

# Parkgate House School

80 Clapham Common, Clapham Common, London, SW4 9SD

**Inspection dates** 21–23 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good school

- Pupils make at least good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Some pupils make outstanding progress, particularly in upper preparatory classes and those with English as an additional language.
- The quality of teaching is good because class teachers and specialist instructors know pupils well and plan interesting activities to help them learn new skills.
- The curriculum is exceptionally rich and varied. Pupils have many valuable learning experiences which prepare them for life in Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils consistently show excellent conduct and respectfulness for each other and adults.
- Pupils are kept safe and they say they feel safe at all times. School leaders ensure rigorous systems safeguard all pupils.
- Senior leaders have improved how the school checks its work and acts on these findings.
- All pupils, parents and staff are very positive about the school, particularly the curriculum and how pupils are prepared for secondary school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not as effective as the rest of the school.
- The use of pupil progress information is not used strategically enough to evaluate the school's work.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding throughout the school.
- Some middle leaders are new to their role. It is too early to see an impact of their work.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Information about this inspection

- This was a full inspection at the request of the Department for Education.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons or part lessons. All were joint observations with senior leaders.
- During visits to classrooms, inspectors reviewed pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning. They scrutinised pupils' books and learning in a range of subjects.
- A tour of the school's premises was undertaken with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with the leadership team, pupils, parents and the principal.
- School documents and records were scrutinised, including information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, checks on staff suitability, school improvement planning and special curriculum events.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the beginning of the school day. They took into account the 79 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 27 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Ann Debono, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Veronica Young

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Parkgate House School is an independent day school for girls and boys aged from two to 11 years.
- The school was established in 1986 by the present principal.
- It is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school prepares its pupils for entry to selective independent secondary schools.
- There are no disabled pupils or those with a statement of special educational needs.
- A very small minority of pupils have English as an additional language.
- The school was last inspected in 2008, since then there have been three headteachers. The current headteacher has been in post for three years.
- The school's aims are 'to develop confidence, provide opportunity, realise potential – in every single child'

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

- Strengthen the quality of teaching so that more pupils make outstanding progress by:
  - embedding the new assessment system so all pupils make rapid progress from their starting points, especially those in the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - ensuring the marking policy is implemented consistently so all pupils act on feedback and improve their work.
- Continue to develop the role of subject and year group leaders to have greater impact on pupils' achievement by:
  - using pupil progress information when checking the school's effectiveness
  - further develop school improvement planning by including tight timescales with a rigorous monitoring and evaluation programme
  - provide suitable accommodation to cater for the medical examination and treatment of sick or injured pupils.

### The school must meet the following independent school standards.

- the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils including accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils (Paragraph 23B(1)(a)).
- accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (Paragraph 23B(1)(b)).

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders are clear and determined to improve the school and clear about what needs to be done. New subject and year group leaders develop leadership skills quickly, but this has not yet brought about outstanding pupils' achievement and teaching.
- Senior leaders scrutinise test results to assess pupils' attainment. However, leaders are not tracking pupils' progress as robustly as attainment. This means sometimes their assessments of teaching lack precision.
- Self-evaluation is accurate because leaders thoroughly check the school's work. Staff, pupils and parents provide honest feedback about the school's work. Leaders attend weekly project meetings to assess the effectiveness of current initiatives. Coordinators and year group leaders complete termly evaluative reviews. The school improvement plans that guide this work, are useful but do not always have sharp enough targets or timescales.
- Senior leaders have high expectations of staff performance and invest time in their professional development. All staff receive extensive feedback on their teaching and leadership which they understand and value. As a result, they continually strive to improve their practice, more is becoming outstanding.
- The proprietor's vision is promoted through an exceptionally rich curriculum. Pupils develop skills through experiences such as horse riding, Latin and karate. Specialist staff have high expectations and some pupils excel in readiness for secondary school and beyond.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively. Pupils study lives different to their own. They enjoy special whole school projects, such as the United Kingdom and finding out about the monarchy, castles and local London customs through research, literature, art and drama.
- The vast majority of parents and all staff are exceptionally positive about the school's work. Ninety nine per cent of parents would recommend the school. Staff views are summarised by, 'I am proud to be a member of the school, I feel supported at all times.'
- The accommodation for treatment of sick or injured pupils is not compliant with independent school standards. There is no dedicated room with required facilities, supervision or privacy to meet pupils' medical needs.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are polite and courteous at all times and take pride in their work. They show confidence and develop positive self-esteem because of the support and care they receive from all staff. Pupils' readiness for secondary school is exemplary, which is the cornerstone of the school's vision and values.
- The school promotes opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for themselves and others. From an early age they manage transitions to different lessons, change uniform or organise their equipment for sports, ballet or music instruction. They behave responsibly, not only in school but also on daily visits to the common or to local venues for school assembly, trips and outings.
- Older pupils are encouraged to be democratic and to show leadership. They feel confident in these skills. For example, they all participated in hustings for election as head boy or head girl. Pupils organise their own fundraising events for local and national organisations. They are consulted about the school's priorities and actively encouraged to liaise with their teachers, safely using online 'blogs'.
- School assemblies promote core values such as resilience, pride, respect. When these attributes are shown by pupils, their names are proudly displayed on the school 'virtues' or 'golden' trees.

