

# Park Junior School

Elm Road, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 2NP

## Inspection dates

28–29 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the school has maintained the good performance noted at its previous inspection.
- Staff absence during the past year has adversely affected the school's plans for improvement. Consequently, not all actions taken to improve the school's performance have been implemented effectively or consistently.
- Pupils with high prior attainment do not make rapid enough progress. Work planned in writing often lacks challenge, especially for the most able pupils. Not enough pupils reach the higher standards.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop a wide vocabulary through frequent reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make progress at a fast enough rate to help them catch up on the reading and writing standards expected for their age.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to reinforce key writing skills in subjects other than English, or to ensure that they write accurately and extensively.
- The quality of teaching varies considerably across the school. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations, and do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have implemented effective strategies to support groups of pupils in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants provide lower-ability pupils with dedicated help in lessons.
- Outcomes are improving in mathematics, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make steady progress in mathematics.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- A consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour is resulting in the vast majority of pupils being ready to learn and demonstrating positive attitudes in lessons.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils trust their teachers and are well looked after.

## Full report

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

- Improve the impact of leadership so that it is consistently good by:
  - ensuring that systems for monitoring teaching over time are precise and more directly focused on improving outcomes for all groups of pupils
  - ensuring that leaders' plans to raise pupils' attainment and increase progress are implemented consistently by all staff.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes by:
  - ensuring that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school are eradicated
  - raising expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve by setting work that is suitably challenging.
- Improve pupils' progress and achievement in reading and writing by:
  - providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to read widely and often, particularly in developing independent reading skills
  - supporting pupils in developing an understanding of, and an ability to use, a rich and varied vocabulary
  - giving pupils work that is set at the right level and providing sufficient opportunity for them to apply their writing skills in a range of other subjects
  - ensuring the challenge for disadvantaged pupils, most-able disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is sufficiently focused to enable them to make rapid progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the school has maintained the good performance noted at the previous inspection. Leaders were slow to take action to address a decline in pupils' outcomes, particularly in writing. Action is now being taken to deal with weaknesses in the quality of teaching and gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils' progress is improving as a result, but there is still some way to go before their achievement is consistently good in all subjects.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and know where teaching is strong and where improvements are required. In addition, they provide feedback to support teachers in developing their practice further. However, this feedback is not sufficiently precise, nor does it effectively take into account pupils' outcomes. Work in books confirms that variability persists in the quality of pupils' work and in their learning and progress in writing.
- The school has experienced a number of changes in staffing in the last year due to staff absence. This situation has slowed the school's improvement journey. In addition, it has made it difficult for leaders to establish a culture where all pupils flourish academically. Recent actions taken to improve teaching, learning and assessment are having a positive impact for most year groups.
- Leaders have developed teams of teachers as subject leaders through professional training. Support from experienced teachers from other schools has been welcomed and acted on. The work of subject leadership teams is helping to bring about improvement, particularly in mathematics.
- The curriculum is planned to include an appropriately broad range of subjects. However, the curriculum is not engaging and exciting all pupils sufficiently well to ensure they learn successfully. In addition, there is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils. Consequently, pupils do not make good progress in some subjects, such as in English.
- The school offers a wide range of after-school activities, including sports and support with homework. It also offers breakfast and after-school clubs. Pupils have opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities and to go on trips. Pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities they have to play sport such as hockey, cricket and zumba. The primary sport premium is used effectively to develop pupils' sporting skills.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils demonstrate respect and tolerance towards each other and those of other cultures. High-quality displays throughout the school support pupils' understanding of British values. In discussions, pupils showed that they understand that radical points of view can sometimes be extreme, such as opinions expressed about the local badger cull.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately. Additional adults are deployed to support pupils' learning and pupils benefit from support that meets their individual needs. Two family support workers provide helpful support for disadvantaged pupils and families in need. This has a beneficial impact and means that disadvantaged pupils are included in all aspects of school life. As a result, their

progress improves, but not enough pupils are making the swift progress required to catch up so that they reach the standards expected for their age. This is especially the case for the most able disadvantaged pupils.

- A few parents believe pupils' behaviour in lessons to be more disruptive than was observed during the inspection. However, other parents spoken to during the inspection were positive about all that the school offers and the guidance and support they receive.
- Over time, the support provided by the local authority has been focused on improving teaching. This has contributed to more effective school improvement. For example, the deputy headteacher is successfully leading improvements in teaching, including refining the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' work. Nonetheless, despite this support, there has not yet been sufficient improvement in pupils' outcomes.

