environments provide good opportunities to develop children's skills. Staff incorporate topics into learning, for example writing letters and envelopes as part of a topic about post. In the nursery, there have been staffing and room changes. Some of the routines that should be in place are not yet fully effective.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Adaptations are made where needed to enable access to the full curriculum.

There are many opportunities that promote pupils' personal development. Pupils take part in charity fundraising and visit a range of places, from temples to museums. They have visitors in and regularly talk about the values that support readiness for life in modern Britain. Staff across the school have a positive relationship with the pupils in their classes and this encourages good behaviour.

Attendance has been a high priority for the school for many years. Although overall attendance has risen, there are still too many pupils who do not come to school regularly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. Parents mostly agree and commented on how their children now feel happier in school than in the past.

Staff are very clear on what they need to do if they have any concerns about pupils. There are specific members of staff to support the pastoral and attendance work of the school. Governors undertake their statutory responsibilities well and all appropriate checks are made on adults who are regularly in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculums in geography and history have recently been rewritten. They are ambitious and clearly sequenced. However, for some units it is not as clear as in others what knowledge, skills and vocabulary leaders wish the pupils to develop. Curriculum plans for all units need to support teachers in planning for progression of knowledge and skills year on year.
- The extended leadership team has been working closely with external advisors to improve their skills in developing others' practice in teaching. The leaders are becoming confident and the impact of this work is evident in the school. However, some teaching is not yet consistently strong and there is still reliance on the external support. In time, all leaders need to be confident to lead without such extensive support.
- There have been several recent changes to nursery staffing and classroom arrangements. As a result, some routines are not as well established as they might be to prepare children well for the next stage. The routines need to be improved to support children's transitions from home to school and in being school-ready by the end of nursery.
- Although overall levels of attendance have improved over time, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is still too high. Leaders have started working with individual pupils closely on this, also involving teachers. This work needs to develop so that all pupils attend well.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 117562 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10121357 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 325 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Miranda Barnett |
| Headteacher | Charles Soyka |
| Website | www.parksidecommunityps-herts.co.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 28–29 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act. |

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the staffing of the school. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2018.
- The school has an above-average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium grant.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- As part of this inspection, we spoke to the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of the leadership team. We spoke to subject leaders, teachers and members of the school support team.
- We spoke to members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

- We talked to parents and a wide range of pupils.
- We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. We also observed playtimes and an assembly. An inspector visited the breakfast club.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, science and geography. The deep dives involved talking to leaders, looking at curriculum plans, looking at pupils' work, visiting lessons, talking to teachers and talking to pupils.
- To inspect the school's safeguarding arrangements, we looked at documents and asked staff and pupils about their views.

Inspection team

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