

# Inspection of a good school: Park Academy

200 Dorset Road, London SW19 3EF

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Inspection date:

27 September 2022

## **Outcome**

Park Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a nurturing school that pupils love to attend. They are happy and kept safe. New pupils are made to feel immediately welcome. They quickly settle into established school routines. Staff have very high expectations of all pupils. Teachers and support staff work collaboratively to make sure that every pupil thrives and succeeds in their learning.

Pupils were keen to explain what makes their school special. They like the fact that everyone has a part to play. No one is left out. They also appreciate having their talents recognised and praised. Pupils enjoy learning about and celebrating different cultures. They regularly take part in visits designed to enhance their learning across the curriculum, for example to the National Trust park close to the school.

In lessons, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and respectful towards each other, their teachers and visitors alike. Pupils know what bullying is and what it is not. Any such incidents are dealt with by staff quickly and effectively. Pupils know to tell an adult if they are worried about anything. They also like that they can make use of the 'reflect and reset' spaces in their classrooms if they need to.

Parents and carers commented positively on the high-quality support and care their children receive.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have designed a carefully sequenced curriculum that matches what is expected nationally. They are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Subject leaders have identified the most important knowledge and vocabulary pupils should learn from early years onwards. Teachers revisit key learning regularly. They know what pupils have learned previously and why this is important for

what pupils will learn next. For example, in geography, teachers remind pupils of knowledge they have learned in previous years before moving on to new ideas. This helps pupils to secure their understanding and to remember important ideas. In Year 2, for instance, pupils develop an in-depth knowledge of the equator, continents and oceans.

Teachers' own subject knowledge is strong. This helps to ensure that the curriculum is implemented with precision. In line with the rest of the school, teachers in Reception Year set the same high standards and expectations from the start. For example, they use technical language accurately in phonics teaching to help develop children's understanding. Teachers spot misconceptions and gaps in knowledge immediately. This is because they check pupils' understanding carefully. They make sure that any misconceptions and errors are addressed swiftly.

Pupils enjoy learning and take great pride in their work. They recall previous learning confidently and how it links to what they are learning now. All pupils, including those with SEND, access the same curriculum. This is because pupils' barriers to learning are identified, and teachers adapt learning effectively when needed. Support staff benefit from the same professional development as teachers. Pupils are secure in routines and know exactly what is expected of them. This plays its part in ensuring that all succeed.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have made sure that staff are trained to deliver the phonics programme confidently and effectively. Phonics is taught every day from the very start of Reception Year. The curriculum has been structured to ensure that pupils practise reading daily. Leaders also provide additional catch-up sessions for pupils who are either new to reading or have fallen behind. This means that weaker readers quickly become more confident and fluent.

Pupils behave very well. This means that their learning is not disrupted. Leaders also make sure that pupils' wider development is well catered for. Pupils learn about all aspects of safety. They are taught how to keep themselves physically and mentally well, including how to use different strategies to deal with conflict and emotion. Pupils try hard to behave in a sensible and respectful manner towards each other and visitors. They learn about other faiths and different points of view. Pupils are encouraged not only to tolerate but also to celebrate each other's differences. Pupils are also taught about democracy and put this into practice when voting for their class ambassador. They enjoy a variety of clubs and visits.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working at the school. They feel supported in managing their workload. Staff well-being is a high priority. For example, staff particularly value coaching from more experienced members of the team.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Leaders make sure that staff receive regular and up-to-date safeguarding training. This means that everyone knows what signs to look out for that may suggest a pupil is at risk of harm.

Leaders work proactively with external agencies to secure the help that pupils need. Those responsible for governance perform their statutory duties well.

Pupils learn about how to stay safe both outside and inside school. They understand they should talk to a trusted adult if they have any worries. They also know not to share personal information online.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141027
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240510
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	117
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Rama Venchard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Atkinson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.park-academy.org">www.park-academy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school joined Step Academy Trust in April 2020, having previously been part of Chapel Street Community Schools Trust.
- The headteacher joined the school in June 2021. Most staff have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. They also met three representatives from Step Academy Trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspectors also looked at the curriculum in art and design and history. They spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects and looked at pupils' work.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspectors checked the single central record of pre-employment checks and met with the designated safeguarding lead. They reviewed documentation related to safeguarding, including case records.
- The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils to discuss their views. They spoke with staff formally in groups and informally with individuals. The inspectors observed pupils' conduct around the school.

### **Inspection team**

Alison Colenso, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Aliki Constantopoulou

His Majesty's Inspector

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