

Parkstone Grammar School

Sopers Lane, Poole, Dorset BH17 7EP

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Under the headteacher's calm, authoritative and exceptionally effective leadership, the school has improved rapidly since the previous inspection.
- Leadership at all levels is very strong. Governors, senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff work harmoniously together to provide high-quality education for pupils.
- Pupils make remarkable progress by the time they take their GCSEs in Year 11. This is sustained in the sixth form.
- By the time they leave school, pupils have attained consistently at the highest levels and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.
- Disadvantaged pupils make exceptional progress during their time at the school. Their rates of progress are much higher than other pupils nationally with the same starting points.
- School leaders make very good use of targeted training to develop teachers' professional knowledge and skills. As a result, teaching continues to improve.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They inspire and sustain a love of learning in their pupils. Teachers have an unswerving faith in the ability of their pupils to succeed and give their time unselfishly to ensure that this happens.
- Pupils are confident and articulate learners. They take great pride in their work and are determined to succeed.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable and their positive attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are hungry to learn and attendance rates are high, including in the sixth form.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students follow very well developed 16 to 19 study programmes. Systems to track and monitor their progress have been transformed since the previous inspection.
- Disadvantaged students prosper in the sixth form and in recent years all have gone on to university.
- Systems to communicate information to parents about their children's progress need further refinement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by sharpening the clarity of information parents are given about their children's progress, including in the sixth form.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is an outstanding school leader. Since taking up her post in 2013, she has provided exceptional leadership to the school, which has improved rapidly and continues to do so. Her ambition for the school is boundless but is always tempered by an ever-present concern for the well-being of pupils, teachers and other staff. Her calm, considerate and authoritative approach is a model to all.
- Leadership at all levels is a strength of the school, including in the sixth form. The headteacher is very well supported by a close-knit senior leadership team that shares her moral purpose and vision for the school. Middle leaders are also a strength of the school. Since the previous inspection many of these middle leaders have taken up their posts. They bring dynamism to their roles and have been a key element in driving up standards to new heights.
- Highly effective leadership has improved teaching rapidly and continues to do so. Leaders use training highly effectively to develop teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result, the school has a highly motivated and well-trained staff. In turn, this has led to pupils' progress becoming even quicker.
- Newly qualified teachers are effusive in their praise for the support that the school provides as they set out on their new careers. The use of individual subject mentors and regular training opportunities means that they are rapidly developing their teaching knowledge, understanding and skills further.
- Leaders have improved systems to manage teachers' performance significantly since the previous inspection. Teachers' individual targets are closely linked to their opportunities to undertake further professional development and training. This personalised approach to performance management has been another key factor in driving teaching standards ever upwards.
- School leaders are committed to using educational research to inform their decision-making. This means that key initiatives are evidence-based. An example is the introduction of the new well-being programme, in which the school has redesigned its personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum to meet the needs of pupils more precisely. Teachers are encouraged to undertake their own research projects in order to develop not just their own teaching but teaching in the school as a whole.
- Leaders are equally committed to listening to pupils' opinions about changes in the school. Pupils recognise and appreciate this. They can describe a number of occasions where their collective voice has been responded to, such as in the organisation of study spaces in the sixth-form hub and around the school.
- School leaders and governors make very good use of additional funding. The school has a relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium but it uses the funding it gets thoughtfully. As a result, these pupils make substantial progress. The school has no pupils eligible for the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well led and the additional funding for these pupils is spent wisely. This aspect of the

school's work has improved markedly since the previous inspection and the school is recognised in the local area for its strength in areas such as mental health.

- The curriculum at Parkstone Grammar is very strong. Pupils follow a wide range of courses in key stage 3 and have an equally wide range of options to choose from in key stage 4. In the sixth form, students have a large number of A-level courses to select from, plus a well-developed programme of additional activities.
- Leaders' vision for the curriculum is clear. They are determined to maintain its breadth, especially in the creative areas, such as art, drama and music. As a result, they do not insist that pupils must enter for GCSE subjects that will qualify them for the EBacc, although many choose to do so.
- The formal curriculum is augmented by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, which most grab enthusiastically. There are currently over 70 clubs and societies operating in the school. In addition, extra-curricular sport is a strength of the school. Many pupils play sport at lunchtime or after school. This contributes well to maintaining their physical and mental well-being.
- The school actively promotes fundamental British values such as individual liberty, democracy, the rule of law and tolerance. This is built into, for example, the new well-being programme. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Similarly, the broad and balanced curriculum, coupled with the rich extra-curricular programme, promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The value the school places on the creative arts is but one example of this. Another is its links with a school in Kenya and the charitable work that pupils do for orphans with HIV/AIDS there.
- Some pupils and parents would appreciate greater clarity in the information they are provided with about the progress that pupils make.

