

Parkgate Primary School

Brooklands Road, Parkgate, Neston, Cheshire CH64 6SW

Inspection dates

11–12 December 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a good and improving school. Strong and effective leadership from the headteacher has led to improvements in pupils' outcomes. Staff and governors share the headteacher's ambition for the school to improve further.
- The school provides a broad, engaging and stimulating curriculum. This helps to ensure that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils develop strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Consequently, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Middle leaders have great enthusiasm for their subjects and many have played a key role in improving standards in their curriculum area. Subject leaders for mathematics and English have overseen significant improvements to teaching in these subjects.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills to their role. This, combined with their knowledge of the school and the community that it serves, enables them to provide effective support and challenge to school leaders.
- Pupils behave well. Their conduct around school is good, they have positive attitudes to learning and they develop strong relationships with the adults who teach them.
- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe in school. This helps them to develop into confident and happy learners.
- The school has a strong safeguarding culture built on excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they can talk to a member of staff if they have any concerns. They know they will be listened to.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and many other subjects across the curriculum.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils develop the knowledge and skills required to help them become successful readers.
- Attendance was below the national average last year and this year too many pupils have been persistently absent from school.
- Some middle leaders have not received enough guidance to enable them to raise the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in the subjects that they lead.
- Over the past two years some children have not made the progress of which they are capable in order to attain a good level of development by the time they leave the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the systems for supporting middle leaders so that all are able to influence teaching in their area of responsibility and contribute to pupils' substantial and sustained progress in all subjects.
- Reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- Build on recent developments to teaching in the early years so that a greater proportion of children achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has overseen significant improvements at the school since the previous inspection. He has worked effectively with staff and governors to develop a strong and positive ethos at the school. The progress that the school has made during this period is reflected in the improved academic outcomes for pupils at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, are ambitious for Parkgate. They have high expectations of staff and pupils and have created many strengths at the school. The positive relationships that exist between leaders and staff support the strong progress that different groups of pupils make across the school.
- Leaders have driven improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in English and mathematics. They make regular checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. They also meet regularly with teachers to review pupils' attainment and identify where pupils may need additional support.
- Middle leaders for mathematics and English have been highly successful in improving standards in their subjects. They have led training for teachers and provided good-quality support in class. They also make regular checks on the quality of work that pupils are producing, highlighting strengths along with any areas that could be improved further.
- However, not all middle leaders have been able to have the same impact on teaching in their areas of responsibility. Senior leaders have not provided all subject leaders with precise guidance about how to carry out their role in checking the quality of pupils' learning. As a result, standards are not as high as they could be in some subjects.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and provides pupils with regular opportunities to explore all national curriculum subjects. In developing this curriculum leaders have also emphasised the importance of applying literacy and numeracy skills where appropriate. For example, inspectors saw many high-quality pieces of writing in history books. They also saw evidence that pupils use their mathematical skills when recording science experiments.
- Art and music are now particular strengths at Parkgate. Inspectors saw high-quality artwork on display around the school and in pupils' sketch books, which they keep with them as they move through year groups. All pupils learn to play the clarinet in Year 5. They also have the opportunity to take part in small-group and individual lessons with a range of instruments. There is a school orchestra and the choir often performs in school and in the local area.
- The curriculum is enriched with a range of educational visits and residential trips. Staff make good use of the local area to explore environmental issues with younger children. From Year 2, pupils can participate in residential visits through which they experience a range of outdoor pursuits such as canoeing and abseiling.
- Teachers are fully supportive of the school's leadership team. They value the support that school leaders provide. They are also positive about the regular opportunities that they have to attend high-quality training. This has a positive impact on their teaching

and on pupils' learning.

