

Parkfield Primary School

Parkfield Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4RT

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2017

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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, weak governance has contributed significantly to the school's decline. Recent appointments to the governing body are now having a positive impact. However, governors recognise that despite 'steadying the ship', it is too soon for these to have enough impact on teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes.
- Middle leadership is weak. Key roles and responsibilities are not clearly understood, which reduces the impact of leaders.
- Leaders do not check the impact of the school's pupil premium strategy well enough. As a result, disadvantaged pupils fall behind their peers academically and have poor attendance.
- Internal assessment information is unreliable. This provides a false sense of security and prevents teachers from identifying pupils who need rapid intervention.
- The quality of teaching is not good and too variable. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress by the time they leave the school.
- Teachers do not always check, respond and adapt quickly to pupils' learning needs. This slows pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of spelling and phonics is poor. Pupils lack the knowledge and strategies to spell well.
- Teachers do not always identify gaps in pupils' number skills accurately. This leads to teachers planning work which is not always well matched to pupils' needs.
- Teaching does not focus sharply enough on critical aspects of improvement for pupils who find writing difficult, especially boys. This slows the progress they are capable of making.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is ambitious and effective. He has already started to bring about the necessary improvements.
- Recently appointed governors are taking effective action to improve the school, including safeguarding.
- Pupils enjoy a rich and diverse curriculum.
- The early years foundation stage is good. Children get a good start and are well prepared for key stage 1.
- A new policy and strategies for improving behaviour are having a positive impact so that pupils' general conduct is good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable, by:
 - developing the skills of teachers to check and respond quickly to the different needs and abilities of pupils
 - enabling pupils to be confident in applying phonics knowledge and spelling strategies in their reading and writing
 - building pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of number and place value, so they can apply this confidently in a range of mathematical situations and contexts
 - providing well-targeted and precise next steps to accelerate pupils' progress in writing, especially for boys and for lower-attaining pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including that of governors, by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders to check, evaluate and hold others to account in their subjects or areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that all leaders have clearly defined and agreed roles, responsibilities and accountabilities to hold others to account
 - implementing and monitoring an effective strategy to improve the attendance and outcomes of disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that assessment information is accurate and reliable, so that it can inform consistently high-quality teaching and learning.

An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be taken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Significant leadership changes over time, including four headteachers in the previous three years, have had an unsettling effect on the school. This has contributed to a serious decline in the school's performance. However, the recent actions of new governors and the newly appointed headteacher now drive the necessary improvements.
- Middle leaders have not received the professional training and support required for them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. They have not been given the opportunities to learn and acquire the skills needed to contribute well to school improvement.
- In some cases, for example that of the assistant headteacher, leaders do not yet have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. As a result, some individuals do not contribute well to school improvement and this causes confusion. For example, there is uncertainty as to who is responsible for disadvantaged pupils.
- Subject leaders have been frustrated. They have previously been denied meaningful opportunities to monitor and evaluate their subjects. As a result, they do not have a strong understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. However, with the arrival of the new headteacher, they now have an active role and are checking teaching and learning. They are also relishing their new responsibility for delivering school-wide improvement initiatives and training.
- The school's internal assessment information is inaccurate and unreliable. It provides a false impression of pupils' progress and is overly positive. However, leaders have now introduced processes to check and moderate standards, including moderation with other schools.
- The new headteacher, appointed in September 2017, is effective and has quickly gained an accurate view of the school. His ambition and vision on behalf of the pupils are having a galvanising effect. He is inspiring other leaders, staff, pupils and governors alike. As a result, the school is already taking the necessary steps to improve.
- Other leaders' plans are clearly linked to the school's priorities, including English and mathematics action plans. These are clear and precise and appropriately reflect the wider priorities of the school development plan (SDP). Consequently, leaders are now being trusted and trained, and are expected to contribute to school self-evaluation and review.
- The headteacher is having a positive and galvanising impact on the school community to raise morale and expectations. Pupils, staff and parents overwhelmingly recognise and endorse his efforts. A parent, whose view was typical, said, 'The school is now heading in the right direction.'
- The headteacher is ensuring that there are now systems and processes for holding others to account. For example, teachers' performance is entirely linked to the school development plan. Furthermore, professional meetings are being held, where teachers are expected to identify pupils who are not making enough progress. As a result,

teachers are gaining an understanding of pupils' progress based on their prior attainment.