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong at Parkstone Grammar School. Governors share the headteacher's drive to make the school a centre of excellence in all aspects of its work.
- Governors have a very good understanding of the school and of their role. They play an active part in the strategic development of the school and are involved in all aspects of planning for its future. They have clear priorities, such as the preservation of a broad and balanced curriculum with plenty of creative opportunities that are communicated clearly to school leaders.
- Governors take their roles seriously and undertake a wide range of training to help them fulfil these roles. Recent examples include courses on interpreting assessment information and the use of the pupil premium. As a result, governors are well equipped both to challenge and to support school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The designated safeguarding lead and his team have a very good understanding of safeguarding in the context of

the school and the local community. As a result of effective training, staff have a good knowledge of issues such as self-harm, child sexual exploitation or the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

- In the online survey, Parent View, the vast majority of parents said that their children were happy, safe and well looked after at the school. Pupils say that they feel safe and highlighted what they saw as the good work the school does to teach them how to stay safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers at Parkstone Grammar are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and highly skilled. They inspire pupils with a love of learning and build successfully on pupils' high levels of self-motivation.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and set high standards. Pupils rise willingly to these. Teaching is characterised by strong subject knowledge. Teachers use highly effective questioning to assess, probe and develop pupils' understanding. Feedback, in whatever form it is given, is particularly good at helping pupils to make rapid progress. Pupils say that the feedback they receive from teachers is one of the most effective things that help them to make rapid progress. Teachers quickly identify misconceptions and use these as a springboard to further learning and deeper understanding.
- Lessons are well planned to ensure that pupils are challenged, whatever their starting points. Pupils are made to think, and think hard, about the material they are studying. Teaching is particularly effective in using challenge to promote very rapid progress by the relatively small number of pupils who join this selective school with prior attainment in line with the national average.
- Teachers are unswerving in their belief that all of their pupils can succeed at the highest levels and give their time unstintingly to pupils as a result. When asked by inspectors what they liked most about the school, pupils almost invariably mentioned the teachers, and their willingness to help, as the first thing they thought of. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very strong and provide a solid foundation upon which to build success.
- Teaching is at its most effective where it is targeted precisely at pupils' individual needs, of which teachers have a good understanding. Teachers are adept at letting pupils drive forward their own learning by responding effectively to their questions and capitalising on their interests and enthusiasm.
- Teachers' excellent, specialist subject knowledge makes teaching in the sixth form highly effective.
- Pupils join the school with typically very good skills in reading, writing and mathematics, which teaching goes on to develop very rapidly, promoting high levels of attainment. Very occasionally, teaching does not identify some errors in literacy quickly enough.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have all the attitudes and habits of highly effective learners. This is a key reason behind the outstanding progress they make. They take a justified pride in their work and are determined to succeed. They show resilience when faced with challenging work. They do not give up easily and are keen to work things out for themselves.
- Pupils have a maturity that allows them to take responsibility for their own learning. They can articulate clearly what they are learning and why. In the newly introduced well-being programme, for example, they understand completely the aims of the programme and how it will benefit their future learning.
- Careers guidance is a strength of the school, including in the sixth form. This means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. All pupils at the end of Year 11 go on to meaningful education or training, as do all students who leave the sixth form at the end of Year 13.
- Pupils talk positively about the strong relationships they have with their form tutors and how they are always there to listen if pupils have anything they are worried about.
- The quality of the sex and relationships education that pupils receive is extremely high.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities that pupils engage in, including sport, helps them to maintain healthy lifestyles, both physically and mentally.
- Pupils say that there is little or no bullying in the school and are confident that school leaders will deal with it effectively should it occur. School records indicate that when it does occur this is the case, as communications with external agencies show.
- School leaders take no major decision without giving deep consideration to the impact that it might have on pupils' well-being, which is always at the forefront of their minds. This is a central reason why the school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is impeccable. They are consistently polite to each other, to teachers and staff and to visitors. This ensures that a calm, industrious and productive learning environment is maintained at all times.
- Pupils enjoy and value their education. As a result, levels of attendance have historically been high and they continue to improve. Very few pupils are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- In their time at the school, pupils make outstanding progress as a result of the outstanding teaching they receive. Most pupils enter the school with very high levels of attainment; nonetheless, they go on to make rapid advances in their knowledge, understanding and skills from these high starting points. This is true across all year groups and subjects. The work being produced by pupils currently in the school is of exceptionally high quality.
- For a number of years, the progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 4 has been significantly above the national average. In 2016, the school's progress score put it in the top five percent of schools nationally. The results from 2017 indicate that overall progress has improved even further. Moreover, in each of English, mathematics, science, humanities and languages, progress has been significantly and consistently higher than the national figure for a number of years.
