

# Queen's Park Academy

Chestnut Avenue, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK40 4HA

## Inspection dates

11–12 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently strong across the school.
- Recently, leaders have introduced new initiatives across the school to improve writing and a new way of teaching phonics, but the impact is not yet evident in pupils' progress and attainment.
- Teachers' assessment and tracking of pupils' progress in some year groups are not accurate, which means that planning does not match the needs of the pupils and expectations are not high enough.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistent in early years.
- When leaders have identified areas for improvement, they have not always brought about change quickly enough.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, at all key stages, is below the national average.
- Pupils do not make strong enough progress in reading and writing during their time at the school.
- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to enable them to reach the higher standards in reading and mathematics or greater depth in writing.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to improve outcomes for the pupils.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's priorities. Since a review of governance, they work more effectively.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by teaching assistants.
- Pupils are well-behaved and follow classroom routines. They talk politely and courteously to adults and to each other.
- Leaders place high importance on pupils' personal development and welfare. As a result, pupils enjoy going to school and feel safe when they are there.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders accurately monitor the impact of new initiatives with a sense of urgency to ensure that they are improving pupils' outcomes and progress
  - the quality of teaching is consistently strong across all year groups
  - teaching across the early years is consistently strong.
- Improve pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that the outcomes at the end of all key stages are closer to the national average by:
  - improving the accuracy of termly assessments to ensure that teachers plan effectively for challenge
  - ensuring that teachers set high expectations for pupils, particularly the most able.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have clearly identified the priorities for the school and have implemented change. However, the speed of this change has not been rapid enough. They have introduced a new way of teaching phonics which is systematic and well structured. It is being taught well in Reception and Year 1, yet the impact on results is yet to be seen.
- Leaders have not brought about improvements in teaching, learning and assessment quickly enough to ensure that attainment at the end of each key stage is close to the national average. Nonetheless, recently introduced initiatives in writing and the introduction of more problem-solving in mathematics have led to stronger progress in books. This is more evident in Years 5 and 6.
- Of the parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, almost all would recommend the school to other parents and feel that their child is safe. One parent said: 'Queen's Park Academy is a school which nurtures and educates children of all ages and abilities.' Another parent said: 'My daughter is really happy at Queen's Park Academy and she is very keen to go to school every day.'
- Leaders place high emphasis on pupil welfare, and their pastoral care is good. They have effective systems in place to support pupils with complex difficulties, both with their learning and with daily school life. They prepare pupils well for living in a multicultural United Kingdom.
- Staff at the school say that they are well supported by senior leaders and that they are encouraged to develop their skills through attending training.
- Leaders have used the grant for disadvantaged pupils to create intervention groups and offer enrichment activities. In Years 1 and 2, this has resulted in disadvantaged pupils outperforming other pupils in the phonics screening check and the key stage 1 assessments.
- Pupils in Years 2 and 4 who read to the inspectors did so with confidence but with varying degrees of fluency. Books were not always matched accurately to their reading levels.
- Where leaders have identified weak teaching, they have been quick to act and have put support plans in place. For some teachers, these plans have been effective, and the quality of their teaching is beginning to improve. For others, there has been no change. This has resulted in reduced progress for the pupils in these classes.
- Leaders make good use of the extra money they receive to increase sports provision. They have introduced a morning run/walk for pupils, parents, staff and governors. They have employed a sports technician who runs a wide range of extra-curricular sports, including athletics, dodgeball, curling, football and netball. Ten pupils with SEND attended the inclusion games, which improved their self-confidence.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is strengthened through celebration of other religions and cultures, visits out of school, sports events and visitors coming into school. Leaders understand the importance of this aspect of the

curriculum and actively promote it.

## **Governance of the school**

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a review of governance, which has resulted in a smaller and more streamlined governing body. Governors' skills are now well matched to the areas that they monitor and, as a result, they are in a stronger position to hold leaders to account.
- Governors understand the school's priorities. Progress towards set targets is well documented in the headteacher's reports to governors. Governors contribute to the culture of safeguarding and make regular checks on the systems in place for ensuring that adults are suitable to work in the school.
- Governors are effective at holding leaders to account for their spending of the extra money for disadvantaged pupils and the sport premium that the school receives.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a good culture for keeping children safe, and this is valued by pupils and parents. All staff receive the required training for keeping pupils safe. The relevant checks to ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children are carried out systematically.
- Any concerns are dealt with effectively by the schools' early intervention officer, who has developed strong relationships in the local community. This is highlighted by the fact that all pupils receive a home visit from leaders when they join the school.
- Staff and pupils who completed the online survey agree that safeguarding is effective. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school and any concerns are dealt with swiftly.
- Leaders are quick to seek extra help from other agencies, such as social services, when a pupil or their family needs it. They hold outside agencies to account for dealing with concerns satisfactorily and in a timely manner.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently strong across the school. Where teaching is strong, there are high expectations for all groups of pupils and, as a result, they make strong progress. Where teaching is not yet strong enough, groups of learners are not challenged sufficiently and expectations are low. The progress of these pupils is limited.
- Teachers have a good relationship with their pupils and, where teaching is strongest, pupils are comfortable in answering questions and challenging the teacher and each other. One group of year 5 boys collaborated well in an English lesson to work out what 'primarily' meant.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that, for some year groups, progress over time is good. However, some teachers are focusing on arithmetic and fluency and not moving pupils to problem-solving and reasoning quickly enough. There is more

problem-solving in the Year 5 and 6 books, resulting in some pupils working at the higher standards.