- Although some parents expressed negative views about the school's leadership on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the vast majority were highly supportive. Their positive responses were captured by one parent who wrote, 'This is now a school that offers a broad, exciting and inspiring curriculum as well as focusing on the demanding targets for reading, writing and maths.'
- The additional funding that the school receives for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is spent well. Leaders have ensured that good systems are in place to identify pupils' needs and monitor the impact of any additional support provided.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a full and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve further. They provide a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders and closely track the school's progress in improving its priority areas.
- Governors bring a wealth of educational experience to the school. As a result, they are able to raise relevant questions about the performance of different pupil groups when challenging and holding staff to account for the school's work.
- Governors ensure that they have an accurate overview of the school's finances and manage them efficiently. They keep a close check on how well the school uses any additional funding, for example the use of pupil premium and the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are appropriately trained in all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection. They understand how to respond should they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety.
- The school's detailed records show that any concerns are followed up in a timely manner. Where necessary, school leaders work effectively with outside agencies to provide support for families and ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Recruitment processes are robust. School leaders ensure that appropriate checks are made on all adults who work with pupils at the school. Staff files are well maintained and the safeguarding governor makes regular reviews of the school's safeguarding records and policies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan well-structured lessons that help pupils to learn well. Teachers have good subject knowledge in a wide range of subjects. They use time in lessons productively and have high expectations regarding pupils' conduct and attitudes to work. They regularly set work that provides a good level of challenge and helps pupils

to make good progress.

- Significant improvements have been made to the teaching of mathematics since the previous inspection. The work seen in books shows challenge from the first day of the school year in many classes. The school's approach to teaching mathematics has helped most pupils to become fluent in developing key mathematical knowledge and skills. Teachers also provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply these skills to investigate and solve problems. Current pupils are making strong progress.
- The teaching of phonics is highly effective. Staff have been well trained and have good subject knowledge. As a result, children develop their early reading skills extremely well in the early years and key stage 1. Teachers make regular assessments of the progress that pupils make in reading across key stage 1 and key stage 2. Adults read regularly with pupils and ensure that they provide challenge and support for all ability groups.
- The teaching of writing is a significant strength. Teachers across the school have good subject knowledge and use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Inspectors saw many examples of high-quality of writing in pupils' English books. They also saw evidence of pupils developing writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. The quality of presentation and handwriting is also a strength in many classes.
- The high quality of pupils' work is evident in the many vibrant displays in classrooms and corridors. The quality of work in pupils' books also highlights the many strengths that exist in teaching across a number of subjects. Pupils' broad experience in most subjects means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they move to secondary school.
- The school provides many learning experiences outside of the classroom. A recent project based around a local zoo helped pupils to learn about the impact of plastics and palm oil on the environment. Pupils also learn about different cultures and major world religions, regularly celebrating events such as Eid al-Adha and Chinese New Year.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. They are well trained and provide high-quality support in class, helping to ensure that all pupils are able to make progress in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have created a nurturing, inclusive school in which pupils enjoy their learning and thrive. At the start of each day a member of staff welcomes each pupil into the school building by name, checking they are in a good frame of mind.
- The school's broad curriculum helps to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Well-chosen topics, assembly themes and the many educational visits that pupils take part in help to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

- Pupils who met with one of the inspectors demonstrated a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they were aware of the major risks associated with using the internet and social media. They were able to explain how to protect themselves while working or playing online.
- Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to school life. There is an active school council and older pupils can volunteer as Young Leaders, helping and playing with younger pupils at breaktimes. Pupils also have opportunities to represent the school at sporting events and have had recent success in competitions with local schools in cross-country running and cricket.
- Some parents expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying on Parent View. However, inspectors saw only good behaviour during this inspection. All members of staff who responded to the staff survey said that behaviour was good at the school. Almost every pupil who responded to the pupil survey said that behaviour around school is good. Pupils said that bullying does happen from time to time but that members of staff are good at resolving issues quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Parkgate is a caring, nurturing and happy school. Leaders and staff have created an ethos of tolerance and mutual respect that permeates all aspects of the school's work. Pupils are well mannered and very welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils quickly develop good attitudes to learning at Parkgate. They work hard in lessons and take great pride in their work.
- Pupils behave well during breaktimes and dinner times. They are respectful towards each other and the adults who supervise them.
- There was a decline in pupils' attendance last year and it fell below the national average. Overall attendance has improved since September but there are still too many pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Attainment has improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been above the national average for the past two years.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. The quality of work that inspectors saw in pupils' books showed that current pupils are attaining well across the school. Attainment at the end of key stage 1 was above average in 2018. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 was significantly above the national average.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Over the past two years almost all pupils have achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Effective teaching results in pupils making good progress in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading at the end of key

stage 2 was above average in 2018.