### **Governance of the school**

- Since the previous inspection there have been changes to governance, including the appointment of a new chair. Governors have not challenged school leaders strongly enough over the lack of consistent improvement in pupils' outcomes across the school. They are now more aware of their roles and responsibilities and are providing greater levels of challenge.
- Governors share leaders' ambitions for the school and fully support its values and ethos. They take a keen and close interest in all aspects of the school's work. Minutes of their meetings show that they are increasingly holding leaders to account and asking questions about the information they receive. They have a good understanding of how to interpret historic achievement data. They know the school's areas of strength and what needs further work, acknowledging the need for pupils to make better progress.
- The governing body checks carefully on the spending of additional funding, especially the pupil premium, and understands the impact of spending decisions. Governors also make sure that any safeguarding issues and health and safety matters are reported and discussed at every meeting. They understand how teachers' performance is assessed and rewarded.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff are vigilant and well trained. Leaders ensure that staff keep their knowledge up to date, including how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Staff know how to keep children safe and are aware of the signs which might suggest that a child is at risk of harm. There are clear procedures in place to ensure that all adults know who to report concerns to.
- Safeguarding records are detailed and show a close and effective working relationship with other agencies.
- The headteacher knows the pupils and their families well and ensures that support is provided when needed. Effective relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and that their welfare needs are met.
- The school educates pupils well about how to stay safe online. Parents value this and the support the school has given them to help their children with this at home.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not had a consistently strong impact on pupils' learning and progress. Progress in different year groups and in different subjects has been, and remains, too variable. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and work does not challenge the most able. Pupils confirm that teachers do not always challenge them in lessons.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling across the school has been identified as a weakness and is a major focus in all classes. However, pupils' work does not show strong improvement. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils of all abilities to use their skills to write for different purposes and audiences. In younger classes, pupils make slow progress in writing from their starting points. Work is often untidy and illegible.
- In some classes, the most able pupils are encouraged to write with flair and imagination. They draw on the techniques that writers use in the high-quality texts they read in class, such as 'Macbeth'. Some examples of sophisticated writing were seen in the books of older pupils. However, the majority of the most able pupils do not demonstrate strong technical use of English. Teachers do not routinely plan opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop a wide and rich vocabulary through frequent reading. Most pupils do not read widely for pleasure. Pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, read accurately and use their phonic knowledge to work out how to pronounce unfamiliar words. However, many pupils read without expression and fluency. They comment that they do not visit the well-stocked library regularly and the most able pupils are not challenged during guided reading time.
- The teaching of basic mathematical skills is a strength. Almost all pupils take pride in their mathematics work, which is neat, carefully organised and shows steady progress from their starting points. There is no obvious difference between the work of girls and boys. The most able pupils demonstrate a greater level of understanding of mathematical processes when applying multiplication skills to concepts such as time, weight and money. Mathematical vocabulary is developed well across the school. However, older pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and reasoning. Consequently, the most able pupils do not reach the highest standards.
- Teachers use ongoing assessment in lessons to intervene and support lower-ability pupils to good effect. This, together with the good-quality additional support provided by teaching assistants, is increasing the rate of progress for this group of pupils. As a consequence, lower-ability pupils currently in the school are making steady progress from their starting points in mathematics.
- For other pupils, their learning is not always checked effectively and, as a result, pupils are not moved on to the next challenge when they are ready. Some pupils benefit from helpful and focused next steps to improve their work, particularly in mathematics. Where this happens, work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress. However, this approach is not being applied consistently and effectively across all subjects, especially in English. This is limiting the progress pupils make.

- Teachers and teaching assistants in Years 5 and 6 skilfully use questioning to develop pupils' thinking and extend their learning. However, this is not standard practice across the school.
- Teachers plan stimulating and exciting activities to introduce new topics across the wider curriculum, such as the life of an Aztec child in a rainforest. Science is taught well across the school and at an appropriate level. Year 5 books provide evidence of deeper understanding of science and pupils demonstrate their ability to apply their learning to other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils use graphs to present the results of science investigations. Pupils in most years use appropriate scientific vocabulary when studying topics such as sound, electricity and digestion.
- There is a positive and supportive climate for learning in classrooms. Pupils are eager to learn and show interest and enthusiasm across a wide range of topics and activities. Their positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their learning. Pupils work willingly in pairs and groups and support one another. They generally persevere with tasks, even if they are not fully clear about what they are doing. Occasionally, pupils' concentration slips, but these pupils do not interfere with the learning of others.
- Relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are mutually respectful and supportive. Teachers know individual pupils well. Teachers make sure that pupils understand that mistakes and misconceptions are an important part of learning. This means that pupils are not afraid to offer their ideas and opinions. Teachers allow pupils time to think and to express their ideas.
- Homework is regular and pupils describe the methods teachers use to check that it has been completed. The school has established regular reading homework in which it has involved parents. However, parents commented on the irregular nature of comments in their children's reading records.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff at all levels know the pupils and their circumstances well. They put pupils' well-being at the centre of all that they do. They work closely with parents and other agencies to make sure that pupils' needs are met and their welfare promoted. They provide an appropriate balance of good pastoral care and zero tolerance of unacceptable behaviour. Several parents mentioned how much they valued the support and attention that is given to children and families during times of difficulty or stress. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' confidence and resilience, and supporting their well-being.
- The school's core values have a powerful impact on pupils' personal development. During the inspection, a group of pupils discussed 'respect', debating whether it is acceptable to use derogatory language about people of other cultures. They made mature and thoughtful contributions to the discussion, showing empathy with the feelings of others.
- School safeguarding procedures are good. Pupils display a clear understanding of their own safety and well-being. They talk openly and confidently about issues that might concern them and their friends and are confident that staff will deal swiftly with them.

