

Central Primary School

Derby Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 2LX

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

- Parents and pupils are very positive about the school. Pupils are eager to learn. They talk enthusiastically about their work.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work well together. With the effective support of governors, they are determined to make the school even better. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of their leadership.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. As a result, pupils make good progress from their varied starting points.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good.
- Staff know their pupils' personal and emotional needs very well. They use this knowledge very effectively to improve pupils' confidence and well-being. Staff meet the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language very well.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Staff implement the school's policies well to ensure pupils' safety at all times.
- The behaviour of pupils and their personal development are outstanding. Pupils learn, from a young age, about tolerance and respect. They understand the wider community in which they live.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. The many different cultural backgrounds of pupils and the rich curriculum help them to become caring and active citizens.
- Children in the early years learn well in a safe environment. Links with families are very strong. The provision is effectively led. Teaching is good although the outdoor areas are not used well enough to consolidate children's skills.
- Senior leaders are successfully improving pupils' outcomes in some areas but not all. The quality of teaching is not consistently effective in science and topic work.
- Subject leaders are highly committed and knowledgeable. However, their monitoring has had insufficient impact on improving standards across all subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in science and topic work by:
 - providing more opportunities for scientific investigations
 - ensuring that the quality of pupils' work is consistently high across subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of all subject leaders so that:
 - they evaluate the quality of teaching in their subjects more accurately
 - they ensure that the school's assessment and marking policy is applied well to improve outcomes further.
- Make better use of outdoor areas to accelerate children's learning in the early years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has been instrumental in consolidating aspects of the school's work since its previous inspection. He has successfully managed the significant growth of the school and created a team of highly committed professionals who are very positive about working at Central Primary School. Teaching is good. Provision and outcomes in the early years are good. Attendance has risen, and now matches the national average. Achievement and results in the national tests are much improved. Links with families are strong.
- The headteacher is passionate about his own continued learning and encourages teachers to trust their professional knowledge when assessing pupils' progress. This is successful in English and mathematics. He is an excellent role model for staff, provides effective training where it is required and is dedicated to ensuring that the school serves its local community well.
- Parents say that they have seen the school improve over the past few years. Many parents who sent comments to the lead inspector wrote that the school was 'fantastic'. Parents believe, and inspectors agree, that staff do their very best to enable their children to learn in a safe and supportive environment. The parents of pupils who have additional emotional or learning needs are particularly complimentary about the school.
- Senior leaders are improving learning and assessment in most subjects. They are rightly targeting their efforts towards improving key aspects of provision, such as outcomes in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. In these subjects, they check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in great detail.
- The work to improve standards in science and topic work is underdeveloped. Subject leaders are passionate about their subjects and they know what they need to do. However, their effectiveness in ensuring that achievement in all areas matches that of the best is not yet demonstrated. Some work of a lower than expected level is unchallenged.
- The systems in place to manage the performance of staff and plan further training are rigorous. The deputy headteacher supports the headteacher effectively. Together, they ensure that good-quality teaching is maintained, especially when staff changes are necessary. Nonetheless, their evaluation of the overall quality of teaching, across all years and subjects, is overoptimistic. In some areas, teaching is not as effective as it could be.
- The rich curriculum motivates pupils, who told inspectors that learning was enjoyable and interesting. Subjects, such as modern foreign languages and the creative arts, help pupils develop their speaking skills and confidence. The emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics ensures that pupils, by the end of Year 6, have a good understanding of the key skills they need to succeed when they move to their secondary schools.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes to pupils' outstanding behaviour and personal development. Pupils develop a global perspective on social,

moral and cultural issues because of the good range of extra-curricular activities which are available to them.

- From a very young age in the early years, children learn and play with children who are at the early stages of learning English. Older pupils have many opportunities to reflect on rights, responsibilities and the principles behind fundamental British values. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for their future lives in Britain.
- Leaders and governors use the additional funding for sports and physical education effectively. They ensure that pupils benefit from expert coaching in a range of team sports. A particular focus is placed on improving specific skills, such as dance, and increasing pupils' participation in sports activities. The urban location of the school and the limited outdoor space make hosting competitive sports difficult. However, the leader for physical education is investigating all avenues, including using her own personal contacts, to ensure that pupils do not continue to miss out.
- The pupil premium funding for the small number of pupils who are disadvantaged is used effectively to support their learning. As a result, there is little difference between the achievement of this group of pupils and others both in the school and nationally. Senior leaders and governors monitor carefully the use of resources. The additional funding and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including pupils who attend the two speech and language needs bases, are making a real difference to their achievement.
- The school is proactive in sharing its expertise with other schools and in meeting the needs of the local community. Initiatives include offering tuition to parents who have limited fluency in English, training teachers new to the profession and helping schools to improve their provision for pupils who have additional needs.

