

Putteridge Primary School

Putteridge Road, Luton, LU2 8HJ

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has a strong, highly effective and inspirational headteacher who is ably supported by senior leaders and an equally committed governing body. Collectively, they have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils, both of which are now good.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their good attendance and enthusiastic attitudes to learning significantly enhance their rapidly improving and now good, progress.
- Pupils say that they feel extremely safe at all times because of the hard work of all the adults in school to keep them safe.
- Leaders have introduced an exciting curriculum. It is broad and balanced and strongly supports pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and their enjoyment of lessons.
- Teaching is now good and sometimes outstanding. Standards continue to rise as all pupils, especially the most able, are fully challenged by teachers' consistently good questioning and guidance.
- Teachers' assessments are used carefully to identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind and support programmes are put in place to move their learning on. As a result, pupils' achievement is good.
- Across the school, pupils are working at levels in reading, writing and mathematics that are higher than those expected for their age. In relation to their starting points, the pupils' skills reflect good progress over time.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children in the Reception class get off to a good start and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive well-organised provision and skilled support. Their learning needs are well met; consequently, they too make good progress.
- Governors keep themselves well-informed about pupils' progress and rigorously hold the school to account for the standards achieved.
- High staff morale and close links with parents further support the strong drive for continued improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The excellent practice that exists in the school is not shared enough to improve further the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- Teachers' expectations for what pupils should achieve are not always high enough in every year group.
- Pupils' spelling is not as good as it could be and this sometimes hinders the progress some pupils make in writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors looked at pupils’ learning in 32 lessons. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher accompanied inspectors during some visits to lessons. Inspectors attended two assemblies.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils to ascertain their views of school and their learning. Inspectors also scrutinised the work in pupils’ books.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. They observed the teaching of reading skills and talked with pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school’s analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve.
- Records of checks on the quality of teaching were examined, along with records of visits to the school made by the local authority and external consultants.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school staff and groups of pupils. Individual pupils were spoken to in lessons and around the school. A meeting took place with the school adviser from the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with a member of the wider leadership team who was leading a residential trip for Year 6 pupils.
- The inspectors talked with pupils as they played at break times and visited the dining hall at lunchtime. They observed pupils’ behaviour as they moved around school.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed in 104 online responses from Parent View and informal meetings with parents at the school during the inspection.
- Inspectors also took account of the results of 63 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Helen Booth	Additional Inspector
John Viner	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Bell-Cook	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A large majority of pupils attending the school are of White British heritage. A small minority are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups; some are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding the school receives to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Children in the early years attend the school's Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school was formed by the merger of an infant and a junior school in 2011. A new headteacher started work at the school in September 2012.
- The school is used by the local authority to support other local schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding so that pupils make rapid progress by:
 - using the outstanding teaching in the school as a model of best practice
 - ensuring that high expectations of what pupils can achieve are adopted consistently in every year group
 - strengthening the emphasis on enabling pupils to spell words accurately as they progress through the school, so that pupils' writing becomes more accurate.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's considerable expertise and decisive action taken since the last inspection have ensured very effective and rapid improvement. With the experienced deputy headteacher, the well-developed school leadership team, and equally effective and determined governing body, the headteacher has established an uncompromising and successful focus on securing good and rapidly improving teaching. Swift and highly effective action has been taken to bring about strong improvements in all areas. The merger of the two schools has been successful and staff work together harmoniously to improve teaching and to raise standards.
- Leaders at all levels know the school extremely well and provide excellent leadership and management. They demonstrate a passion and commitment for further improvement and are far from complacent, continually striving to make the school the very best it can be. There is a strong focus within the school on using evidence-based research to guide decisions on which interventions and initiatives will work best. An example of this is the investment made to improve the teaching of mathematics which has made mathematics more interesting and engaging.
- Senior leaders check teachers' performance regularly and they are quick to provide help where it is needed to improve teaching. They provide very good support and training for all their staff. Teachers are very clear about the quality of teaching required and the rates of progress set for pupils.
- There are extremely effective systems for checking on pupils' progress and, as a result, any pupil who is at risk of falling behind is quickly identified and appropriate support provided so that they can catch up. This information is used to set challenging targets for teachers and to advise governors about teachers' pay awards. While these actions have improved teaching and are now rapidly improving pupils' progress, senior leaders rightly recognise that there is scope to share, throughout the school, the best examples of teaching in order to improve teaching and pupils' learning further.
- The school uses extra funding for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to provide well-planned and focused individualised programmes in basic skills. Opportunities for pupils to develop socially also help them to enjoy their learning and make good relationships with adults and pupils alike. Pupils are not discriminated against and enjoy equal opportunities to access all that the school offers alongside all other pupils. As a result, these pupils demonstrate increased confidence, motivation and good attendance.
- Year group leaders have introduced exciting curriculum themes. These provide a very positive climate in which pupils learn and in which exemplary behaviour and eagerness flourish. Pupils take on many responsibilities at school, such as being members of the school council, prefects, and play and sports leaders. This, together with an impressive range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs and activities, ensure that pupils develop an excellent understanding of traditional British values and become very well-rounded citizens who are more than ready for the next stage in their education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school.
- The primary school sport funding is also used very effectively. As a result, the school is able to offer a wider range of sports including indoor athletics, tennis and multi-sports clubs. Pupils are able to take part in a greater number of sporting competitions and festivals. Effective professional development has been provided for teachers and the quality of teaching in physical education lessons has improved as a result.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school since the previous inspection, for example through guidance for governors. The local authority has confidence in the senior leaders' ability to maintain the school's good performance and has used their expertise to support other local schools.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are regularly reviewed by governors and leaders, and fulfil all requirements. All staff and governors strictly adhere to these well-developed systems, ensuring that pupils are safe at all times whether in school or out of school on visits or trips. Leaders make sure that all staff are vigilant in looking for any signs of extremist views or behaviour and are familiar with the dangers of radicalisation. Parents fully support the view that pupils are safe and well cared for. Several