- In topic and science books, there is a good level of challenge for the lower- and middle-ability groups, but there is less evidence of high expectations of the most able pupils. Work is often the same for all ability groups. The school's marking and feedback policy is applied inconsistently.
- Following the introduction of a new scheme, phonics is taught well in Reception and Year 1. Adults who teach the sessions are well trained, and they teach with enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. The sessions move smoothly from sounds to words to sentences, and pupils have the opportunity to read and write during the session. Pupils are able to develop their understanding through reinforcement and repetition.
- Pupils with SEND are well supported in lessons by skilful teaching assistants who know the children well and know how to challenge them through questioning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have created an environment in which pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- Leaders arrange trips and visits regularly, and these are valued by the pupils. Year 6 pupils enjoyed their trip to the leisure centre following their key stage 2 tests. Year 2 pupils spoke passionately about their trip to Stanwick Lakes and the children in Reception had a great time at the forest centre.
- Pupils are very aware of what it is like to live in modern Britain and they show respect for pupils from different backgrounds and religions. They contribute well to their local community through litter-picking and fundraising.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using computers, and they understand the potential dangers. The pupils say that leaders have introduced robust systems to ensure that they are safe when using the school laptops.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders and teachers have good systems in place to ensure that learning is calm and well managed. Pupils are polite and courteous, and they talk articulately to adults and to each other. There is a strong sense that pupils care for each other, and they reported that there is very little unkindness. They say that bullying is very rare and, when it does happen, it is swiftly and effectively dealt with by adults. This is reflected in the records that leaders keep and inspection evidence.
- Attendance is below the national average, but leaders are working with parents and religious leaders to improve it. The introduction of an attendance officer has increased the rigour of the challenge to parents. This has resulted in a significant drop in persistent absence and a modest increase in attendance. Leaders have developed a

sophisticated computer program to track attendance and alert leaders to patterns of absence, allowing them to involve parents sooner.

- Pupils play together well at breaktimes and lunchtimes and make good use of the facilities and resources on offer. During wet breaktimes, pupils were well-behaved in classrooms. When they needed to move around the school, they did so in a calm manner.
- Pupils take a pride in their work, and books are well kept and well presented.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average in 2018, and very few pupils reached the higher standards in reading and mathematics or greater depth in writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined has been well below the national average for three years.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average in 2018.
- Progress for all groups of pupils in reading and writing was below the national average in 2018, but pupils made average progress in mathematics. There was an improvement in the progress pupils made from key stage 1 to 2 in writing from 2017 to 2018.
- Over the last three years, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been below the national average. Leaders have introduced a new way of teaching phonics, but its impact has yet to be seen.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 performed better in the phonics screening check in 2018 than other pupils as a result of a targeted intervention. This was the same for disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 when they took their reading, writing and mathematics assessments.
- Pupils with SEND are well supported by teaching assistants, and work is well matched to their abilities. Work in books shows that they are making good progress over time.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The early years area is welcoming and vibrant. Although it is situated with Year 1 in a different building from the rest of the school, leaders ensure that they visit the site regularly.
- Children are curious, well-behaved and respond well to adults. They are able to focus on tasks for sustained periods. Many are able to work independently on self-chosen activities.
- Many children join early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. Some have very little, or no, English language. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end of Reception is below the national average.
- All children receive a home visit when they join the school, which leads to good

relationships with families. As a result, there is always good attendance at school open mornings and other events. Leaders have worked hard to involve parents in their children's learning.

- Leaders have identified weak areas in early years and have written an action plan to make the necessary improvements. Parts of the plan have already been implemented, and they are beginning to improve standards, particularly in reading.
- Since leaders introduced a new way of teaching phonics, there has been some improvement in children's language development, particularly in those children new to learning English. Teachers and teaching assistants deliver sessions in a systematic and engaging way. As a result, children are improving in their ability to read and spell.
- Leaders use the indoor and outdoor areas well and offer a wide range of activities to engage the children. Additional adults are used well, and they support the children well through effective questioning.
- Work in books for children in the Nursery show that they make good progress from their various starting points but, for children in Reception, particularly the most able, this progress is not strong enough for them to exceed expectations.
- Leaders ensure that the early years welfare requirements are met.

## School details

Unique reference number	136660
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10088674

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Robson
Headteacher	Anna Thwaites
Telephone number	0123 435 2901
Website	<a href="http://www.queensparkacademy.co.uk">www.queensparkacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:qpa@qpa.uk.net">qpa@qpa.uk.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to a stand-alone academy in 2012.
- Queen's Park Academy is a larger-than-average primary school situated on a split site. Early years and pupils in Year 1 share the Marlborough Road site. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 are taught on the Chestnut Avenue site.
- There is a higher proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans than in other schools nationally.
- Most pupils are from Asian backgrounds; the largest groups are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. Most pupils have English as an additional language.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- There are more girls on roll than boys.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in most classes, and were joined by senior leaders for some of these observations.
- The responses of 31 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account.
- Inspectors looked through a range of books across most year groups and in all subjects.
- Inspector met with leaders, governors, parents and teachers. Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, observed them at playtimes and lunchtimes and listened to them read their books.
- Responses from 115 pupils and 39 staff who completed Ofsted's online questionnaires were considered.

## Inspection team

Nick Templeton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Shân Oswald	Ofsted Inspector
John Constable	Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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