Governance of the school

- Governors question the school's leaders effectively. They receive and understand a wide range of information about pupils' outcomes and welfare. They ensure that funding is spent wisely, and that teachers' pay progression depends on how effective they are in helping pupils make good progress.
- Governors check the work of the school through frequent visits. These are usually linked to the priorities of the school development plan and to key areas of the school's work such as safeguarding. These frequent checks, alongside meetings of the more formal work of the governing body, provide a strong, effective structure which governors use to hold leaders closely to account.
- Governors ensure that communications with parents are positive. They investigate any concerns promptly and, when necessary, refine the school's procedures further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The staff's understanding of the school's procedures and policies ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils say that they feel safe when they are at school. Parents and pupils know that any concerns they have will be addressed promptly.

- All staff have had relevant training. Senior leaders are approachable and highly visible around the school. They are well aware of the specific risks that children might encounter in their local community, such as the impact of overcrowding and the risks of children going missing from school after long stays abroad.
- Leaders are relentless in contacting relevant agencies and services to ensure that pupils are safe. They do not shy away from challenging attitudes seen as normal in other cultures, such as physically chastising children. The family support worker ensures that families in need of intensive support are helped at times of crisis.
- Governors give a high priority to ensuring that arrangements for safeguarding and pupils' welfare are kept under continuous review. The policy and associated procedures have regard to the latest statutory guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Several parents wrote that the teachers were really dedicated and were always working hard for the benefit of all pupils. Inspectors agreed with these positive views. Staff are good role models for pupils. They are open to new ideas and are willing to review the quality of their teaching to improve pupils' outcomes further. The effective teaching in the early years enables children to settle quickly in their new school.
- Teaching in English and mathematics is good. Pupils progress well from their starting points. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils who have additional needs. Staff are aware of pupils' specific targets and parents are kept well informed of their progress. The support that staff provide to pupils who are new to the school and who do not speak English fluently is particularly effective.
- Teachers organise their classrooms carefully so that resources support pupils well in their learning. Classrooms are packed with examples of words that pupils can use to strengthen the quality of their writing. Others have number lines and counting squares available so that pupils can get quick reminders of things they have learned in numeracy. In the early years, staff organise the resources well in the classrooms but the outdoor areas are not used sufficiently well for children to practise their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach all aspects of the curriculum with confidence. Pupils benefit from the expert input of specialist staff such as in dance, music and modern foreign languages. Teachers use probing questions to check pupils' understanding. They use specific technical vocabulary to deepen pupils' understanding, for example explaining about 'dynamics' in dance and an 'orientation' paragraph when working on journalistic styles of writing. In English and mathematics, staff usually spot misconceptions quickly and provide clear explanations to ensure that work is accurate, for example in mathematics where some pupils were measuring incorrectly.
- Leaders are aware of the need to improve the teaching of phonics further. Phonics is taught from the early years onwards and staff are carefully checking that their teaching is having a more positive impact on pupils' outcomes. The youngest children are becoming more proficient in applying their knowledge to read and write unfamiliar words. The time allocated to the teaching of phonics is sufficient and activities during the day support this important area of work.

