

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



15 May 2017

Mr Andrew Hutchings  
Parkgate Primary School  
Brooklands Road  
Parkgate  
Neston  
Cheshire  
CH64 6SW

Dear Mr Hutchings

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Parkgate Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 3 May 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in June 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- focus on what pupils know and can do when planning the next steps in subject development
- provide opportunities for subject leaders to link up with more-experienced subject leaders in other schools to share best practice.
- provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in history, religious education and science.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher, middle leaders, two members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the teaching school to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I spoke to pupils and to four parents on the playground before school. I looked at school documentation, including its action plan, pupil progress tracking and external and internal monitoring. I visited classrooms with you to see the children and teachers at work and to examine the work in pupils' books.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection three members of staff have left the school. There have been three new appointments to the governing body.

## **Main findings**

Governors and staff in the school share your high expectations and commitment to providing a good quality of education for pupils. You have acted quickly to tackle the areas that were identified for improvement at the previous inspection. You are leading improvements effectively with the support of your deputy headteacher and a highly committed team of staff. You and your staff have constructed clear development plans which identify the correct priorities for improvement. The implementation of your plans has been effective in bringing about rapid improvements to the school, particularly to the curriculum on offer. You have made changes to the timetables of individual classes to ensure that teachers give enough time to different subjects to enable the curriculum to be taught in sufficient depth. Your appointment of a member of staff with responsibility for the curriculum has ensured that the curriculum is thorough, carefully planned and offers a range of additional opportunities for pupils, including visits and visitors which bring learning to life. The priority given to the whole curriculum is evident in the quality of work on display.

Subject leadership has developed rapidly within the school. Subject leaders are extremely positive about the changes that are taking place and they contribute to school improvement effectively. You give subject leaders clear guidance on their role and quality time in which to monitor their subjects. Subject leaders' action plans for their individual subjects are based on the monitoring that they have carried out and identify next steps for further development. However, you acknowledge that there should be a sharper focus on the impact of actions on what pupils know and can do within these plans.

Your work to develop the role of middle leaders is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum. As a result, teachers have more confidence in their ability to teach the full range of subjects. This growing confidence is evident in the parental workshops which teachers lead, where parents

work alongside their children.

You are tracking the progress of different groups of pupils more carefully. The impact of any additional support or intervention on pupils' progress is monitored and plans are amended in the light of this. The pupil progress meetings between leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator) and teachers each term have raised expectations about what pupils of all abilities should achieve. This is especially the case for the most able pupils, who are now being given more-challenging work. Pupils who are not making enough progress are identified and supported so that they catch up. Teachers are making sure that disadvantaged pupils who are not making expected progress receive targeted support. As a result, the difference between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is quickly diminishing.

Your more focused approach to planning is beginning to have a positive impact on the challenge provided to the most able pupils. Planning clearly identifies where this challenge would be appropriate. The most able pupils are given opportunities to deepen their thinking through tasks that require them to look at problems in different ways. This level of challenge is more developed in English and mathematics but is not yet embedded across the curriculum.

At the previous inspection, the quality of pupils' writing skills was identified as an area for improvement. The English subject leader has undertaken work to develop planning. This has ensured that there is a clear progression in writing skills developing across the school. As a result progress in writing is becoming more rapid. Pupils are using their writing skills when writing in some other areas of the curriculum, most noticeably in geography. However, teachers have not planned the writing curriculum to take account of what pupils are learning in other subjects and, as a result, there is less evidence of pupils' writing in history, religious education and science. It would be helpful to look at ways of maximising opportunities to write in other subjects being studied.

### **External support**

The school has drawn on external support effectively. The local authority is providing support as well as brokering targeted support from a teaching school alliance. The school improvement meetings are checking that improvement plans are progressing as intended and support is provided as necessary.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cheshire West and Chester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Hughes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**