

Park Gate Primary School

Northmore Road, Park Gate, Southampton, Hampshire SO31 6LX

Inspection dates

3–4 October 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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership is effective throughout the school. The newly appointed headteacher shows clear determination to build on the many strengths of the school. She is ably supported by other talented leaders and committed staff.
- Governors know the school well. They use a range of information to evaluate leaders' work, and provide them with appropriate challenge and support.
- Staff have high aspirations for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Additional funding is used well to tailor learning and support for these pupils. As a result, they make good progress.
- Teaching is effective throughout the school. Consequently, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are good throughout the school.
- The sport premium is used creatively to provide additional coaching, staff training and opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of sports.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well. The schools' values, 'The Park Gate Way', successfully encompass fundamental British values and ensure that pupils are ready for life in modern Britain.
- The early years setting is outstanding. Teaching takes into account children's individual needs and provides high-quality learning activities to extend their emerging reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children make rapid progress.
- Safeguarding throughout the school is effective. Robust systems are in place to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are respectful and polite, both towards staff and their peers. As a result, the school is harmonious and calm.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. However, not all learning is demanding enough. As a result, some pupils, particularly the most able, do not achieve the highest standards in a range of subjects.
- Leaders are rightly prioritising pupils' achievements in writing. Currently, there are few opportunities for pupils to write at length, and in a range of styles. This limits some pupils' progress in this subject.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and the library is used well. However, some most able readers are not effectively encouraged to choose suitably demanding books.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' achievements by ensuring that:
 - their writing skills are developed through opportunities to write at length and in a range of styles
 - the most able read a richer, more demanding range of literature
 - learning activities, across the curriculum, provide an appropriate level of challenge, particularly for the most able, so that they are stretched to reach the higher standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher has quickly and successfully evaluated the school's effectiveness. Senior leaders, including the talented, acting deputy headteacher, understand what the school does well and have put in place clear plans for additional improvement. Leaders are highly ambitious about improving pupils' outcomes further, and show clear determination to ensure that everyone achieves their best.
- Leaders promote the school's values, identified as 'The Park Gate Way', with rigour and enthusiasm. This provides all with an effective moral code to be both effective learners and good citizens, and pupils model the values well. Wisely, leaders have ensured that 'The Park Gate Way' includes fundamental British values. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain because everyone strives to work and play according to the aspirational ethos embedded across the school.
- Middle leaders support the headteacher well by ably managing their own areas of responsibility. For example, subject leaders carefully monitor the effectiveness of the school's curriculum and adapt teaching to ensure that it sparks pupils' interests. Middle leaders have strong subject knowledge which they use to ensure that pupils enjoy learning and make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Leaders provide good-quality performance management. Recent training, such as that to develop pupils' writing skills, has ensured that teaching is continually refined and developed. Staff are committed to improving their practice and leaders support them effectively to do so.
- Leaders pay high regard to the workload of staff. For example, newly qualified teachers are supported to achieve an appropriate work–life balance. The majority of staff report that leaders are considerate of their well-being.
- Leaders have high aspirations for disadvantaged pupils. They use the pupil premium to good effect, for example by providing additional learning opportunities in writing and mathematics. Staff know this group of pupils well and provide tailored teaching to ensure that they make good progress.
- The school's special educational needs coordinator provides exceptionally good leadership for this group of pupils. She works tirelessly to ensure that those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high-quality care and support. The school provides a highly nurturing environment for this group of pupils, who achieve well from their starting points. Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used appropriately.
- The school's home–school link worker provides excellent support for pupils and families. For example, she helps parents locate additional services available to them from the local authority. She ensures that parents have someone to turn to if they need extra help or have any wider parenting concerns.
- The sport premium provides more opportunities for pupils to engage in physical activity. New equipment, additional staff training and specialist sports coaching enables

pupils to participate in a wider range of sports. Pupils enjoy playing in competitive games and taking part in competitions and tournaments.

