

Little Parndon Primary School

Park Mead, Harlow, Essex CM20 1PU

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led by the headteacher, who is determined to give every pupil the best possible opportunities for success. The effective senior leadership team shares her ambition and vision for the school.
- The leadership team has brought about strong improvements in the quality of teaching and, consequently, good progress for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The local advisory board is committed to working with the school to ensure continuous improvement. It provides a good level of support and challenge.
- The curriculum is well designed and provides stimulating activities that engage pupils. It actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their understanding of British values.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They take responsibility for their learning and for jobs around the school. They take care of themselves, and others, very well.
- Parents are very positive about the school's work. They appreciate the safe and happy learning environment that the school provides for pupils.
- Teaching is not always challenging enough for the most able pupils. Consequently, these pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable.
- Adults are not always deployed effectively to ensure that they provide support to pupils who require it during lessons. As a result, where this is the case, progress for these pupils slows.
- Leaders, including the members of the local advisory board, thoroughly monitor all aspects of the school's work, but they do not effectively evaluate the information they have gathered in enough detail to impact fully on school improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management further by making more effective use of the monitoring information gathered to help sharpen improvement plans by identifying the specific actions needed to move the school to outstanding.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - ensuring that a higher proportion of the most able pupils are moved on quickly to work that is harder and more challenging, so that they always achieve the best they can
 - making sure that all adults are deployed appropriately, thereby ensuring that pupils make as much progress as they are capable of.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils. She identifies talented staff, provides appropriate training opportunities and supports them to become effective leaders.
- The leadership team, including middle leaders and subject leaders, has a positive impact on improving teaching and learning across the school. Leaders regularly check on how well pupils are learning in lessons. They use this information to provide appropriate teaching strategies where extra support is needed. This is resulting in pupils making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable, confident and enthusiastic. They have a clear and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning of their respective subjects. Consequently, leaders demonstrate that they are providing a broad and appropriate curriculum for all pupils. This is improving pupils' achievement in other subjects, aside from reading, writing and mathematics.
- The leadership team monitors the performance of teachers rigorously and effectively in order to improve the quality of teaching. Areas for professional development are accurately identified, training is provided, and success is celebrated. The impact of this can be seen in the improving outcomes for pupils.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides a wide range of creative opportunities for pupils. It is organised into relevant themes and visits that interest and excite the pupils. Woven into the themes are good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, where pupils are also taught about British values. For example, the 'enterprise project' gives opportunities for pupils to engage with the local community. Each class is given funding to make items to sell and the monies raised are donated to a local charity. These real-life experiences broaden pupils' understanding of modern Britain, and are recorded in the pupils' individual 'community values passport'.
- Leaders successfully use pupil premium funding to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils through the support of a learning mentor, and strategies to improve pupils' well-being and engagement in their learning, for example, by attending forest school to develop confidence and self-esteem through outdoor learning activities. As a result, disadvantaged pupils now make better progress than previously, and are catching up with other pupils nationally.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent well. Specialist teachers deliver high-quality physical education lessons to all classes. Additionally, pupils benefit from access to a wide variety of after-school sports clubs, competitive events and activities. As a result, more pupils are participating in a wider range of sports, which is improving their physical skills and stamina.
- Parents are universally positive about the school. They are pleased with the work of the staff and the safe environment that the school provides. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'This school is full of happiness and shares a real sense of family.'

- The school has benefited from the support of the trust, which provides resources, specialist teachers and training programmes for staff. The trust enables teachers to work closely with their secondary school colleagues. This has both improved standards and the transition for pupils moving from primary to secondary school.

Governance of the school

- The local advisory board works effectively and shares the school's vision. The governors' individual skills and experiences are used well to support the school to continue to improve. The local advisory board is knowledgeable about pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching. Governors have a clear understanding of performance management procedures to ensure that teachers' pay is linked to performance, and governors achieve this successfully.
- Governors visit the school regularly and participate in the wide range of monitoring activities that systematically take place in all areas of the school's work. As a result, governors have a clear and accurate overview of the school's performance. This information is used effectively to evaluate the school's strengths and development areas. However, governors do not yet evaluate the impact of the school's actions, so plans are not sufficiently focused to support the school to continue to make rapid improvement.
- The school's website does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about exam and assessment results and the special educational needs report. As a result, parents are not as informed as they should be.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There are well-developed child protection procedures in place that are rigorously followed and understood by all staff. Staff benefit from regular and detailed training that fully complies with the latest safeguarding guidance. Effective systems are in place to support early identification of, and rapid response to concerns. Staff work diligently with families, as well as other agencies in social care and in the community, to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Leaders have ensured that there is appropriate support for vulnerable pupils and their families. The staff who support these pupils are particularly effective. This is because they know the pupils and their families well. They offer good support for pupils' well-being and encourage regular and prompt attendance at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The high expectations of the leadership team have resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment across the school. These raised expectations are confirmed by the work in books, visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and the school's own regular checks on the quality of teaching.

