

More Park Catholic Primary School

Lucks Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 6HN

Inspection dates 4–5 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and governors have successfully improved the school from its satisfactory position at the previous inspection.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 has been consistently and significantly above average over the past three years. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been improving over the past three years and in 2011/12 was significantly above average.
- The governing body effectively supports the school and holds it to account for its performance.
- Senior leaders rigorously monitor teaching and learning so they can identify strengths and weaknesses and provide effective support. As a result, teaching has improved and is now good and achievement has improved.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. They get on well together, have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their high attendance rates.
- Pupils are friendly and well mannered, want to do well and work hard. By the time they leave they have developed as well-rounded individuals who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure the best possible progress.
- Teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to ensure that work is always pitched at the right level to make appropriate demands on more-able pupils or to provide support for those who find learning more difficult.
- Actions by leaders and managers to bring about further improvement are not always linked to tight enough deadlines to ensure that the pace of improvement is even more rapid.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or part lessons, many of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and listened to some pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff with key leadership responsibilities, groups of pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents including the school’s self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils’ progress, monitoring information on the quality of teaching and the safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses to the online Parent View survey, the school’s own survey of parents and carers and four written comments from parents and carers. They spoke to some parents and carers at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of 28 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Jude

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- More Park is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority or are children of service families, is below average. At More Park, almost all the pupils eligible for the pupil premium are those eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class.
- Since January 2013, the school has been led by the deputy headteacher in the role of acting headteacher due to the absence of the headteacher. The substantive headteacher was, however, in school during the two days of the inspection.
- The school provides a breakfast club, which is managed by a private provider and therefore not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move the quality of teaching to outstanding, in order to further raise achievement, by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to plan work that more precisely matches the needs of pupils of all abilities, particularly the most and least able.
- When leaders and managers instigate actions for improvement, including those for improving teaching, ensure that they are linked to tight deadlines to make sure that their impact is even more rapid.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start at the school with skills and knowledge at the expected levels for their age. They get a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make good progress and reach, or sometimes exceed, the expected goals for their learning by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 make good progress overall and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are considerably above average.
- There has been a notable improvement in mathematics standards since the previous inspection, which was an area noted for further improvement, as a result of strong and effective leadership in the subject.
- The small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make interpretation of published data unreliable. Although a small number of new entrants to school this year who have special educational needs are not yet making progress at the same rate as others, over time pupils with specific learning needs generally do well and make similar progress to other pupils. Their attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, although not as high as for other pupils in the school, is above that for similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils' current work shows that all groups are making good progress and achieving well. However, progress, although good overall, is still a little uneven in Key Stage 2 because work is not always pitched at exactly the right level to enable some pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- In English, the school has worked hard and successfully to narrow the gap between achievement in reading and writing. There has been a whole-school focus on 'Talk for Writing', which has led to improved skills and higher achievement. By the end of Year 2 the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in both reading and writing is above average. However, by the end of Year 6, while the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in writing has improved and is above average, the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 and making faster progress is still stronger in reading. Reading is promoted well throughout the school and by Year 6 pupils are fluent, confident readers who read regularly for pleasure and develop a depth of understanding of characters and plots and can use non-fiction texts and the internet competently for research skills.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check (the linking of sounds and letters) in 2011/12, taken by pupils currently in Year 2, the proportion achieving the expected result was above average. The proportion achieving the expected level in the current Year 1 is a little lower and the school has investigated this carefully and found that the more-able readers are attempting to make the 'nonsense' words make sense. However, inspectors found that pupils have a secure knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words and to develop their writing skills.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved because the school correctly identified that difficulties in pupils' use and application of mathematical skills and mental mathematical skills were holding them back and has taken effective measures to improve these areas.
- There were not enough Year 6 pupils in 2011/12 known to be eligible for the pupil premium to comment, reliably, on their attainment in English and mathematics compared to that of other pupils in the school. However, attainment was better than found nationally and progress was similar to others'. Pupils currently in the school who benefit from the pupil premium make similar progress to others.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching overall is good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good role models of outstanding teaching.
- Notable strengths in teaching are good relationships between teachers and pupils, lots of opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and thoughts with each other and teachers' and

teaching assistants' skilled questioning to help extend pupils' thinking and learning.