- The positive relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils are willing to have a go. Pupils who met the inspectors said that they liked their teachers because they help them to do well. Pupils take reading books home regularly and the school is finding many ways of developing pupils' love of reading. Parents are encouraged to hear their children read and pupils who do not have the opportunity to read at home are identified and given priority to read with an adult at school.
- The school is in the process of reviewing its marking and assessment procedures. Leaders want to develop a policy that is realistic and reduces the burden on staff. In English and mathematics, teachers do not accept substandard work and expectations are usually matched to the needs and abilities of pupils.
- In science and topic work, expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Inspectors found that some work is too easy, such as worksheets in science that limit pupils' writing and do not provide opportunities for genuine scientific investigations. Overall, staff do not insist enough on good handwriting and presentation. As a result, work lacks quality. Some misconceptions are not rectified, leaving pupils with inaccurate knowledge, such as in the geographical understanding of the regions of England.
- The large majority of parents praise the staff for the way they manage behaviour in class. During this inspection, staff did not have to redirect any off-task behaviour because attitudes to learning, in the main, were excellent and learning proceeded without interruption. Parents receive regular information about their children's progress through the daily contact with families, frequent parents' meetings and the comprehensive end-of-year reports.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding because pupils love 'learning new things'. The Year 6 pupils, in particular, enjoy the challenges they face. They feel well prepared for secondary education and are realistically ambitious for their future careers.
- Pupils willingly explained their work to inspectors. They are becoming more self-assured as they move through the school. Pupils said that they want to work hard to succeed. Year 6 pupils proudly lead the family circle sessions on a range of topics such as the importance of accepting different points of views, beliefs and traditions. One pupil said that the best thing about the school was its diversity.
- Pupils respond very well in class and are proud of their work. They try their best and persevere. The presentation of work and pupils' handwriting are not always as good as they should be across subjects simply because staff are not consistently demanding the very best from them. When they do, pupils respond very positively.
- Pupils are happy because they feel safe and are very well cared for. They said that staff are always willing to help them should they be worried about something. Pupils understand how to stay safe, including when using social media and the internet.
- The personal, social, health and economic education programme helps pupils to

understand issues such as how to maintain positive relationships and respect the views of others. Pupils know about democracy and the rule of law. Visits to the House of Parliament and other places of interest are used well to promote fundamental British values. The oldest pupils like to volunteer for jobs and help younger children. Pupils who arrive mid-year are made to feel welcomed and, as a result, they settle quickly in their new school.

- Displays around the school and work in books show pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different faiths and take part in high-profile events with other schools. Participation in the Shakespeare Schools Festival, music events and other important celebrations makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils are very active. Many love physical education, dance and sports. The staggered morning and lunch breaks mean that, despite the tight space, pupils are able to run around safely in the school playground. The 'healthy wealthy' motto and the health and fitness week further develop pupils' knowledge of health matters.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils listen attentively to adults and to each other. The school is a calm and orderly environment. Behaviour in lessons is very good. The way pupils lined up sensibly on the school's photograph day was exemplary.
- Children have only spent just over a month in the Nursery and Reception class. They already know and follow the school's routines. They respond well to instructions. Older pupils were observed behaving very safely on the playground and around the school.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying. They said that they have no hesitation in telling an adult if they need help. A few parents are worried about behaviour and bullying. Records show that incidents are rare and dealt with very well.
- Pupils want to attend school. Attendance has improved over time and is now in line with the national average. Exclusions are extremely rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for current pupils are good, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress is good overall although it is more rapid in key stage 2 than in key stage 1. Senior leaders and governors have accurately identified areas for further improvement, such as improving outcomes in reading and phonics. Their actions are effective and are beginning to have a positive impact.
- In 2016 less than half of children reached a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. This improved significantly in 2017 and the majority of children reached the level expected for their age. Current children are progressing well in the early years from low starting points. Children in Reception are making good progress. Their improving outcomes ensure that they will be well prepared for the key stage 1 curriculum.
- A specific project is in place to accelerate progress in phonics because the proportion

of pupils meeting the expected standard, although improving, is still below average. In 2017, results in reading, writing and mathematics were below average by the end of Year 2. Results are affected by mobility in some years. Quite a number of pupils join the school and the speech and language bases at any time during the school year.