- The school's revised curriculum, with its many opportunities for exciting and interesting learning activities, meets the needs of pupils and supports them in making good progress across all subjects. Weaker teaching has been tackled effectively and this is resulting in improved pupils' outcomes.
- Teachers have developed very positive relationships with pupils based on a good knowledge of pupils' individual strengths and interests. Classrooms are calm and friendly places where pupils can be seen enjoying their learning experiences. Teachers often use effective questioning to make pupils think about their learning and explain their answers. Pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on what they have learned. For example, 'bubble time' gives pupils time to make improvements and respond to challenges provided by their teachers. Teachers plan and deliver relevant activities that engage pupils well and pupils make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Reading has a high profile in the school and is taught well. Teachers' strong phonic knowledge is used to plan interesting activities for younger pupils. As a result, they quickly learn to use the letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words. New topics of work based around different books have been introduced across the school to encourage pupils to enjoy reading for pleasure, and to improve their reading skills. This is already making a positive difference. Pupils were able to speak at length about their reading books. One pupil enthusiastically told an inspector, 'I could read 50 million books!' This demonstrates the typical love of reading that permeates throughout the school.
- Pupils' achievements in writing are improving over time. Evidence in pupils' books shows that the teaching of writing effectively incorporates spelling, grammatical and punctuation skills. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to write extended pieces of writing across the curriculum to improve their writing skills.
- The quality of mathematics teaching is good. Pupils are making greater progress as teachers rigorously check on pupils' understanding and set them appropriate next steps for learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop their reasoning skills by solving increasingly complex mathematical problems.
- Teaching assistants plan closely with teachers and provide valuable support to pupils who have specific learning needs. As a result of this, teaching assistants contribute effectively to the increasing progress that individual pupils make. However, teachers do not always effectively deploy teaching assistants so that they are able to intervene when other pupils, aside from those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, require support to help them make quicker progress. As a result, some pupils wait too long for help and pupils' progress slows.
- Teachers' planning is good and work is set that is matched to pupils' needs. In the majority of lessons, the most able pupils are set work that is more challenging. However, at times it is not sufficiently demanding and teachers do not provide extension activities or move them on to the next task quickly. Consequently, the progress of the most able pupils is not as rapid as it should be.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- In all year groups, exceptionally well-planned work on developing speaking and language skills ensures that pupils are confident speakers by the time they reach Year 6. As a result, pupils are able to communicate ideas and opinions articulately, while being respectful to others.
- In all year groups, pupils are encouraged to be active members of the school community by taking on a wide range of responsibilities, for example, being special classroom helpers in Reception, friendship buddies in Year 5 and play leaders in Year 6. Additional roles promote learning for pupils, such as the school council awarding stickers to pupils who behave well, and actively role modelling good manners at breaktimes.
- Pupils take great pride in their work. They are highly motivated learners who show great resilience, even when they find their work challenging. As one pupil said, 'We have good teachers who help us get things right.'
- Pupils are very keen to come to school because the learning experiences their teachers plan for them are relevant and engaging. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 wear their special uniform with pride. They are proud of their school and the part they play in its ongoing success.
- Through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education, pupils learn to stay safe in a range of situations. Pupils told an inspector that they feel safe at school, and know how to stay safe online when using a computer.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is very well developed. They have access to an extensive programme of opportunities to try new experiences, such as supporting the local food bank, tasting foods from a range of cultures and visiting a mosque. This prepares them very well for life in modern Britain.
- The overwhelming majority of staff, and parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey and contributed towards the free-text service during the inspection, agreed that pupils are safe and well cared for at this school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and support them well in achieving good standards.
- Pupils' behaviour is positive in lessons. They work hard and listen well to their teachers. On occasions, when pupils are given work that is not sufficiently challenging, a small minority of pupils engage in low-level disruptive behaviour.

