

Kettering Park Infant School

Park Avenue, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN16 9RU

Inspection dates

23–24 November 2016

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	Require improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In recent years, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who pass the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been below the national average for the past three years.
- Leaders, including governors, have not carefully reviewed and evaluated how effectively the pupil premium funding has been spent. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' attainment dropped in 2016.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school. Teachers' feedback is not helping pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average. Too many pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are absent from school too often.
- Not all teachers use assessment information about pupils to plan learning that is suitably challenging and at the right level. Therefore, pupils, including the most able pupils, do not make as much progress as they should.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' learning and understanding well enough in lessons or follow up on pupils' misconceptions, particularly in mathematics. As a result, pupils do not have a secure grasp of fundamental mathematical concepts or understand where they have made mistakes.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are working steadfastly to improve the school and are determined to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils are friendly, happy and support each other well.
- The provision for children in the early years is good. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders have provided well thought out and effective opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe and secure.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently and accurately use assessment information to improve the learning of all pupils, including the most able pupils
 - feedback is used to help pupils improve their work
 - pupils' understanding is systematically checked in lessons and any misconceptions, particularly in mathematics, are promptly addressed.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, including that of disadvantaged pupils, meets national expectations by the end of Year 2
 - pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening test continues to improve in line with national expectations.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that pupils' attendance improves, particularly that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - eradicating the inconsistencies in teaching quality, particularly in Year 1
 - making sure that leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement because there is some way to go to before all pupils, especially the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged, reach the standards they are capable of in all subjects. Over time, the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 1 has been below the national average.
- Leaders' plans for improvement focus on the key areas of weakness. However, leaders acknowledge that the school's actions now need to be regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure that they improve pupils' attainment more rapidly.
- Turbulence in staffing and difficulties in recruitment and retention since the previous inspection have made it difficult for leaders to ensure that all teaching is of a good enough quality to enable all pupils to make sufficient progress. Although leaders have identified weaknesses in teaching, they have not yet taken effective action to eradicate them all. For example, there are still inconsistencies in teachers' use of assessment information on pupils, in their use of feedback, and in recognising pupils' misconceptions in mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have not evaluated the use of pupil premium funding on pupils' outcomes well enough. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' attainment, including that of the most able disadvantaged pupils, has fallen below the national average.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. All Year 2 pupils study French. Learning activities are increasingly tailored around themes that interest the pupils. This is motivating them to try hard with their work.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn about democracy when they vote for their playground pals and class representatives for the school council. Leaders have ensured that there are rich opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills. Pupils learn about a different language every month and participate in local singing, poetry and speaking competitions. Pupils say that they enjoy the extra-curricular clubs in which they can participate.
- Discrimination is not tolerated and the school endeavours to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Since the last inspection the school has joined Inspire teaching alliance. Teachers value the wider range of training opportunities this has opened up to them.
- Performance management targets for teachers are closely linked to whole-school priorities and have helped to foster and develop leadership skills among staff.
- Middle leaders now have greater responsibility. They lead developments across the school and are involved in tracking and monitoring pupils, as recommended at the last inspection. Middle leadership of the early years is particularly effective. However, middle leaders' actions in other areas have not yet had a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The large majority of parents who spoke with inspectors and replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and free text service, were overwhelmingly positive about the school. They confirm that the school provides a caring and nurturing environment.

Parents commented on the strong family support which the school provides. One parent summed up the views of many in describing how the school 'nurtures as well as educates'.

- The primary school physical education and sports funding is used effectively to motivate pupils to stay fit and healthy. Pupils benefit from inter-school dance, football and multi-skills festivals.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school. They have helped the school to make accurate judgements of the quality of teaching and learning.

Governance of the school

- Following the last inspection there have been a number of changes to the governing body, and a new chair of the governing body has recently been appointed. The governing body is now more stable and provides suitable challenge and support to school leaders
- The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's priorities. They have confidence in the headteacher and senior leaders to bring about the improvements needed to secure good outcomes for pupils.
- Governors are fully committed to their own training. They have recently undergone training in governance and understand how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.
- The governing body acknowledge that they have not been rigorous enough in holding leaders to account for the use of the pupil premium funding. As a result, disadvantaged pupils have not made sufficient progress.
- The governing body have identified that pupils' attendance, in particular that of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, has fallen below the national average. However, the school's actions have not yet been successful in reversing this decline.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This has recently been confirmed by an external safeguarding audit.
- The single central record for recording the recruitment checks on staff meets statutory requirements. Procedures for safeguarding are tested, rigorous and robust. Staff receive appropriate and regular training on a variety of aspects of safeguarding. Training includes how to identify pupils at risk, and staff understand how to report any concerns should they arise. Evidence seen in the school's files shows that staff act promptly if they do have any concerns about a pupil's welfare.
- Leaders ensure that parents engage well with help offered early on, before issues escalate into more serious concerns. The safeguarding lead is tenacious in following up external agencies to make sure she has done everything that she can to keep pupils safe. As a result, there is a culture of safeguarding evident in the school and recognised by the pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because not all teaching has been good enough over time to enable pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable. Staff changes have led to variable rates of pupils' progress.