- The 2017 results at key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics combined were above average. This shows that pupils do better the longer they are at the school. Outcomes in writing and grammar were particularly strong in 2017, demonstrating the effectiveness of the actions taken following the previous inspection. Current pupils make rapid progress in Year 6.
- Improving achievement in reading is a key priority. The school uses a wide range of strategies to develop pupils' love of reading. Pupils who read to the inspectors were competent. They read aloud with intonation and could explain what they had read. Over time, pupils are successfully developing their skills of inference and deduction. By the end of Year 6 they are successful readers.
- The large majority of pupils do well in subjects other than English and mathematics and progress is mostly good. Work in books and displays around the school shows that pupils do well in computing, creative arts, French, Polish and physical education. In science and topic work, pupils underachieve when the tasks are not demanding enough and where staff's expectations, such as in the accuracy in pupils' work and the quality of handwriting, are too low.
- There is little difference in the rate of progress of different groups of pupils. Some pupils arrive at the school with a very limited knowledge of English but quickly catch up in response to the close attention that teachers pay to their welfare and learning needs
- The most able pupils do well in English and mathematics but, in science and topic work, the standards they reach are not high enough. Evidence of accelerated progress, leading to good or outstanding outcomes, is limited in these subjects.
- With relatively few disadvantaged pupils in each year group, performance information fluctuates year on year. The small number of pupils currently at the school progress as well as their classmates. Leaders are successful in reducing the difference between their outcomes and those of other pupils in the school and nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points. The special provision in the speech and language bases is organised well and pupils make rapid progress in their communication and emotional needs. Parents praise staff for the support they give. Gaps in learning are quickly identified and individual targets set as a result.

Early years provision

Good

- Half of the children join Reception from the school's own Nursery and almost all have had prior pre-school learning experiences in a range of early years settings. Children's stage of development is below that typical for children of that age, although the current cohort includes a number of children who are increasingly articulate and confident.
- Children learn well and make good progress from their varied starting points. The proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has

increased year on year from well below to slightly below average in 2017. The school is participating in a 'readiness for school' programme, led by the Home Start charity, and the large majority of children are increasingly well prepared for Year 1.

- Parents are pleased about the provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. The learning records and work kept electronically are shared with families. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning.
- Children behave well. They were observed having a lot of fun. Their personal and social development improves rapidly as they learn to share toys and play together sensibly. They quickly learn about the school's routines. Their participation in the many whole-school events teaches them how to behave in large groups.
- Teaching is good. Children discover new words and numbers from a range of activities in the classrooms. Indoor learning is planned well and is interesting. Pupils were proud of the poppies they were making for Remembrance Day and they could explain that they were 'for people who had died'. The outdoor areas, however, are not used enough to reinforce the topic in hand and apply literacy and numeracy skills in different contexts.
- Children who lack confidence in speaking are encouraged through adults' precise questioning and clarity in their use of language. This is especially beneficial to children who speak English as an additional language. However, some opportunities are missed to improve speaking when adults do not challenge children who merely point to ask for what they need or when single word answers are readily accepted when children could construct a fuller sentence.
- The leadership of the early years is effective. The leader works well with the staff who are determined to do their best for children. Together, they ensure that children are well cared for. All staff have had relevant training, including in paediatric first aid. Safeguarding is given a high priority.

School details

Unique reference number	117156
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10031456

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Haley
Headteacher	Dr John Mynott
Telephone number	01923 225129
Website	www.central.herts.sch.uk
Email address	head@central.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school has doubled in size since the previous inspection. It is now larger than an average. primary school. The early years consists of a nursery where children attend full time and two Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The number of pupils eligible for pupil premium is low.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school manages a specially resourced provision for pupils with specific speech and

language difficulties, referred to as the speech and language bases. Pupils travel some distance to attend this provision. Currently there are 14 pupils on roll in two bases, one for key stage 1 and one for key stage 2. All these pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- The school provides advice and support to other schools in the local area. It also coordinates training for newly qualified teachers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Senior leaders took part in joint observations with inspectors and attended all inspection team meetings.
- Inspectors scrutinised examples of pupils' work in a variety of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and topic work.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader and the coordinator for special educational needs. They also met leaders of subjects.
- The lead inspector met governors and spoke to two local authority representatives.
- The lead inspector considered responses to an inspection questionnaire submitted by 29 members of staff.
- Inspectors talked with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. The lead inspector took account of 41 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. The school's own survey of parents' views was also considered. An additional 28 comments from parents and one email were received.
- One inspector held a formal meeting with pupils. Inspectors met many pupils informally and listened to some of them read. Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at lunchtimes, breaktimes and when they were moving around the school. Pupils' behaviour was also observed in the classroom.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Marianick Ellender-Gelé, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Karen Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Edel Gillespie	Ofsted Inspector
Diane Hawkes	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Carter-Tufnell	Ofsted Inspector

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