Pupils share ideas about bullying and recognise the different forms it can take. They know how to stay safe online and who they can turn to if they have any concerns, even if an incident has taken place out of school.

- Pupils readily take on responsibilities, such as school council, eco-council and sports council. They represent the school in the local community at events such as Remembrance Sunday ceremonies.
- Parents believe the school's approach to their children's personal development and welfare is very good. For example, a parent wrote, 'I find all the staff approachable and nurturing towards my son; I cannot praise the school highly enough.'

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders' consistent actions ensure that challenging behaviour is well managed. Leaders set high expectations and boundaries are firmly understood by pupils and staff.
- Staff adopt a consistent approach to managing behaviour in the school. This is very effective in lessons and results in the vast majority of pupils being ready to learn and demonstrating positive attitudes.
- Pupils say they like the routines and encouragements used by teachers to help them achieve the awards in the 'star' system. This motivates them to work hard and behave well.
- Current attendance figures are in line with national averages. Last year, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who were away from school too often was greater than average. This was largely due to illness and exceptional circumstances. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils this year matches that of other pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because not enough pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who attained the expected standard in the 2016 key stage 2 tests was similar to that seen nationally. However, from their starting points this did not represent good progress.
- Pupils with high prior attainment do not make strong enough progress. Work in writing often lacks challenge, especially for the most able pupils. Not enough pupils reach the higher standards. By Year 6, most-able pupils in English use more complex language and sentence construction. Lower-ability pupils also develop in their learning and application of language; however, this is at a slower rate.
- In 2016, the attainment of pupils in grammar, punctuation and spelling was below the national average. Standards in pupils' presentation and handwriting are poor in a few year groups. The school acknowledges that there is still more to do to improve grammar, punctuation and spelling, especially in younger years. Some pupils do not have sufficient stamina for writing longer pieces of work. Insufficient opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum hinder pupils' progress in this subject

overall.

- Inspection evidence shows that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is not substantially different from that of others in the school. This group of pupils sometimes makes faster progress than others. However, the progress for the most able disadvantaged pupils is not strong enough to enable them to reach the standards expected for their age. Consequently, their attainment is lower than that of other pupils nationally.
- Over time, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities varies considerably across year groups. As a result, too few catch up with the standards expected for their age. This view is supported by the school's own assessment information.
- Pupils are, however, improving their outcomes in mathematics, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Intervention activities for lower-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure stronger improvement in mathematics. These pupils are making steady progress, similar to their peers, and towards appropriate expectations.
- Pupils achieve well in other subjects of the curriculum such as history, science, music, physical education and art. The way topics are organised and taught enables pupils to explore ideas and deepen their knowledge and understanding.



## School details

Unique reference number	115539
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10005550

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Organ
Headteacher	Richard Gasser
Telephone number	01453 823 108
Website	<a href="http://www.parkjuniorschool.co.uk">www.parkjuniorschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@park-jun.gloucs.sch.uk">head@park-jun.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	13–14 June 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of children for whom the school receives the pupil premium is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs is also above the national average.
- No pupils are educated off-site or through alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club, a homework club and a range of after-school clubs which were evaluated as part of the inspection.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. There are fewer pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language than in most schools of

this size.

- The government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics, are met by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons, or part-lessons, covering all classes. Some of these visits were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, two governors, including the chair of governors, senior and middle leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke with the local authority primary adviser by telephone.
- Pupils' work was examined during lessons and a more detailed scrutiny was made of samples of written work. Inspectors listened to pupils read and they spoke with pupils throughout the inspection in order to gather their views.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation including policies and records about how the school keeps pupils safe, information about pupils' behaviour and their learning, progress and achievement, and the school's evaluation of its strengths and its priorities for improvement.
- Eleven responses to the Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered, together with 14 staff questionnaires. Discussions were held with parents as they brought their children to or collected them from school.

## Inspection team

Sheila Crew, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Fox	Ofsted Inspector

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