- A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the quality of teaching is starting to improve. Current pupils' books demonstrate that progress is being made for all pupils. This progress now needs to be more rapid, so that pupils who have previously fallen behind catch up more quickly.
- However, feedback in books is not being used to help pupils to understand where they have gone wrong or to inform their next steps in learning. Therefore, pupils are not having time to deepen their learning and this is limiting their progress.
- Not all teachers use assessment information on pupils' attainment and progress to ensure that learning, particularly for the most able pupils, is suitably challenging. Neither do all teachers systematically check on pupils' understanding during lessons. This means that lower-ability pupils often do not understand what they are being asked to do. All too often the most able pupils complete work that is too easy and have to wait, doing very little, while other pupils finish.
- The quality of teaching of mathematics is inconsistent. Teachers do not consistently correct pupils' misconceptions. Therefore, pupils do not fully grasp fundamental mathematical concepts, such as place value. These embedded misconceptions are seriously limiting pupils' ability to deepen their numerical knowledge and understanding.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of where strengths and weaknesses in teaching lie. They put in place additional support where teaching is weaker. However, this support has not been completely effective and inconsistencies in teaching remain. Leaders acknowledge that teaching and learning in Year 1 is not enabling pupils to make sufficient progress.
- Leaders have made pupils' writing a whole-school priority. Writing tasks capture pupils' interests and imagination. Consequently, pupils enjoy writing and want to do well. Pupils told inspectors how much they look forward to receiving a writing pen. This inspires them to write carefully and present their work neatly.
- The teaching of reading is improving. The school has invested in a wide range of books and pupils read regularly. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors could all name their favourite book and said how much they enjoyed reading. Pupils who read to inspectors were able to use their phonics skills to decipher less familiar words.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers ask pupils questions which make them think hard and deepen their knowledge.
- Most teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils' learning, particularly those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils in the school.
- The majority of the pupils who speak English as an additional language are given effective support to help them to develop the necessary language skills to make good progress from their starting points. All pupils are set regular homework. This helps them to consolidate their spelling and handwriting, as well as having opportunities to select projects which deepen their knowledge and interests. Pupils particularly enjoyed a recent homework project to make their own castles.
- Teaching in the early years is good because staff have high expectations of what children can achieve and plan learning that is suitably challenging.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted. Pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs. Pupils told inspectors that 'being different does not matter, because we are all the same.'
- Pupils speak confidently to adults and are polite and respectful. They enjoy showing parents around the school on open days and taking part in community events. For example, pupils regularly visit the local pensioners at the Band Club, where they sing to the residents and help to serve them their lunch. Pupils also vote to choose which local charities the school supports.
- Leaders have carefully planned opportunities to support pupils' well-being. Pupils learn how to have healthy minds. Pupils then write their favourite strategy, such as 'share a worry with someone else', on to cards then launch them on balloons into the sky. Both parents and pupils are encouraged to share well-being ideas on leaves, which are then stuck on a well-being tree in the reception area. Leaders also run regular family learning sessions on topics such as sleep solutions. The school has won a national award to recognise its good practice in supporting pupils' emotional well-being.
- Pupils are taught effectively about healthy eating. Most pupils enjoy the healthy school dinner provided for them. All pupils complete a healthier child project, which helps them to understand the importance of keeping fit and making healthy food choices. The school recently took part in a Northamptonshire National Health Service walking event to contribute to a countywide two million step walk.
- Pupils successfully learn about how to keep themselves safe online and on the roads. They could tell inspectors about a number of strategies that they can use if they are worried about anything.
- All pupils who spoke with inspectors said they feel safe and that bullying is rare. They trust their teachers and the playground pals to support them if it does happen.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to reflect on their work and respond to feedback. As a result, they have not developed into inquisitive and resilient learners.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Over recent years pupils' attendance has been below the national average, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' overall attendance declined further last year. Leaders have started to take effective action to address this. Current in-year school attendance information indicates that attendance is improving. However, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities still miss school too often. The school's family support officer works effectively with parents to help improve pupils' attendance. Pupils now receive HERO ('here every day ready on time') rewards in weekly celebration assemblies. The proportion of pupils who are persistently late to school has reduced dramatically as a result.
- The vast majority of pupils are keen to learn. They told inspectors that they love school and want even more challenge.

- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school. However, in some lessons where pupils are not sufficiently challenged, they lose interest and become distracted.
- Pupils make full use of break and lunchtimes to let off steam and enjoy the varied equipment provided for them in the school playground. Pupils enthusiastically told inspectors about the pupil 'playground pals'. They explained how playground pals have one eye to see if anyone is alone and needs someone to play with, and one eye to check that no one is misbehaving. All pupils clearly understood the importance of good behaviour and knew the consequences if they misbehaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Pupils' attainment in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 was well below the national average. From low starting points at the end of the Reception Year, these pupils were not given appropriate support to help them catch up in time.
- Since the last inspection, the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 1 has been repeatedly below the national average. Over recent years, because leaders have not carefully monitored and evaluated the use of the pupil premium funding, the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils has been variable. Leaders have failed to ensure that the strategies they use have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. In 2016 the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was significantly below the national average.
- For the last three years the proportion of pupils who passed the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 has been below the national average. Although this is improving year on year, it is still not yet at national age-related expectations.
- The most able pupils are not always given the appropriate challenge to help them make the accelerated progress which they are capable of. Evidence in books shows that the most able pupils do not have opportunities to study subjects in greater depth. This is limiting the progress which they make.
- The school has responded to the decline in pupils' results by taking action to raise standards. Information about pupils' progress is now reviewed more regularly, so that timely intervention for any pupil who is falling behind can be put into place. Current in-school assessment information predicts that all Year 2 pupils will make better progress by the end of the year in all subjects.
- Historically, boys underperformed compared to girls. The school has successfully put in place a number of strategies to engage boys' interests and to capture their imaginations. Boys' attainment is improving as a result.
- Most pupils who begin at the school with little or no spoken or written English make good progress. This is because they are given effective support to develop the language skills which they need to access learning.
- School records indicate that most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with other pupils in the school.
- Children's attainment in the early years is better than in the rest of the school. They are well prepared for Year 1.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have improved outcomes for children over the last two years. Children's attainment is now close to the national average, including that of boys – who had previously underperformed compared to girls. Children are, therefore, well prepared and ready to start in Year 1.
- Leaders make sure that they meet children and their families before they start in the Reception Year so that they settle quickly into school.
- Leadership of the early years is strong. The early years leader has a detailed knowledge of what children can do and, therefore, plans effective learning to help them make good progress, including the most able children.
- The curriculum engages children's imaginations. Children enjoy learning and making up stories. For example, one child told an inspector that he had a green bean and was going to plant it and it will grow into a beanstalk. Leaders have provided children with plenty of opportunities to develop their learning through both indoor and outdoor play.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that activities develop children's literacy and numeracy skills. They ask children questions which help them to speak in sentences and improve their vocabulary.
- Children behave well. They listen intently to adults' explanations and follow instructions promptly.
- All adults working in the Reception class contribute to children's assessment. Children's learning journals show that they are given lots of different things to do. This helps them to make progress in all of the seven early learning areas.
- Adults provide a caring and supportive environment which promotes children's safety, welfare and social skills effectively. Staff are suitably trained in paediatric first aid.
- Leaders involve parents well with their child's learning. Parents contribute to children's homework booklets. Consequently, leaders have a full and accurate picture of each child's development during their first year at the school.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils has been variable. Leaders have acknowledged that this is a whole-school priority for improvement.

School details

Unique reference number	121840
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10019128

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Lewis
Headteacher	Pauline Hulse
Telephone number	01536 481 922
Website	www.parkinfantschoolkettering.co.uk/
Email address	office@parkinfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 September 2011

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized infant school that admits pupils from a wide range of pre-school settings.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2014.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes in the school. Some lessons were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and representatives from the governing body, including the vice-chair.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised in detail a range of pupils' books.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and the development plan, information on pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour, bullying and attendance records, safeguarding procedures, reviews of the use of the pupil premium and sport funding, and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at break and lunchtimes. They spoke formally to a group of pupils in Year 1 and 2 and informally with others around the school. One inspector listened to pupils reading.
- There were 40 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, for inspectors to view. Inspectors spoke with parents before school and considered the 39 responses from parents to the Ofsted free text service.
- Twenty responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sally Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Pete Strauss	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Dales	Ofsted Inspector

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