

Parkstone Grammar School

Sopers Lane, Poole, Dorset, BH17 7EP

Inspection dates 17–18 December 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	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The proportion of students securing five A* to C grades at GCSE has been consistently and significantly well above the national average for the last three years.
- Students make outstanding progress from their starting points in both English and mathematics.
- Results in GCSE humanities, languages and science have also been significantly above average for the last three years and have continued to improve in 2013.
- Students eligible for support through the pupil premium attain above the national average for similar students. Their attainment is very close to other students in the school. This reflects excellent support and guidance.
- A high proportion of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers prepare students well, both academically and personally, for their futures.
- Students feel very safe. They are polite, friendly and respectful to others. Behaviour is excellent, as seen by students' high levels of concentration in lessons and good attitudes shown to their learning.
- Attendance is high and improving. Exclusions are extremely low.
- There are many opportunities for students to attend extra classes and clubs which enrich their learning.
- Leaders and managers plan effectively, know what their teams do well and have a clear view of what the next steps must be to improve further. This is leading to rising achievement.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of performance in all areas of the school's life and holds senior school leaders and heads of department to account with rigour.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. In lessons, challenge is sometimes inconsistent. Some marking does not give students enough advice on how to improve.
- The sixth form is good and despite improving progress for students the proportion of students at A and AS level making rapid progress is not sufficiently high.
- More rigour is needed in the performance management of teachers, particularly in the monitoring of the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 43 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to year assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the school leadership and management and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with four groups of students representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three additional members of the governing body.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and scrutinised documents including the school’s own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students’ achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- There were 175 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 48 responses to the staff questionnaires. Additional comments were received from parents, and consideration was given to the views expressed by families in response to the school’s own surveys completed by 398 parents.

Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Cavill	Additional Inspector
Una Maria Stevens	Additional Inspector
Trevor Woods	Additional Inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Parkstone Grammar School is a popular, oversubscribed selective grammar school for girls.
- It is a larger-than-average-sized 11 to 19 school. It is an International School, an ITT partner with Exeter University, and holds awards for Sportsmark.
- Parkstone Grammar School converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2011. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is a member of the South West Academic Trust. This consists of a partnership of 10 grammar schools in the South West region and the University of Exeter.
- Over 90% of the students are from White British, Irish or other White or mixed White backgrounds. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The government provides additional funding to support these students because they are at particular risk of underachieving.
- Around 2% of the students are disabled or have special educational needs. The proportion of students supported by school action, school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is well below national averages.
- No students are enrolled on any alternative programmes operated by other schools or colleges.
- The school significantly exceeds current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has seen a number of significant staff changes during the last six months, including the appointments of two new assistant headteachers and a new headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least good and increase the proportion which is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide activities and materials which are tailored well to meet the needs of individual learners
 - the challenge in lessons, particularly for the most able, is consistently high enough
 - always providing helpful feedback to inform students of what they need to do to improve their work and that teachers check that students have put this guidance into effect
- Support students to make rapid progress in the sixth form by ensuring that leaders and teachers monitor progress closely and act decisively to intervene and gain the highest grades possible.
- Strengthen the impact of leaders and managers through ensuring that they consistently and rigorously check performance in their areas, in order to promote outstanding teaching and student achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the main school is well above average for current students and for those who completed GCSE examinations in 2013 and before. Examination results at the end of Key Stage 4 have risen year on year and are consistently, and significantly, well above the national average. The school does not make early entries for GCSE examinations.
- The proportions of students making and exceeding expected progress in both English and mathematics are extremely high compared with national figures and can only be described as outstanding. Students of all abilities make very good progress in lessons.
- Achievement in subjects across the curriculum, including science, modern foreign languages and humanities, is outstanding.
- This year has seen the first students enter the school at Year 7. They attain good levels of development that far exceed national expectations. Students make at least good progress in lessons and their books contain a large amount of high quality, well presented work.
- The small numbers of students who are entitled to support through the pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs are achieving in line with their peers and there is no gap between their performance and those of other students in the school. This is because the progress of these students is monitored closely and great care has been taken to ensure that their needs are fully catered for.
- Literacy and numeracy are promoted well within the school. Reading is positively encouraged and literacy skills are particularly well developed across the curriculum. The library reports high numbers of students borrowing reading books. Good support is provided to weak readers and the school quickly ensures that they are not disadvantaged in lessons.
- Students enter the sixth form with prior attainment that is well above the national average and make slightly better progress than other students nationally. A high number already secure A-level grades between A* to E, and an ever increasing proportion are achieving the highest grades of A* to B at both AS and A2. Large numbers progress to university, including those in the Russell Group and Oxbridge.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students make good progress over time because teaching is typically good. Students themselves describe teaching as good and a significant proportion of parents are also happy. The majority of parents believe that an appropriate level of homework is set.
- Teachers know their subjects extremely well and enjoy sharing their knowledge with students to develop and enhance their understanding. Good classroom management and good relationships with students are features of the very best lessons.
- Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan their lessons well and really interest and inspire their students. Good questioning challenges students and deepens their thinking. The activities that the majority of teachers plan in these lessons enable students to make full use of their time and gain new knowledge, skills and understanding rapidly.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers and students generate a lively atmosphere within the lesson where there is a strong desire to seek to improve their knowledge and understanding and make rapid progress. An example of this was observed in the Year 9 Conference, where older students generated a lively and engaging discussion with others about life and the impact our choices have on ourselves and others. Students thoroughly enjoyed the experience and made outstanding progress.
- In a few lessons, teaching requires improvement. Whilst most teachers know how well students are doing and provide tasks to promote learning for a range of different abilities, these lessons lack the drive, challenge, excitement and activities that are typical in the better lessons. This is often because classes are given the same activity or all students begin working from the same

starting point. As a result, there is not enough challenge, especially for the more able, who spend too long marking time.