- Pupils also make good progress in writing and achieve well. Inspectors saw many examples of high-quality writing not only in pupils' English books but in subjects such as history, geography and music.
- Pupils achieve well in many other subject areas. For example, inspectors saw evidence of high-quality artwork in pupils' sketch books. Pupils' music books show clear evidence of strong learning in music lessons. Improvements in pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge were evident in science books. The links that teachers make between different subject areas mean that pupils are also developing their reading and writing skills in history and geography lessons.
- The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth at the end of key stage 1 and the higher standards at the end of key stage 2 has been broadly average over the past two years. However, current pupils are making increasingly strong progress in English and mathematics. As a result, more pupils than before are working at higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils at the school have not made good progress over recent years, when compared to other pupils nationally, particularly in English. Few have achieved the expected standard in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2. However, the effective use of the pupil premium funding is ensuring that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving convincingly. Inspectors saw clear evidence that current disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress. There is very little difference between their progress and attainment and that of other pupils currently in the school.
- Effective provision is made for pupils with SEND. Leaders monitor their progress closely and the support that staff provide for these pupils is having a positive impact on their learning. As a result, they make good progress from their various starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start at the school with skills and abilities that are in line with and sometimes above those typical for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been broadly average over the past two years. This did not represent good progress for some children, who were capable of more. However, improvements in teaching mean that a greater proportion of children currently in the Reception class are making much stronger progress in their learning. A higher proportion are on track to achieve a good level of development at the end of this school year than has been the case previously.
- The quality of teaching is good in the early years. Recent improvements have been made to the way that adults use assessment to plan activities that are engaging and challenging. This is helping to ensure that children currently in the early years are making stronger progress than the children in previous cohorts.
- There are good links between school and home. Transition arrangements are well organised and ensure a smooth start to school life. Good communication ensures that parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents often use the school's online system to find out about what children are learning at school and share

what they are doing at home.

- Leaders regularly hold meetings for parents to show them how different aspects of the curriculum, such as phonics, are taught. This helps parents to develop a good understanding of how they can support their children's learning and development at home.
- Staff ensure that the early years curriculum provides children with many interesting experiences. The classroom and the outdoor area are well resourced and organised in a way that stimulates children's curiosity. Children enjoy the broad range of activities on offer each day. They work and play well together in a calm and well-organised environment. They quickly learn to follow school routines and develop good attitudes to learning.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. The early years leader has a clear understanding of the quality of provision and knows where staff need to focus their efforts to maintain and improve the good quality of education provided.
- Staff work effectively to promote the development of children's language and communication skills. Children listen carefully to each other and the adults who teach them. Children regularly engage in activities which build their understanding of the world beyond their immediate experience. For example, an inspector heard two children talking in detail about the Prime Minister, having watched a children's television programme about politics.
- Children are safe and well looked after in the early years. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Children behave well, cooperate with each other and develop good levels of independence and resilience.

School details

Unique reference number	111126
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10046376

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Dool and Elaine Jackson (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Andrew Hutchings
Telephone number	0151 338 2082
Website	www.parkgateprimary.org.uk
Email address	head@parkgate.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 June 2016

Information about this school

- Parkgate is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups who attend the school is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is well below the national average.
- There is one Reception class.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in all classes. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in subjects across the curriculum.
- Inspectors looked at documentation including school improvement plans, the school's self-evaluation document, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour information, and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and several subject leaders. The lead inspector also met with four members of the governing body. This included the co-chairs of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to listen to them read and discuss behaviour and other aspects of school life. Inspectors also spoke with many other pupils informally.
- Inspectors spoke with parents in the playground before school. They also talked with staff about teaching, safeguarding and leadership.
- Inspectors reviewed the 84 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's parental questionnaire. They also took account of the 14 responses to the staff survey and the 64 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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