- Leaders responsible for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities as well as English as an additional language are effective. They ensure that pupils are identified and targeted quickly to receive the further support they need. The special educational needs funding is well spent. Parents and pupils are involved in agreeing targets on their support plans. As a result, pupils are encouraged and supported well in their learning.
- Leaders are effective in delivering a wide and enjoyable curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 have been writing about staying fit in science and drawing bar graphs to show this information. There is also a full range of clubs and activities, including sports and music tuition. These opportunities, as well as others to encourage social and emotional development, for example the breakfast club and residential visits, are enjoyed by the pupils.
- The additional sports and physical education (PE) funding is used well so that pupils are accessing a variety of sports and enjoy at least two hours of high-quality PE. Leaders do not monitor the uptake of PE and clubs by disadvantaged pupils or other vulnerable pupils.
- The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural strategy is still emerging and is having variable impact. Pupils make strong links to explore their feelings and emotions. The Year 6 Remembrance in the school's secret garden offers such an opportunity. Pupils are not always clear, however, about the school's values and how these reflect wider British values.
- Over time, the local authority has been unable to intervene effectively to prevent the school's decline. However, in February 2017 it was pivotal in commissioning a governance review which subsequently led to key personnel changes on the governing body. School leaders have engaged well with the local authority, which has brokered school-to-school support, co-opted governors and undertaken termly visits. These actions, together with the appointment of the substantive headteacher, are now starting to show improvement.

Governance of the school

- The legacy of previous weak governance has contributed significantly to the school's decline since the last inspection. However, recent appointments to the governing body, which include a national leader of governance to the chair, now know and understand their responsibilities well.
- Following the review in the spring term, governors have taken the right decisions to ensure that they tackle the most pressing issues first. These have included recruiting a substantive headteacher and ensuring that safeguarding practice is effective. However, governors are not yet sufficiently strategic when it comes to monitoring the SDP, especially in respect of priorities around teaching and learning.
- School leaders, including governors, do not implement an effective strategy for disadvantaged pupils. Although funding is directed towards staffing, educational visits and other support for disadvantaged pupils, the impact of these is not well evaluated.

Consequently, outcomes and attendance for these pupils remain poor when compared to their non-pupil-premium counterparts.

- Some governors have started to make visits. However, it is too soon for these to show enough impact on teaching, learning or pupils' outcomes. Governors' visits are linked to classes and to priorities on the SDP.
- Since March 2017, governors have 're-grouped' and share a clear understanding of the school's needs and priorities. Their self-evaluation is accurate. They are realistic about the needs of the school and what is required for it to improve.
- Governors have ensured that the new academic year has a relevant SDP with measures to hold the headteacher to account. For example, the curriculum committee meets to review pupils' progress and the headteacher's appraisal has been completed with an external adviser so as to meet the expectations of the SDP. This plan is being used successfully to share and raise expectations in teaching and learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Following a review in July 2017, leaders have quickly taken appropriate steps and measures to ensure that the school's systems for safeguarding are robust and effective. For example, they have updated the single central record.
- The school's arrangements for checking, vetting and training staff are appropriate and timely. Therefore staff, as well as governors and volunteers, understand their duties towards pupils in respect of safeguarding. This contributes to creating a safe culture in the school.
- Staff know who the designated safeguarding leaders are and have a good understanding of when and how to make referrals to them. Records show that referrals passed on by staff are checked and dealt with efficiently. School staff interact well with other external agencies to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They know how to stay safe in a variety of contexts including when using the internet. Pupils have been involved in making e-safety displays in some classrooms to help raise awareness and knowledge of online safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite some effective teaching in parts of the school, the overall quality of teaching is not good enough. In particular, pupils do not capitalise on the strong start that they get in the Reception Year. At other stages in the school, they are not well supported to make good progress to reach the standards they are capable of.
- Teaching does not make consistently good use of formative assessment. Too many teachers do not check what the pupils actually know, understand and can do. As a result, they fail to build incrementally on prior skills and knowledge, which leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge.

