

# Parkgate Primary School

Brooklands Road, Parkgate, Neston, Cheshire, CH64 6SW

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Progress is not consistently good for all groups of pupils, especially in Key Stage 2
- Standards in writing have declined in the current year and standards in mathematics fell in 2013.
- Teaching is not consistently good and is not always effective in improving pupils' progress.
- Some pupils are not challenged enough because their work is too easy. Presentation of work is not always neat and tidy and pupils do not get enough opportunity to practise their writing skills.
- Subject knowledge in mathematics is not always strong enough to improve pupils' skills, especially of mental calculations.
- Checking on pupils' progress and the impact of actions by senior leaders has not been rigorous or systematic enough to tackle concerns and raise achievement and teaching. Improvement overall has not been fast enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to good start in reception.
- Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good overall.
- Standards in reading are above average.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy school and feel safe while they are there. Attendance is above average.
- Parents say that their children are kept safe and are cared for effectively.
- The curriculum enables pupils to enjoy their learning and is enriched by a good range of additional activities outside of lesson times.
- Leadership is improving with actions being more effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Changes in the governing body have strengthened its effectiveness. With improving teaching, these strengths add significantly to the school's capacity to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 12 lessons and part lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of staff, members of the governing body, parents and a representative from the local authority
- The views of 76 parents who responded via the online survey Parent View were taken into account as well as questionnaires completed by staff members.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation that included: national assessment data and the school's own assessments; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's own view of its work; samples of pupils work; and safeguarding information.

## Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kirsty Haw

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school in which almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is very small when compared to the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is well below the national average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the current floor standard, which is the government's minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- Pre-school provision and after-school care are available on site. These are not managed by the governing body and were not part of this inspection. Their separate reports are published on the Ofsted website.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in mathematics and writing especially in Key Stage 2 by:
  - raising expectations of what all pupils can achieve and always insisting on good presentation of work
  - making sure that work is always set at the right level in order to speed up progress
  - improving subject knowledge in mathematics and making sure that pupils learn good mental strategies and apply them well to solving problems
  - giving pupils many more opportunities to write at length in different styles so that they can use their skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling to good effect.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that senior leaders follow up their actions to improve teaching and pupils' progress swiftly and robustly so that there is sustained improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not consistently good especially in Key Stage 2. Progress in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 requires improvement. The rates of progress for different groups of pupils are too variable. School assessments and pupils' work show varying proportions of pupils not on track to achieve the targets set by the school in writing or mathematics.
- Standards in writing and mathematics are broadly average in Year 6. Standards in writing are not as high as they were in 2013 due to a period of less effective teaching. During this time the amount of extended writing pupils completed diminished and not enough opportunity was provided for pupils to practise their spelling, punctuation and grammar. In mathematics, some pupils are unsure about methods for carrying out mental calculations.
- Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter Reception with typical skills, knowledge and understanding for their age. Their personal social and emotional development is generally good and they adapt well to their surroundings. Children are taught well and have many exciting opportunities to develop their skills. Almost all achieve a good level of development and are prepared well for their transfer to Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress in Year 1 where teaching has been strengthened. Pupils build well on their earlier learning of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and tackle early reading and writing confidently. Current Year 1 pupils are on track to exceed expectations in the phonics screening test.
- Pupils are making up lost ground at a good rate in Year 2 after being held back previously through less effective teaching. Many started Year 1 with lower than expected starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. They are now making good progress from these starting points and are on track to reach at least the expected levels.
- A whole-school focus on reading has led to good progress in all classes. Year 2 pupils are very keen readers. They read unfamiliar texts confidently, using phonics successfully to work out new words. They know the differences, for example, between fiction and non-fiction and read regularly at home. By the end of Year 6 standards in reading are above average. Pupils are enthusiastic about books and speak knowledgeably about the books they have read. They read fluently and with good expression.
- The most able pupils make similar progress to their peers. The school has successfully challenged the most able Year 6 pupils in mathematics and raised the number on track to attain Level 5. Nevertheless, these pupils are not always set hard enough work to enable them to consistently make good progress, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Those supported by the pupil premium make similar progress to others. Attainment, including for those known to be eligible for free school meals, is in line with others in writing and mathematics but school assessments show a deficit gap in reading, equivalent to about one term's progress. Overall, gaps in achievement are closing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well provided for. Additional support for them is well organised into individual and small group sessions as well as extra help in classes. They generally make expected progress from their varying starting points.
- An imaginative curriculum enables pupils to achieve well in art, music and sports. All pupils are fully involved in a wide range of activities. As yet, not all pupils make as much progress as possible and the overall promotion of equal opportunities is not fully effective.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching over time has been too variable as pupils move through school. Skills in writing and mathematics have not always been taught effectively and overall teaching requires improvement.
- The teaching of basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling is generally effective, including

in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, older pupils have too few opportunities to put their skills fully to the test by writing at length in any subject. This makes it difficult for teachers to assess writing quality precisely or plan effectively for further improvement.