- The same is true of attainment at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. For example, over 60% of grades in the new, more rigorous GCSEs in English language, English literature and mathematics were grade 7 or above.
- Two groups of pupils do particularly well at the school. The school is a selective grammar school and the vast majority of pupils who are admitted are among the most able nationally. A small number of middle-ability pupils join the school, however, and they make even more rapid progress than the other pupils. Results from 2017 indicate that they get approximately a grade and half more in each GCSE than pupils nationally with the same starting points.
- Similarly, the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school do at least as well as, and sometimes better than, other pupils in the school. This means that they achieve substantially better outcomes than other pupils nationally with the same starting points. For example, all the disadvantaged pupils in 2017 achieved higher than a grade 5 (a good pass) in both English and mathematics and achieved on average half a grade higher in each of their GCSEs.
- The relatively small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress as a result of the high-quality support they receive.
- The high levels of progress that pupils achieve in key stage 4 are sustained very well in the sixth form and students leave the school with exceptionally high levels of attainment at the end of Year 13.
- Pupils read widely, regularly and enthusiastically. The library is a key part of the school and pupils make good use of it. One indicator for this is the waiting lists for popular books, such is the demand for them from pupils.
- As a result of their outstanding progress, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training. All pupils go on to meaningful education, employment or training at the end of their time in the school, with over 80% going to university after Year 13.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection in 2013, the leadership of the sixth form has been transformed. Leaders now have a comprehensive and robust tracking system in place. This allows them to intervene at the earliest possible moment if a student needs further support to reach their potential.
- Attainment in the sixth form is very high. Students respond to their specialist teaching well so that by the time they leave at the end of Year 13 they are attaining at the highest levels. For example, in 2017 15% of A level grades were at A*, up from 10% in 2016. For a number of years, approximately three-quarters of all A-level grades were B or above.
- For a school of its kind, the requirements for entry into the sixth form are relatively low. Approximately 20% of students join the school in Year 12 and as a group they make significant progress in their two years at the school.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers deploy their specialist knowledge to push students on to high levels of attainment. As a result, they excel, including the most able. Students talk appreciatively of how their teachers help them to learn and how teachers encourage them to study their subjects beyond the confines of the examination specifications. They particularly appreciate the help that teachers give them in identifying and locating additional wider reading. Students recognise that this is very good preparation for their studies in higher education.
- The school meets all the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Indeed, the decision that all students will take three A levels rather than four means that students now have broader opportunities to undertake meaningful, high-quality non-qualification activities, including work experience and volunteering. This ensures that they are very well prepared for future employment and life generally. This approach also ensures that students' personal development remains at the heart of the study programmes.
- There are no students in the sixth form who do not have at least a grade C or a grade 4 in both English and mathematics. There is no need for the school, therefore, to provide tailored retake courses in these subjects in the sixth form.
- Attendance in the sixth form is high and improving. There is very little unauthorised absence indeed. This is because students value their learning and enjoy coming to school. Rates of retention are very high and few students do not complete the courses they start.
- High-quality careers guidance ensures that students move on to meaningful and sustained destinations, chiefly in higher education. In 2017, all students who had been eligible for the pupil premium when they were in key stage 4 went on to university.
- As it is in the main school, safeguarding is highly effective in the sixth form. Students say that they feel safe and are well prepared for adulthood.

School details

Unique reference number	136368
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	10037041

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	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,231
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	345
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Dawn Stark
Headteacher	Tracy Harris
Telephone number	01202 605605
Website	www.parkstone.poole.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@parkstone.poole.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 December 2013

Information about this school

- Parkstone Grammar School is a large selective school for girls in Poole. It has a much higher proportion of most able pupils than the national average and lower proportions of pupils who are disadvantaged, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its accessibility plan on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what

academies should publish about contact details, the special educational needs report and equality objectives.

- The school uses one alternative provider, the Quay School.
- Some subjects in the sixth form are taught jointly with a neighbouring school. A small number of post-16 students also attend A-level courses at that school.
- The school meets the current government floor standards at key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in lessons across all year groups, including in the sixth form. They spoke to pupils about their studies and also examined the work in their books and folders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, newly qualified teachers and governors. They also spoke to groups of pupils. The lead inspector spoke to the school's improvement partner by telephone.
- A wide range of documentary evidence was examined, including records of pupils' progress, key policies, safeguarding records and the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took into account 205 responses to Parent View and also scrutinised the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Stephen Lee, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Malcolm Davison	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Butler	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Massey	Ofsted Inspector
John Laver	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Hummerstone	Ofsted Inspector
Benjamin Antell	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017