parents mentioned the significant improvement they have seen in the school since the previous inspection.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have improved their procedures since the previous inspection and have strongly supported the headteacher in driving the school forward. Governors bring a wide range of experience and skills which they use to excellent effect in supporting and challenging the school.
- Governors have re-structured the way they share and undertake their responsibilities with specific teachers and subjects. Consequently, they know the school extremely well; they have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and where it needs to improve further. They are particularly well informed about pupils' achievement and progress, and how the school's academic performance is measured against the national picture. They use this information, together with their knowledge of the Teachers' Standards, to help manage teachers' performance and ensure there are clear links between performance and salary increases.
- Governors oversee the spending of the pupil premium and sport funding well. They are aware of the positive impacts these funds are having on pupils' achievement and physical well-being. Governors ensure that all their statutory obligations are fully met, including ensuring that the school's website provides all the required information for parents.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Well-established and consistent routines, together with high expectations from all staff, result in excellent behaviour during break times, assemblies and when pupils move around the school. Pupils show respect and courtesy towards each other and to adults in the nurturing, caring and supportive atmosphere across the school.
- Pupils are very happy and display really positive attitudes to their learning, which ensure that lessons can proceed without interruptions. This enjoyment of the rich variety of activities and tasks provided has significantly impacted in quickening their progress. Pupils welcome the way teachers fully involve them in learning and they eagerly share ideas and supportively edit each other's work.
- Pupils willingly take on roles of responsibility, for example, discussing how to improve the school as members of the school council. They raise money for charities and have recently focused on collections for local food banks. Pupils show very caring attitudes and politeness towards each other, especially on the playground where they enjoy being play leaders and get on very well together. Adult leaders keep careful records of pupils 'falling out', but these incidents are very few and far between.
- Serious incidents of challenging behaviour or bullying are extremely rare. Pupils are very aware of the different types of bullying and know that name-calling and the use of derogatory language is forbidden. They say, 'There is no bullying at our school.' If it did happen, they are confident that it would be dealt with immediately.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children are very happy at school. This is reflected in the pupils' above average attendance, which also reflects the school's supportive partnership with parents. One parent spoke for many, commenting: 'The school is a happy, safe and disciplined environment, with caring and highly skilled staff. My children are developing beyond my expectations; progress is impressive.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school and when on trips or visits. They acknowledge and appreciate the work of adults in the school to keep them safe. Parents agree that the school is a safe and secure environment.
- Pupils show a well-developed understanding of how to recognise safe or potentially unsafe situations, and how to deal with them and stay safe. They know about the different forms that bullying might take and are very knowledgeable, for example, about cyber bullying and e-safety rules, which help them to use computers safely.