- Expectations of writing are too low, especially in Key Stage 2. In one instance, pupils were held back in their writing because they had to follow the teachers' instructions. They said afterwards that they had much better ideas of their own for writing extended sentences.
- The teaching of mathematics requires improvement because there is some lack of confidence in how to teach all aspects of the subject. Younger pupils are gaining in confidence as basic skills are now taught successfully. Action taken to improve mathematics has successfully boosted the progress of the most able pupils in Year 6. However, evidence in some pupils' mathematics books shows that they are allowed to dwell too long on simple tasks that they have already mastered. The skills of using mental calculations are not fully exploited and pupils are not always prompted to use the best mental methods to speed up calculations and make better progress.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school. An effective approach to teaching phonics is built on well as pupils move from year to year.
- Resources, including technology, are used effectively and pupils benefit from working with partners in lessons to test out their ideas on each other. This adds interest to learning and pupils try hard to produce their best work.
- Pupils are managed well and learn in a calm atmosphere. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. They provide valuable help in classrooms, working alongside teachers, and offer skilled support when working with pupils with special educational needs.
- Marking has improved in response to effective leadership. A clear system is now in place and pupils understand the system and appreciate the guidance they receive. However, some work is not always neat enough and this is not sufficiently challenged by teachers.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are always polite and well mannered and they contribute well to the friendly ethos of the school. Above-average attendance is typical and a measure of how much pupils enjoy their learning
- They are attentive and well behaved in lessons and are keen to please their teachers and do well. Most try hard to get their work correct but neatness, especially handwriting, is not always given enough attention.
- In the playground and dining room they enjoy each other's company and are mindful of others. There are relatively few instances that need to be dealt with by adults because pupils are generally good at managing to sort their differences amicably.
- Pupils have a good understanding of other cultural lifestyles as well as some knowledge of their own cultural heritage.
- The active school council makes sure that all pupils have a say in school affairs. Others willingly take on extra responsibilities such as being a 'befriender' in the playground or helping to tidy the dining room in readiness for the afternoon session. Older pupils take good care of the younger ones.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good
- Pupils say that they are safe in school and the large majority of parents agree with that. Pupils feel that they are well cared for and they have trusting relationships with adults who work in the school.
- Pupils state firmly that there is no serious or offensive name-calling and that anything seen as bullying is very rare and quickly dealt with when it occurs.
- The very good systems to help pupils who need emotional support, or help them to think about how their actions might affect others are a strong contribution to the good management of

pupils' behaviour and safety.

- Pupils' views about possible risks inside the school are taken into account. They are also aware of potential dangers outside of school, including cyber-bullying, and know how to deal sensibly with situations that may occur.

## The leadership and management

## requires improvement

- The leadership team has not fully monitored change in the school to ensure that improvement is good. Consequently, although issues for improvement are identified by senior leaders, actions do not always get to the root of those issues quickly enough or deal with them in a systematic and rigorous way.
- Leaders, governors and all staff are ambitious for the school and set challenging targets in order to raise standards. However, pupils' progress towards these targets is not checked sufficiently by senior leaders to ensure that all pupils achieve them. A consequence of that is that progress and standards are too variable.
- Although teaching requires improvement it is improving in response to closer checks on teaching. Nevertheless, there is still work to be done in improving skills in teaching mathematics and taking swift action to check that pupils are consistently challenged to achieve their potential.
- The headteacher has recently dealt with ineffective teaching well and strengthened teaching quality in some classes. Teachers' classroom practice is assessed more robustly and targets set to raise performance. All are aware that salary increases depend on improved teaching and better progress of pupils.
- Strengths are emerging in achievement and teaching especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Where positive action has been taken, such as to boost the higher level in mathematics, there has also been a good measure of success although more remains to be done.
- Middle leaders with responsibility for managing subjects contribute satisfactorily to the checking of the school's work. As yet they are not fully effective in ensuring priorities are followed through with precise actions. A programme of training to help them improve their skills is on-going and all have clear plans for improvement in their subjects. They oversee a varied curriculum that promotes pupils' personal development well and helps them to enjoy their learning.
- Allocated sports funding is used effectively to extend the range of activities available to pupils and to enhance their physical well-being. Sports instructors add quality physical education teaching both through the challenges for pupils and the sharing of their skills with class teachers who work alongside them.
- The school has received very light touch support from the local authority in the past. With improvement evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage and through the appointment of teachers, along with the strength of governance, the school is seen to be capable of bringing about further necessary improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have improved their understanding of attainment and progress in the school and now measure the school's performance against the national picture. They are very clear about teaching and how it has improved and recognise the school's areas for improvement. They play a key role in challenging school leaders and helping to move the school forward. Governors have audited their own skills and, through careful appointments when vacancies occur, have plugged any gaps which may have lessened their effectiveness. They are watchful over the impact of pupil premium spending as well as the allocated sports funding to improve the well-being of all pupils. Governors manage the headteacher's performance robustly and have a very clear overview of teaching performance throughout the school. Financial management is efficient and safeguarding arrangements meet all 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111126
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	444283

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	188
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Baker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marjorie Downey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 3382082
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