- Leaders develop pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding very well. Pupils develop a keen sense of tolerance and respect because of the range of successful strategies such as special assemblies, educational visits and special visitors. This learning is reinforced continually through 'The Park Gate Way', and ensures that pupils develop a strong moral code and caring, considerate attitudes.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They say that they like the 'family atmosphere', the 'caring staff' and the 'effective communication between school and home'. One comment, typical of many, stated: 'Park Gate is brilliant. Leaders and staff are wonderful, and the pupils come out at the end of the day happy and enthusiastic.'
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. However, leaders know that sometimes learning across the wider curriculum is not consistently challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils. Rightly, leaders are developing provision to ensure that lessons and activities are suitably demanding to enable more pupils to achieve at the higher standards.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They visit regularly to monitor leaders' actions against the school development plan. Importantly, they use a range of information, such as reports produced by the local authority's school improvement partner, to validate their evaluation of the school's effectiveness. They use this knowledge to challenge and support leaders in equal measure, which demonstrates governors' high expectations for pupils' achievements.
- Governors monitor the school's budget well. For instance, they know the positive impact on outcomes the school's use of the pupil premium has. Governors have appropriate oversight of performance management arrangements and the subsequent link made to pay reviews for staff. Governors fulfil their financial responsibilities to a good standard.
- Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to see the school go from strength to strength. For instance, they assisted the school well during the recent period of leadership change, and were tenacious in recruiting a new headteacher. Governors' determination to provide continual, ongoing, effective support is a strength of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have developed a strong ethos for keeping pupils safe. For example, when employing new staff, all appropriate employment checks are made and recorded accurately on the school's single central record. All safeguarding systems comply with the latest government guidelines.
- Leaders ensure that staff are trained well in child protection and that they know what actions to take to safeguard pupils. Staff report any concerns they have about pupils'

welfare appropriately and leaders act swiftly to protect children from harm. Leaders work closely with parents and with external child protection professionals to provide thorough, wrap-around care for pupils. A strong culture of care emanates throughout the school.

- Leaders manage health and safety with careful consideration and take the necessary actions to reduce risk. For example, pupils are supervised well during breaktimes and lunchtimes, and well-trained staff are always at hand to provide first-aid care when needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils respond well and engage appropriately in lessons, sharing their thoughts and ideas confidently. Pupils work hard and make good progress as a result.
- Teachers use effective questioning to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. They then use this information well to tailor learning activities, and ensure that pupils know the next steps in their learning. Pupils are skilled at using and applying the feedback teachers provide to improve their work.
- Teachers check pupils' learning well. They work diligently throughout lessons to monitor pupils' progress, and provide clear and concise explanations to successfully tackle pupils' misconceptions. As a result, teachers address any barriers to learning well, and plan appropriately for pupils' individual needs.
- The support provided by teaching assistants is of a good standard. They understand what is being taught, and why, and use their own good subject knowledge to support pupils to achieve well. Teaching assistants are caring and nurturing, and build pupils' confidence and self-esteem as they help them learn.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. Learning is structured carefully, and is suitably challenging. Teaching provides regular opportunities for pupils to consolidate and practise their emerging reading skills.
- The teaching of history is effective. For example, Year 6 pupils were producing information leaflets about Mayan life for younger children. Pupils used a range of different information sources, including non-fiction texts and historical photographs, to research effectively about Mayan civilisation.
- Teaching places a firm emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills. For example, teachers use books and high-quality texts to model effective writing for pupils. However, opportunities for pupils to write at length, for a range of purposes and in different styles, are currently limited. As a result, some pupils do not make rapid and sustained progress in writing.
- Teaching ensures that pupils develop a love of reading. The library is used well and is regularly updated and restocked with new books and authors. However, some most able pupils read books that are too easy for them. Teaching does not yet ensure that these pupils are consistently encouraged to choose books that will stretch their reading ability and challenge their thinking.

- The organisation of the wider curriculum does not provide teachers with consistently rich opportunities to challenge most-able pupils with suitably demanding work. As a result, some of these pupils do not yet achieve the highest standards in a range of subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils take on additional responsibilities with relish. For example, the school librarians explained confidently to inspectors how they run the library by cataloguing books and keeping the room tidy. Pupils contribute effectively to school life and take pride in their learning environment.
- Pupils state that bullying rarely happens. They know that teachers will act swiftly to support them if it does occur. Pupils state that they feel safe and know whom to turn to if they have a problem or worry.
- Pupils learn effectively how to keep themselves safe. For example, older pupils demonstrated a growing understanding of e-safety. Leaders provide a range of learning opportunities that develop pupils' ability to manage their personal safety well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of the school's values and model them well in their general behaviour. They are caring towards each other, friendly and respectful. Pupils listen to their teachers and follow instructions obediently. This ensures that Park Gate is an orderly school where pupils learn and play together calmly and appropriately.
- Pupils enjoy learning at Park Gate. Notably, when lessons are particularly challenging, pupils rise to teachers' high expectations and produce work of a very good standard. They collaborate well with their peers, when learning activities require them to do so, but are also able to work successfully with growing independence. Pupils' positive behaviour contributes effectively to the good progress they make.
- Pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good and improving. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' attendance and are quick to act to support and challenge individuals if their attendance dips.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children make outstanding progress in the early years. Typically, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development exceeds the national average.

