

Park Academy

Robin Hoods Walk, Boston PE21 9LQ

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Children's skills and knowledge are below those expected for their age on entry to the school. By Year 6, pupils have caught up and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are on track to be similar to last year's national levels.
- Teaching is good. Strengths in teaching are the positive relationships between staff and pupils, and established routines which support learning. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn in lessons.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully and ensure that there is a balance between parts of the lesson that they lead and time for pupils to take part in activities.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe in school. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and to each other.
- The chief executive, directors and leaders have high expectations and have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved so they are now good.
- Leaders know the school well and their plans for improvement accurately focus on key areas with clear actions that are carried out effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because work is not always precisely matched to pupils' ability levels and teachers do not always ensure that tasks are reshaped in lessons so learning is at a fast pace.
- Teachers' questioning does not always deepen pupils' understanding and pupils do not have clear targets on how to improve their work.
- Although pupils make good progress from their starting points in Key Stage 1, their attainment is below average. Pupils do not read in a wide enough range of styles. They do not have regular enough opportunities to write at length and to apply their mathematic skills to problem solving.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 19 lessons or part-lessons. Three observations of lessons were carried out jointly with members of the Trust leadership team.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books, attended an assembly and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Advisory Board, who is also Chair of the Trust Board, and another director; with members of the Trust leadership team; and with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers as they brought their children to school. There were not enough responses to the online Parent View survey for these to be seen.
- The returns from 45 staff questionnaires were reviewed.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, studied records of pupils' progress, and reviewed documents relating to the management of the performance of staff and plans written by leaders, as well as behaviour and safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Colin Lower	Additional Inspector
Lenford White	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Approximately one third of pupils are White British. Most of the other pupils are from other White backgrounds, mainly from Eastern Europe. A higher proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language than in schools nationally with many new to speaking English when they join the school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and those with a parent in the armed services) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is also above average.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-aged ability groups across Years 1 to 6 in literacy and in Years 3 to 6 in numeracy.
- A higher proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual admission dates than in schools nationally.
- Park Academy converted to become an academy in January 2013. When its predecessor school, Park Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The Chair of the Trust Board of Directors took up the post of Acting Chair of the Advisory Board from April 2013.
- The school is part of the Phoenix Family of Schools Academy Trust.
- The academy is led by an acting head of school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - work is more precisely matched to pupils' ability levels so that it moves learning on quickly
 - teachers check on learning regularly in lessons and reshape tasks so that pupils move on to new activities quickly when they are ready
 - teachers questions challenge pupils' thinking and understanding
 - pupils have regularly updated, clear targets which show them their next steps for learning.
- Raise attainment at Key Stage 1 so it is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - encouraging pupils to read a wider range of texts both in and out of school
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematic skills to problem solving.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start at the school with skills and knowledge below those usually expected for their age, particularly in their language and communication development. Many children also start at the school new to learning English. The school successfully develops children's communication skills and encourages them to talk about their learning. Children make good progress in Reception, with the vast majority of children working at age-related expectations by the end of the year.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. The school's current data for Year 6 pupils shows that pupils are on track to reach similar standards to those nationally last year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive additional help from teaching assistants in lessons which helps them to understand the work and helps them with their learning so they can take a full part in lessons. These pupils make good progress in all year groups in the school.
- Pupils eligible for support from pupil premium funding receive healthy breakfasts at the start of the day, access to 'wow' days so that they have a rich experience of school, holiday schools, individual mentoring and one-to-one tuition. Specialist language support is also provided for some pupils. The school carefully tracks the difference this support is making for these pupils. These pupils are making good and in some cases very rapid progress in the school. However, a gap of approximately six months remains in English and around a year in mathematics between these pupils and others currently in Year 6.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those new to the school are given additional help to support them in learning English and, in particular, in developing their reading so that they can access the rest of the curriculum. These pupils make good progress in their learning and their progress accelerates the longer they are in school. The school checks on the progress of pupils regularly and gives additional help to any pupils at risk of falling behind. The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity for pupils' learning and in ensuring that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Although progress is good in Key Stage 1, current school tracking shows standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are likely to be below those in schools nationally. Pupils are supported in developing their reading but do not all read a wide range of texts to develop their reading skills fully and to help them to catch up. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces and to apply their mathematic skills to problem solving to help them make the fastest progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Reading, writing and mathematics are all taught well, so pupils make good progress. Among the strengths of teaching are the relationships between pupils, routines in lessons and the clarity from teachers so that pupils know what is expected of them.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully and regularly explain learning objectives to pupils so that they understand the focus of the learning in the lesson. There is a good balance between teacher input with the whole class and opportunities for pupils to be involved in activities.