- Behaviour around the school during social times is good. Pupils play cooperatively, sharing and taking turns. Pupils told an inspector that occasionally a few of the older boys play football too boisterously. Pupils are well supervised at break- and lunchtime and relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Lunchtimes in the hall are calm and orderly, though can be rather noisy at times.
- Pupils told an inspector that there is very little bullying in the school. If bullying does happen, then pupils are confident that the teachers will sort it out quickly.
- Attendance overall is broadly in line with the national average. The school promotes the importance of good attendance so that no learning time is lost. The school is proactive in working with parents where pupils' attendance is causing concern.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Historically, pupils have not achieved as well as they could. However, improvements in the quality of teaching mean that current pupils are making good, and sometimes better than expected progress from their starting points. This is confirmed by the quality of work in pupils' books, which is often of a high standard, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Children enter the early years with skills that are much lower than is typical for their age. Through accurate assessment, leaders quickly identify the children's needs and develop appropriate learning experiences for them. Consequently, children make good progress from their starting points. The number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is increasing over time, and in 2016 was above the national average.
- The number of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1 is increasing, and in 2016 was close to the national average. This is as a result of phonics being taught more systematically and pupils being able to use their phonic skills accurately when reading books.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average in writing and mathematics, and at the end of key stage 2, attainment was below the national average in reading and mathematics. However, current pupils across the school are now making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The current cohorts in Year 2 and Year 6 are achieving well and school analysis shows that these pupils are on track to attain at least in line with the national average in all subjects by the end of the academic year. As a result, pupils are well equipped with the academic skills to be fully ready for the next stages of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are well supported and now make good progress from their starting points. This is because the school has effectively used pupil premium funding to provide additional learning and well-being support that ensure that all disadvantaged pupils are academically and emotionally ready to learn. Additionally, the most able disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and consequently more are achieving the higher standard.

- Expectations of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are high. The school identifies and assesses pupils' needs accurately and ensures that the support provided improves their learning. As a result, these pupils are currently making good progress from their individual starting points.
- Improvements to teaching mean that the most able pupils are making better progress than in the past. This is because learning activities are providing some challenge to pupils, requiring them to apply their skills in different situations. However, this effective teaching is not taking place consistently. As a result, some of the most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable, and consequently not enough achieve the higher standard.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader and the teaching staff demonstrate an accurate understanding of the provision needed for the children. This ensures that learning opportunities are appropriate and secure children's progress in all areas. For example, the teaching staff recognise the limited speaking and listening skills of some children. Consequently, there is an emphasis on encouraging children to speak clearly and in complete sentences. Teachers and teaching assistants provide a language-rich environment, with many opportunities to recall events and talk to each other. The adults constantly model language skills for the children. As a result of this approach, every child was able to successfully take on a speaking role in the Christmas play and perform in front of their parents.
- Children have access to a wide range of learning activities that are interesting and therefore sustain their concentration. For example, a group of children were showing high levels of focus and perseverance when washing a toy car in the 'car wash' outside. Because of the skilful questioning of the teaching assistant, the car became Cinderella's carriage and the children excitedly talked about how they would decorate the carriage, and the journey the carriage would take.
- Staff work hard to engage with families. Parents are regularly invited into school to celebrate their child's progress. Parents are encouraged to complete 'wow sheets' to praise their child, or record their child's learning achievements at home.
- The children enjoy a safe indoor and outdoor environment with a variety of activities to support their progress in each of the learning areas. However, some of the equipment is in poor condition and not always stored tidily. This means that children cannot access the resources they need quickly.
- Assessment is accurate and thorough so that the needs of all the children are met in a timely manner. This ensures that children make good progress from their starting points. Consequently, the children are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	140019
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10023346

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	437
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Zoey Maertens-Colyer
Headteacher	Sophie Laing
Telephone number	01279 425600
Website	www.littleparndon.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@littleparndon.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Little Parndon Primary School converted to an academy in April 2014. The academy sponsor is the Burnt Mill Academy Trust.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about exam and assessment results, and the SEN report.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended a whole-school assembly. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the senior leadership team.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, specialist teachers, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the trust SEN lead, the early years leader, newly qualified teachers and trainee teachers, the trust's director of sport, the trust's educational welfare officer, two governors (including the chair of the local advisory board), and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break- and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also attended the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Years 1 and 5 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents including: assessment information; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the nine parent texts and 47 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire. They also spoke to some parents before school at the beginning of the inspection. Additionally, inspectors looked at the 34 views expressed by members of staff in response to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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