- In Year 1, most pupils achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Effective teaching ensures that pupils can apply their knowledge to sound out successfully when reading unknown words and when writing.
- The large majority of pupils achieved the expected standard in the 2017 key stage 1 national curriculum assessments for reading, writing and mathematics. Current key stage 1 pupils are achieving similarly, and making good progress in a range of subjects.
- The school's pupils' progress information and work in their exercise books show that most pupils are achieving well across the curriculum in key stage 2.
- Last year, at the end of Year 6, not enough pupils achieved the expected standard in mathematics. However, leaders have tackled this well and most current Year 6 pupils are working at the expected standard for their age in this subject.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and across the wider curriculum. Their learning is supported effectively and this ensures that they achieve well from their starting points. Similarly, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Pupils, typically, make stronger progress in reading and mathematics than they do in writing. Leaders are aware of this and know that more needs to be done to ensure that pupils are able to write at the higher standard.
- Pupils read fluently. However, some of the most able pupils are not encouraged consistently to read more demanding texts. As a result, these pupils do not make the accelerated progress they are capable of.
- Some pupils, including those who are the most able, are not challenged sufficiently across the wider curriculum. Consequently, they do not achieve the higher standard in a range of subjects.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children make outstanding progress in the early years. Leaders plan exceptionally well for all areas of learning and provide activities that enthuse and encourage children to deepen their learning. Appropriately, staff know when to intervene in children's learning and when to step away to enable children to discover things for themselves.
- The leadership of early years is outstanding. The early years leader works very closely with pre-schools, nurseries and families to ensure that Park Gate early years staff have a thorough knowledge of the children when they start school. Careful and accurate assessments take place throughout the year and are used to tailor learning to children's individual needs. As a result, the vast majority of children make rapid progress in the early years, and are well placed for the next stage of their education.
- Staff provide excellent learning opportunities for children to develop their emerging writing and mathematical skills. For example, children were already busy practising their numbers, letters and phonics knowledge. Staff are highly effective in supporting learning, enabling children to fully engage, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, on a learning walk around the school site, children knew the importance of following the teacher's instructions and responding quickly to what they were asked to do. Children's behaviour in the

early years is exemplary, and enables them to learn and achieve to the highest standards.

- Children in the early years have a growing understanding of the school's values. Staff simplify these effectively so that the youngest children in the school know about 'The Park Gate Way'. This learning contributes effectively to children's growing understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect.
- Safeguarding is rigorous throughout the early years. Risk assessments are carried out appropriately and all statutory welfare requirements are met. Staff know how to keep children safe and always follow precisely the school's procedures for safeguarding.
- Parents are highly positive about the early years. Staff keep parents well-informed about their children's development, and work hard to promote strong links between school and home. For example, parents appreciate the many different sessions that the school provides, when they can visit the classrooms to participate in their children's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	116033
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10036895

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Fran Slater
Headteacher	Lindsay McCarthy
Telephone number	01489575444
Website	www.parkgate.hants.sch.uk
Email address	adminoffice@parkgate.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There has been a considerable turnover in staff recently, including senior leaders. The headteacher has recently taken up post, and is supported by an acting deputy headteacher.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning throughout the school, spoke to pupils and looked at work in their books. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of the governing body and three other governors. The lead inspector also spoke with the school's local authority improvement partner on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the day and took into account 74 responses, including free-text comments, to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also analysed 28 responses to the staff survey.
- A range of documents were reviewed, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation document, information about pupils' achievement, attendance, behaviour and safety records; governing body reports and local authority reports.

Inspection team

Dom Cook, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Cathy Burnham	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Burrell	Ofsted Inspector
Deirdre Crutchley	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Cook	Ofsted Inspector

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