- In the best teaching, for example, in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, pupils made excellent progress. This was because the teacher made sure that the different strategies for adding, subtracting, multiplication and division were securely understood before pupils applied these to a real-life problem and used these skills to select the cheapest option from different supermarkets. The teacher used skilful questioning to deepen pupils' understanding and to move their learning forward quickly.
- Teachers do not always use a range of questioning techniques to probe and deepen pupils' understanding. Work is not always precisely matched to pupils' levels of ability so it is hard enough for all pupils and not too easy for some. On some occasions, teachers do not check on learning and adjust their teaching to change or reshape tasks or activities for pupils who are ready to move on in their learning more quickly. This means that they do not make the fastest progress.
- Books are regularly marked but pupils do not have regularly updated, clear targets which show them how to improve their work so they can focus on these in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave in an orderly fashion around the school. They are courteous to adults and to each other. They behave well in lessons and in the dining hall, and treat each other with respect when playing together in the playground. They line up sensibly and follow instructions from staff.
- Pupils say behaviour is good and that they feel safe in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet and how they walk sensibly around the school. They say that bullying is not an issue and that they can go to staff with concerns and are confident these will be dealt with.
- The school behaviour logs show very few incidents. Pupils who have behavioural needs are well supported and the school operates an inclusion room to which pupils go for more serious incidents. This has been effective and there have been no external exclusions.
- The vast majority of staff are positive about how behaviour is consistently managed and that it is good in school. Parents that inspectors spoke to were also positive about pupils' behaviour. The school is effective in promoting positive relationships and ensuring that there is no discrimination.
- Pupils take on a range of responsibilities in school including the school council and the eco-committee. Some Year 5 and 6 pupils are trained as Junior Police Community Support Officers and trained by local officers to deal with pupils' issues and to support other pupils in school.
- Pupils are extremely punctual to school and to their lessons, and most attend regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- There are high expectations from the chief executive, the leadership team and directors for teaching to be of high quality and for pupils to make good progress. In these key areas, they have been successful. Staff are committed to the vision of leaders and directors.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and improvement plans focus on appropriate areas for development.

These have clear steps, show who is responsible for leading each area and who checks on this. These are updated regularly and colour-coded to show which actions which have started and which have been completed.

- Performance management systems are very thorough and, at each stage of management, are overseen to ensure consistency. Targets are set linked to pupils making good progress, areas from the school development plan and individual development areas. There are appropriate links between performance management and salary progression.
- Professional development for staff is a strength. The vast majority of staff were positive about the support and training they have received. The school has successfully supported teachers new to the profession in being able to teach regularly to a good standard.
- The curriculum supports pupils in making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Subjects are taught through a themed approach, with topics including animals, chocolate and earthquakes. The international school dimension enriches this experience for pupils, with links with schools in India, Sri Lanka, Lithuania and Sierra Leone. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed and pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on a range of issues.
- The 'Park University' is very popular with pupils and gives pupils the opportunity to select workshops on a range of topics where they study English, mathematics and science with a practical purpose. Recent workshops have included architecture, hairdressing, business, and stand-up comedy. The school works with a range of external providers to bring these workshops to life for the pupils.
- Staff from schools in the Trust support each other and work together to share good practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The directors are clear about the expectations of members of the local advisory boards. They realise the importance of developing members and hold regular training across the Trust schools so that there is a shared understanding of the roles of board members across all the schools. Directors also attend specific areas of training as required, as well as being able to access training provided for school staff. There are regular updates on pupils' progress with high-level information being reported to the Trust board. This includes information on how pupil premium funding is being spent and the difference this is making. In addition to an overview of the data, there are also case studies to enable directors and advisory board members to understand what difference this makes to individual children. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and where support has been provided to improve teaching. Pay recommendations go to the Trust board to be signed off. The Trust board and the local advisory board ensure that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

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	139191
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	418368

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	The Academy Trust Board
Chair	Denzil Shephard
Headteacher	Carol Clare
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01205 368805
Fax number	01205 361826
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