- Activities are well planned to meet the interests of pupils and pupils' involvement in deciding topics to explore has a positive impact on engaging boys and girls in learning.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve and set appropriately demanding work. For example, Year 5 pupils were completely engrossed in studying *Romeo and Juliet* to understand dramatic conventions. They were using higher-level reading skills of inference and deduction to analyse the text and made good gains in their learning.
- The teaching of reading is good. Specific reading skills are taught in small groups and pupils are encouraged to read at home through an online reading programme that motivates all pupils, but boys in particular.
- Although good overall, there are a few occasions where teaching is less effective because teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan work that makes enough demands on the more-able pupils or that provides enough variation to support those who find learning more difficult. This means that some pupils do not always make as much progress as they are capable of.
- Teaching in mathematics has focused on making learning fun and relevant to pupils' lives and giving pupils more opportunities to learn through investigative work, and this has resulted in improved achievement. For example, pupils in Year 1 made good progress in developing measuring skills as they had a real reason for accurate weighing in grams, which was to bake fairy cakes to sell at the Farmer's Market the following day.
- Marking of pupils' work is usually of a good quality and gives pupils good pointers for how to improve. There are some good examples where pupils have opportunities to evaluate their own progress and comment on the work and progress of others, which they do in a sensible, mature way.
- Teaching assistants often make a good contribution to pupils' learning through one-to-one support or working with pupils in small groups.
- Children in the Reception class are taught well and have a broad range of exciting opportunities to play and learn and develop enquiring, curious minds. For example, they were awestruck when they unearthed potatoes they had planted as seeds 10 weeks earlier, to sell at the Farmer's Market.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes towards learning and enjoy coming to school. Many pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they liked the friendly, caring atmosphere where they feel safe and secure and can learn and play without fear of discrimination. They are polite, friendly and confident when sharing their views about school. They show respect and consideration for each other and are instinctively caring and supportive of each other in lessons and in the playground.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. Sometimes, behaviour is outstanding, especially where teaching fully engages pupils. On a very small number of occasions, where pupils' attitudes are not as focused as they might be and teaching does not fully engage them, a few pupils can become distracted and inattentive. This is dealt with effectively by staff who make sure learning is not disrupted.
- In discussions, pupils are adamant that they are not aware of any bullying in school but say they are confident to speak to adults should they have any problems. They have a good awareness that bullying can take different forms, including name calling, physical bullying, cyber-bullying and prejudiced-based bullying, and said they were secure in the fact that if any incidents did arise, staff would deal with them quickly and fairly.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe in a range of situations, for example, when using computers to access the internet.

- Pupils demonstrated good enterprise skills and contribution to the community in their preparation and organisation of a very well-attended 'Farmer's Market', which took place during the inspection. Even the youngest children were observed using their skills to sell their produce and work out the right change to give to their customers.
- Pupils are keen to take an active role in school life and take on a range of responsibilities that they enjoy and take seriously, such as being school council members and buddies.
- All parents and carers who responded to the online survey feel that their children are well behaved. Almost all agree that the school keeps their children safe and most feel that children are well looked after. Inspection findings and the school's own survey support these views.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for the school's future. The school is led well by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher in his acting headteacher role and they both have had a significant impact in bringing about improvement to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Their vision and ambition are shared by staff and governors and expectations for pupils' achievement are high.
- Leaders and managers use a range of approaches, including observing teachers at work and rigorous evaluation of data on pupils' achievements, to check on the effectiveness of teaching. As a result there is a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved, and this is recorded accurately in its self-evaluation. This information informs the school development plan which gives a clear steer for the school's future work, which was an aspect to improve in the previous inspection.
- Arrangements for judging teachers' performance are rigorous. There are clear links between teachers' performance and pay progression. Targets are set for teachers that are linked well with the progress pupils make and teachers know they are accountable for pupils' progress. Support and training are given if weaknesses are identified, with a clear expectation of improvement; and in the past steps have been taken that have ensured there is no inadequate teaching in the school. On occasion, however, leaders do not impose deadlines for individual or whole-school improvement and so the impact of actions is not always as rapid as it might be.
- The roles of key leaders are well defined and leaders at all levels make a positive contribution to whole-school improvement as well as providing skills and expertise in their particular areas of responsibility.
- The subjects and topics taught inspire and motivate pupils and meet their needs and interests well. This is largely because pupils are involved in deciding the topics that will be the basis of much of their learning. There is appropriate emphasis to learning basic skills and a varied range of extra activities including artistic, sporting and musical experiences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and underpins all that the school does. Pupils work well together in collaboration and discussion. They learn to listen to each other and respect each other's views and ideas. The school promotes good relationships and equal opportunities for all pupils. As a result, pupils get on well with each other, make good progress and learn without fear of discrimination. They develop as well-rounded individuals who are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Parents and carers are mostly very supportive of all aspects of the school's work and particularly positive about the approachable, open door ethos.
- Safeguarding arrangements fully meet statutory requirements and are well known and implemented by all staff to ensure that pupils feel safe in school.
- An independent advisor works well with the school on behalf of the local authority, providing light touch support to this good school based on its performance data.

The governance of the school:

Governors know the school well, have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and are committed to its further improvement. They know how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally and use the published school data and detailed reports on pupils' progress from senior staff to question and challenge the school and hold it to account for its performance. Governors are involved in monitoring the school's work through checking its policies and having named governors working in monitoring pairs linked to key areas. Governors maintain an overview of the quality of teaching and the impact on pupils' learning. Effective performance management systems are in place to ensure that teachers and the headteacher fully meet their responsibilities and targets and that the school links staff pay to their performance. The governing body has a good knowledge of how the school uses the pupil premium funding, including, for example, individual support for identified pupils in mathematics and English, therapeutic play sessions and support from the family liaison officer. It evaluates the effectiveness of the support to ensure the funding is being well spent to raise achievement. Governors have good ideas for further improving their effectiveness, for example, by reviewing the way they write reports from their monitoring visits to ensure they are more concise and challenging to the school. The governing body ensures statutory duties are met, including those for safeguarding.

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	118774
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405817

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Watson
Headteacher	Carol Smith
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 September 2010
Telephone number	01732 843047
Fax number	01732 847706
Email address	headteacher@more-park.kent.sch.uk

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