- The marking of students' work is generally good. There are examples of outstanding practice, where teachers really make every effort to ensure that students learn from their mistakes. Marking usually identifies ways in which students can improve their work, but not all teachers provide this advice and guidance or ensure that it has been followed. As a result, examples of unfinished or incomplete work can be found that have not been followed up later and, therefore, misunderstandings and misconceptions may remain.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students embrace the values promoted by the school's charter. They accept that with rights come shared community responsibilities. All cooperate and try their hardest to maintain the highest standards in all aspects of their school lives.
- Students are extremely polite, well mannered and courteous towards each other and to adults, and are very welcoming to visitors.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is often exemplary. Despite the size of the school and the large number of students on site, movement around the building is very orderly and the vast majority arrive promptly to lessons.
- Positive attitudes are adopted by students to their learning in lessons and, as a result, they make a good contribution to their own learning.
- Students have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are very aware of the many forms of bullying and unacceptable behaviours and articulate how they would deal with them. All the young people spoken to described the increased expectations of the new headteacher and expressed real confidence in the school's ability to deal effectively with any issues.
- Exclusions are extremely rare and positive behaviours are encouraged and promoted very effectively.
- Records show that attendance is high compared to national averages, and this reflects positively on students' very good attitudes towards their learning, enjoyment and engagement in school. The number of persistent absentees is extremely low.
- Students are extremely proud of their school. They feel extremely safe and talk openly about the real sense of community that permeates throughout the school. They genuinely value and appreciate the considerable academic and personal support that all staff give them. They are most positive about the wide range of enrichment activities available to them.
- Parents are equally vocal in their praise for the school. They are overwhelmingly positive about the way in which the school operates, keeps their children safe, develops the skills and talents of their children and promotes their progress.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has quickly galvanised the staff, who clearly share the school's goals to secure higher levels of achievement through great teaching, high expectations and effective tracking. All staff know what it is that the school wants to achieve and support it wholeheartedly.
- The determination of leaders to make the school even better is evident. The school improvement plan sets out what it is the school needs to work on to make it even more successful. The plan rightly focuses strongly on improving teaching and achievement, but should make it clear how success will be measured in terms of these, particularly in the sixth form.
- The quality of teaching is now checked more regularly. Only recently has the impact of this on student progression been considered when making a judgement. Systems are in place to ensure that those staff who require improvement receive support and mentoring to help them improve

their practice. Training for teachers, for example in the use of data, has improved the quality of lesson planning and, subsequently, the quality of learning in classrooms.

- The school recognises the need for a greater rigour in the management of the performance of teachers, their appraisal and their pay. The school is finalising its policy which places the national teaching standards at the heart of the process and links student achievement, the quality of teaching and pay progression. All staff speak positively about the support they receive from leaders and managers to improve their work.
- The school's curriculum is well matched to the needs of students. There is a good range of academic courses supplemented by a diverse range of enrichment programmes provided on the school site. Links with schools, extensive sporting, musical and performing experiences, and an abundance of extra-curricular activities make strong contributions to the development of students at the school.
- Leaders of each Key Stage and Heads of year contribute positively to the achievement and well-being of students. They are highly pro-active in the identification of learners who might be in danger of underachieving, signpost and support learners on an individual basis by finding solutions that help them move forward, and secure the best outcomes, particularly at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Some students in the sixth form are not achieving as well as they could as their progress has not been monitored closely enough by leaders. As a result, some students have fallen behind with their work and this has not been picked up rapidly enough to ensure that they catch up in time to secure better than expected progress in external examinations.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. Students work and socialise extremely well together. Students of all ages are keen to learn about other cultures and show respect for each other. Students are prolific fundraisers and play a very active role in their communities. Opportunities are taken in lessons to encourage students to reflect and empathise with others in different circumstances.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is determined to ensure that the school is amongst the best in the country. It has a comprehensive knowledge and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and has proven itself quick to act in the greater interest of its students. Governors challenge the school's actions robustly to ensure that the school continues to improve and can sustain the impact of the actions going forward. They keep up to date with training and understand performance management procedures and expectations. Governors understand national data well and know both how pupil premium funding is spent and the very positive impact of the school's work. This knowledge of data is used to ensure the governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the standards of teaching throughout the school. Governors are also aware that the more able are not consistently challenged and that some sixth form students could, and should, be doing better.

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	136368
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	427196

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,231
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Peden
Headteacher	Tracy Harris
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01202 605 605
Fax number	01202 605 606
Email address	enquiries@parkstone.poole.sch.uk

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