#### Safety

- The personal health and social aspects of the curriculum are excellent. A powerful example is the sex and relationships programme embraced by all staff, pupils and parents. A specialist leads age-appropriate workshops using correct terminology that do not shy away from core messages about keeping the body, behaviour and interactions with others safe.
- The arrangements to keep pupils safe are excellent. The curriculum emphasises outdoor learning, but all school outings are underpinned by rigorous health and safety risk assessments.
- School leaders expect teachers to maintain meticulous individual records about every child's behaviour and personal development in the form of 'daily notes'. Any concerns are immediately identified and

appropriate action is taken. Child protection is given a very high priority in school. Safeguarding systems are rigorous and meet requirements. Pupils' attendance is above average.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- The quality of teaching is good. Some teaching is outstanding, especially for older pupils in upper preparatory classes. However, it is not consistently at this standard.
- Teaching is most effective when adults really challenge pupils to achieve highly and build on their prior knowledge and understanding. For example, strong teaching was observed when pupils presented their science research on the properties of materials and in an English lesson pupils' imagination was stimulated to write creative prose about a box of magic gifts.
- This quality of teaching is not reflected throughout the school; in other examples, work is too hard so pupils need too much help from an adult, and at other times work is too easy. Additional adults in a minority of classes are unclear about how to help pupils achieve more highly.
- Adults' questioning skills are effective. Leaders prioritised staff training and modelled exemplar practice. They closely monitored questioning in lessons. Pupils make at least good progress in reading and mathematics because adults use probing questions enabling pupils to deepen their understanding.
- The quality of teaching is continually under review. Staff are not complacent and they are very keen to improve their practice to consistently outstanding. They welcome feedback from senior leaders, a staff learning community is established and lesson studies are undertaken, these strategies promote honest peer discussion and challenge.
- Teaching by specialists is usually at least good. They are highly proficient, with specific subject knowledge. They share these skills with pupils who, from the Early Years Foundation Stage, develop talents and competencies frequently above those expected for their age.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Most pupils achieve above national expectations and make at least good and sometimes outstanding, progress. Despite these high standards some pupils plateau. School systems to track the rates of pupil progress or to measure the speed at which pupils catch up are being developed.
- School leaders correctly identify that pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as strong as English. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows their progress in English is promoted by effective marking. In mathematics, pupils are given work that they can do quite easily. A pupil told an inspector they would like 'harder mathematics questions to practise from my teacher'.
- Most children start school in the nursery with skills and abilities at, and usually above, those typically expected for their age. They make steady gains in their learning so that, by the time they reach the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, all make expected progress. A high percentage of children exceed expectations from their starting points.
- Pupils are well prepared to begin Key Stage 1 with strong literacy, numeracy and personal development skills. They benefit from specialist teaching and excellent resources. Most pupils achieve highly in all subjects. In Year 1, a new reading project ensures all pupils develop high levels of fluency and the confidence to tackle difficult texts.
- The strong development in pupils' basic skills continues throughout the school because teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge. Underperforming pupils are identified by their test results or information in staff 'daily notes'. Extensive one-to-one support or group intervention is put into place, enabling most pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress because they receive effective and focused support.
- Most able pupils are also identified early and they excel. They are invited to sit scholarships in academic subjects, music or sports. The majority of Preparatory 6 pupils leave with an offer to attend the secondary school of their choice.

### **The early years provision** is good

- The staff-child ratio in nursery classes for two-years-olds is very high. Key adults know children's individual personalities extremely well and plan carefully to meet their particular needs and interests. For example, an adult extended a child's vocabulary through skilful questioning about the stickiness and thickness of dough, whilst the child explored shapes with different sized cutters.

- In all classes, children’s personal development is promoted very well. Children are encouraged to take responsibility. They tidy away resources quickly when learning has finished and help each other in a sociable and friendly way, eager to move to their next lesson.
- Classroom displays show a range of different subjects such as Halloween, Space and the Solar System. Learning is organised effectively because adults work closely with groups of children. They listen attentively to these responses and subsequently plan activities which children find enjoyable.
- Leaders have introduced a new online assessment system to track children’s achievement, but this is not used consistently to plan precise next steps in children’s learning. It is also not used strategically enough to challenge children strongly enough to exceed typical expectations from their starting points.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101091
<b>Inspection number</b>	443489
<b>DfE registration number</b>	212/6397

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	218
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	56
<b>Principal</b>	Catherine Shanley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Malcolm McKinlay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2008
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£5100 - £13350
<b>Telephone number</b>	0207 350 2452
<b>Email address</b>	office@parkgate-school.co.uk



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