- Teachers do not always match work closely enough to the needs of the pupils. As a consequence, tasks can be either too easy or difficult, especially for lower-attaining and the most able pupils.
- Weak teaching of phonics and spelling does not identify pupils' mistakes and misconceptions. As a result, pupils continue to make spelling errors and lack the confidence to 'have a go' when they are stuck.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving, with a particular focus on enabling pupils to explain and justify their mathematical thinking. However, teachers do not check pupils' understanding of number and related concepts, such as place value. Teachers make inaccurate assumptions about the depth of pupils' understanding and plan lessons that do not support them well enough, even the most able. As a result, persistent misunderstanding in number and calculation slows pupils' progress.
- Teaching of writing does not enable all pupils to make good progress, especially lower-attaining pupils and boys, because it does not identify the key next steps for improvement. Teachers present a raft of generic objectives or 'success criteria' in quick succession, which are not well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils do not master skills they need to improve their own, individual, writing.
- The new headteacher has already started to improve teaching, as he is raising expectations and pupils are being challenged to achieve more. The introduction of clear 'non-negotiables' means that teachers know what is expected of them and are familiar with national benchmarks and expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers make links between subjects to provide further experiences to challenge pupils. For example, in a Year 2 PE lesson, pupils were experiencing jumping in quarter-turns and relating this to numbers on an analogue clock.
- The teaching of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works with teachers, pupils and parents to put personal plans in place for pupils. These have precise and measurable targets and are often time-limited, which helps pupils to make progress that is relevant to their own needs.
- Rapid identification and effective support for pupils with English as an additional language usually enable pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers and adults often hear pupils read and have tailored language programmes that support pupils well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are motivated and keen. They interact well with pupils to build positive relationships. Consequently, pupils enjoy their lessons, especially when they work with one another to solve problems or complete tasks.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

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

- Pupils are not supported well enough to make the progress that they are capable of, which inhibits their readiness for the next stage in their learning. This particularly affects disadvantaged pupils, who leave the school making progress well below their peers and effectively disadvantages them further.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is poor and has declined in the past year. This is further compounding the issues and adversely affecting these pupils' enjoyment and entitlement.
- Some pupils do not show positive attitudes to learning and can distract themselves and others in lessons. This most commonly occurs in lessons where the teaching is weak and pupils are distracted.
- Pupils feel safe and are emotionally well cared for. They do not believe that bullying is a problem in the school and have confidence that teachers will act quickly to prevent this on the rare occasions that it should occur. Overall, pupils enjoy being part of a happy school and are delighted with the recent improvements. For example, the new playground markings have added a new and enjoyable dimension to their breaktimes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The headteacher has been quick to introduce a new behaviour policy with related strategies to improve pupils' general conduct and behaviour around the school. The new behaviour system is well understood and consistently applied, resulting in pupils who know how to behave and who treat property and those around them with respect.
- Incidents of poor or anti-social behaviour have fallen markedly already since the start of term. Higher expectations have been welcomed by the pupils, who strongly endorse the improvements since September 2017.
- The school environment is orderly and well organised. The recent drive to improve the quality of displays in the classrooms is also supporting pupils in their learning.
- Pupils mix and play well together. They are proud of their school and are keen to help each other at every opportunity.
- Leaders are effective in improving the overall attendance of pupils, which is above the national average. This is also true of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils enjoy school and want to come, which makes the comparison with disadvantaged pupils even more noticeable.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Successive years of weak performance have meant that the school is in the lowest 20% of schools in 2017 for progress in key stage 2 reading and mathematics. This has been ascertained by the headteacher, who is already taking steps to accelerate progress in the school.
- Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 is just above the national average. However, this does not represent good progress when compared with their prior attainment at the end of the Reception Year.

- Pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 is below the national average. Pupils, including prior low-, middle- and high-attaining pupils, have not made enough progress in these subjects (based on their prior points at the end of Reception).
- Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been below the national average in the past two years. Some pupils show weak phonics skills and understanding when applying these to reading and writing. Pupils sometimes lack confidence when trying to spell and rely too much on an adult to give the spelling.
- Current disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are not making enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There is still too much of a 'lag' between their outcomes and those of their non-disadvantaged counterparts.
- The quality of writing seen in pupils' books is starting to improve. There is evidence of pupils writing for differing purposes across the curriculum. However, lower-attaining pupils, especially boys, do not have the technical skills to write fluently or the resilience to write at length. This holds them back.
- The teaching of mathematics is focusing on pupils' reasoning and thinking skills. These are clearly more evident in pupils' work and are supporting them well. However, pupils still do not consistently have a secure understanding of how to manipulate numbers and apply them. For example, some pupils also show common misconceptions, such as reading '6.02' as six hundred and two (Year 5) or working with large numbers that pupils cannot read and do not understand. Over time, these misunderstandings create gaps in pupils' knowledge which are not speedily identified and remedied.
- The headteacher's raised expectations are already leading to higher-level discussions between teachers and pupils to improve outcomes in communication, speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. However, gaps in some year groups for particular pupils, including the most able, are still wide and require greater acceleration to catch up.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making variable progress. Some are making good progress, especially those who have profound or complex needs. However, those identified as 'SEN support' are dependent on the quality of teaching and the daily support they are receiving.
- Pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress. This group make up nearly 20% of the school population and are well served. The focused language support is closely monitored so that pupils, including those who leave at the end of key stage 2, are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years foundation stage is well organised and managed so that the children can start to be independent. Provision and resources, including the 'secret garden', inspire the children. As a result, children are motivated, keen and curious, which they show in their play and learning.
- Children enter the Reception Year from a range of pre-school providers. There is a wide variety of needs and abilities on entry. The highly effective transition

arrangements mean children are well supported to begin making good progress immediately, including in their personal, social and emotional development.

- Over the past three years, the children's outcomes at the end of the foundation stage have been above the national average and showing continuous improvement. A majority of the children make good progress from their respective starting points. In particular, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and English as an additional language make rapid progress.
- The children are well prepared for Year 1 and the next stage in their learning. There is evidence of strong development across the full range of the early years curriculum. The few children who are disadvantaged also make good progress and commonly attain a 'good level of development' at the end of Reception.
- School leaders build good relationships and partnerships with other providers and external services to provide specialist provision as required. Staff have recently introduced a new online assessment and reporting system which is open for parents to use. However, the early years team is yet to make the very best use of this in building on assessment information which is provided by parents.
- Adults, including teaching assistants, are good role models to the children. They deepen children's knowledge and explore their understanding. The children are confident and quickly gain skills to be articulate and willing to 'have a go'. For example, one child talking to an adult was able to explain how two squares can be joined together to make a rectangle.
- Assessment information is accurate and well used. Adults know the children well and use information effectively to plan and deliver high-quality lessons that support the children well.
- School leaders have rightly identified that elements of the outdoor provision are not as strong as the indoors. In particular, writing and numbers are not as well marked or as much in evidence, which limits children's ability to learn and to bring them freely into their play when outside.
- Safeguarding is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	123714
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10033156

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Guy Adams
Headteacher	Gareth Jones
Telephone number	01823 282125
Website	www.parkfieldschool.co.uk
Email address	sch.346@educ.somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 July 2008

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school has had four different headteachers since the previous inspection. There have also been changes on the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The school works in partnership with other schools in the Taunton Learning Partnership.
- The school has been receiving some support brokered through the local authority. There are plans for further support to be continued.
- The school meets the current floor standards set by the government for the end of key stage 2.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- Parkfield Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classes and were accompanied by the head of school for the majority of inspection activities.
- Meetings were held with the range of leaders to evaluate their work. These included: the headteacher; assistant head; representatives of the governing body; a representative of the local authority and other leaders such as the SENCo and the mathematics and English subject leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including any recent governor visits, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding and governance reviews, anonymised performance management records and the school development plan.
- Documentation, including the school's single central record and records of child protection training, was scrutinised with school leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector carried out one lesson observation in physical education to help evaluate the impact of the sports and PE funding.
- Inspectors undertook an extensive scrutiny of pupils' books to evaluate the quality of work and check the accuracy of assessment information, including for disadvantaged pupils. They also spoke with pupils to check their understanding of what is seen in workbooks.
- Inspectors spoke to children through various activities during the inspection and heard pupils read in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6.
- Inspectors observed breaktimes and lunch on both days of the inspection.
- The 60 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The lead inspector also considered comments provided in other ways, especially in face-to-face discussions with parents throughout the inspection days.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Aisha Waziri	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector
David Shears	Ofsted Inspector
Lizzy Meadows	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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