- School systems for vetting staff and reporting concerns are fully in place. Pupils know they can talk to an adult about anything that is worrying them and they know they will be listened to.
- Attendance is above average and has improved as a result of the school's thorough systems for checking on, and following up, any absences. Pupils are eager to come to school and arrive punctually.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked closely and supportively with teachers to help them to improve their practice. All staff have a determination to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Expectations are high and relationships with pupils are strong. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and keen to succeed. Teachers are skilled in preparing activities that interest and engage pupils, using a range of appropriate resources, and at developing pupils' skills and understanding systematically. Consequently, pupils are making good progress.
- Teachers explain tasks clearly. Pupils' excellent behaviour means that they pay attention and listen carefully. They know and understand what they are expected to learn and are keen and eager to start work without delay. Classroom walls and equipment are consistently used throughout the school, with ideas and information to support increasingly high quality learning.
- Teachers develop speaking and listening abilities very well. They question pupils carefully to make sure that they have understood what is being taught. This also helps them to make accurate assessments of pupils' attainment.
- Staff encourage pupils to offer and share their ideas, to explain their thinking and they value pupils' responses. These significantly advance their learning and progress. For example, during a history lesson on the Mayan Civilisation in Year 6, pupils' eager and well-considered responses to the teacher's searching questions extended their understanding of how our system of constitutional monarchy compares to that of hierarchical government. This provided a good opportunity to learn the value of democracy.
- The use of additional adults and strong teamwork are key features of teaching in the school. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to make sure that activities are carefully explained to the pupils and challenge them at the right level to enhance their learning. As a result, pupils across the range of ability learn well.
- Teachers emphasise basic literacy and numeracy skills well and demonstrate good subject knowledge. Good teaching and pupils' learning in mathematics are evident in pupils' well-presented work and their good knowledge of number facts. Evidence of good prior learning and competent mental skills were observed when pupils were learning to solve mathematical problems.
- The teaching of phonics, (the sounds that letters represent) reading and writing is good. Pupils read and enjoy books every day. They strengthen and use their skills productively when using books and computers for research and to write in subjects across the curriculum. However, the quality of pupils' writing is sometimes hampered by weaknesses in spelling. This is because accurate spelling is not emphasised strongly enough in some classes.
- Work is marked thoroughly by teachers who often link their comments to pupils' targets and make sure that pupils know what to do next to improve their work. Pupils are given time to respond and correct errors, and this supports their good progress.
- In the early years, children work very hard because teachers and other adults focus tightly on improving their key literacy and mathematical skills. Adults quickly adjust what they are doing when children require extra support or when their learning needs to be extended.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported very effectively in lessons to achieve as well as they can from their starting points. They are given work that systematically builds on their understanding of what they have been taught previously.

- Expectations are high in most classes. In some lessons, pupils make outstanding progress because teachers find ways to engage pupils highly, whatever subject is being taught. Nevertheless, this is not a feature in all classes because work is not always challenging enough. Opportunities are sometimes overlooked to demand higher standards.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Strong leadership and significantly improved teaching have accelerated pupils' progress. Previous gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are being successfully closed so that pupils are making up for lost time caused by weaker teaching in the past. Consequently, the progress of pupils from their individual starting points is good overall. Although in 2014 attainment was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, this represented good achievement by these pupils from their starting points under the current leadership.
- Pupils of all abilities are making good progress and there has been a steady rise in attainment because teachers' raised expectations of pupils' achievement, especially over the past two years, have resulted in more consistent and higher levels of challenge being presented to the pupils than in previous times. School information for Year 6 this year shows an even greater percentage of pupils working at a level higher than that expected in all three subjects. A substantial number of pupils in all classes now show levels of skill that are higher than those normally expected for their age.
- Pupils enter Year 1 from Reception with increasingly good levels of development. Results in the phonics (the sound letters make) screening check at the end of Year 1 are above average and standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- A considerable number of the most-able pupils are making outstanding progress, ably working at a level much higher than is expected in mathematics, as well as reaching a much higher level in reading and writing.
- Good provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that they make the same good progress as all other pupils. They have their needs identified and tackled at an early stage and are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants, who plan relevant activities effectively. The assistant headteacher for inclusion works closely with staff to make sure that these pupils are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential. This illustrates well the school's positive commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Standards in mathematics are improving well, with pupils making good progress stimulated by the wide variety of activities provided for them. The school places a strong and successful emphasis on reading. Inspection discussions with pupils show that they enjoy reading, respect books and have good strategies to tackle new words. Pupils in all classes are now accelerating their progress in response to increased opportunities to read and write.
- Although spelling remains a weakness for some pupils, standards in writing have improved following a period when it has been a focus of school improvement. Pupils in all classes show much improved confidence and present their work very neatly. They also demonstrate rapidly improving skills in writing expressively and across a range of subjects.
- Children in the early years make good progress in acquiring and using key skills because teaching is well planned. Teachers intervene thoughtfully to help them to make good gains in learning when they are undertaking tasks.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was a term behind other pupils in the school in mathematics, three terms behind in reading and two terms behind in writing. Compared with other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils matched others nationally in mathematics and writing but they were a term behind in reading.
- The school's evidence shows that, in relation to their differing starting points, disadvantaged pupils now

make good progress throughout the school. This is because they had their various needs addressed at an earlier stage this year and this has substantially quickened their progress. This reflects improvements in pupils' attainment throughout the school because of the successful work of staff to improve the quality of pupils' writing and use of mathematical skills.

The early years provision is good

- Children's starting points are largely below those typical for their age, particularly in speech and language, reading and writing. Children of all abilities make good progress overall, and progress is particularly rapid in their personal, social and emotional development. The most-able children make rapid gains in key skills such as phonics and understanding of number. By the end of the Reception Year, most children have reached a good level of development across the areas of learning and are ready for Year 1.
- Children settle quickly into the early years because of the well-established routines and inviting environment. The provision is well resourced and allows learning in all the required areas. Children learn well through self-chosen play activities and those led by teachers because activities are well planned to build on what the children were taught previously. A good range of interesting equipment supports play activities in the classroom and the outdoor area. Resources are chosen to relate to current topics. Staff skilfully listen to and question children as they play to assess and support their learning.
- Children in the Reception class behave extremely well. They are self-confident, care for each other and play and work co-operatively. They listen attentively when the teacher is explaining their work to them. They answer questions and talk confidently in teacher-led groups. They show pride in their work.
- Teaching is engaging and captures the children's interests. This was evident in a lesson, where children were helped to make rapid gains in their learning as they wrote sentences about Mr. Happy. The teacher catered well for children's differing interests and used a varied range of approaches to maintain their concentration. When one child read out what he had written, another child full of admiration said, 'It is awesome.'
- Adults regularly track children's progress to good effect and assessment checks now accurately reflect how well children are doing. As across the school, staff work towards improving children's achievement further by, for example, focusing on how accurately children's phonics skills are being developed. This is leading to improved outcomes for children in their reading. School evidence shows current Reception children are increasingly successful in basic writing and mathematics skills.
- Leadership in the early years setting is good. Facilities, both in and out of doors, are well maintained and safeguarding arrangements are implemented highly effectively to keep pupils very safe. Staff sustain a happy, purposeful atmosphere where children grow in self-confidence and develop a love of learning together. Parents agree that their children are extremely safe when in the early years.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109564
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	462079

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	613
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Hubbocks
Headteacher	Euan Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	27 Jun 2013
Telephone number	0158 2728262
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	admin@putteridgeprimaryschool.org.uk

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