

Inspection of an outstanding school: Parkside Community Primary School

Beechwood Lane, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8QQ

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 July 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this happy and vibrant school. They delight in feeding the chickens and goats in the school farm and enjoy exercising on the outside gym equipment. Pupils feel safe. They form very positive relationships with one another. As one pupil said, 'there are amazing people here and you make new friends every day.' On the rare occasion that bullying happens, staff resolve this quickly.

Pupils enjoy taking on leadership roles. Pupil 'buddies' link with children in the Nursery and Reception classes to help with their transition through the school. 'Digital leaders' support staff to deliver assemblies. 'House captains' are a voice for pupils across the school.

Teachers are aspirational for pupils to achieve well. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and to develop the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed. One pupil shared the views of many and said, 'The teachers really push you to do your best.' Staff show a genuine interest in the lives of their pupils and develop strong relationships with them. Pupils explore their learning in the 'forest school'. They engage in a wide range of activities that go beyond the classroom.

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

Leaders provide a curriculum that meets the needs and interests of the pupils well. Over the last year, leaders have refined the steps in learning in many subjects. This helps teachers to know what to teach and when, enabling them to manage their workload effectively. Subject leaders provide helpful training for teachers. This ensures that teachers have the subject knowledge that they need to deliver the refined curriculum with confidence. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Teachers provide purposeful support in lessons for pupils with

SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers with confidence and achieve well.

In most subjects, teachers ensure that pupils learn the knowledge and skills needed to succeed. Teachers use purposeful questioning to review learning. They encourage pupils to reflect on what they have learned and apply what they know to new learning. This helps pupils to develop knowledge systematically and allows teachers to check pupils' understanding. Children in the early years explore what they learn in class through meaningful play-based activities. This ensures that they learn the knowledge and skills needed to be ready for key stage 1. Teachers encourage pupils to apply what they have learned across subjects well. For example, pupils explore mathematical knowledge of coordinates in geography lessons.

However, in a few subjects, some pupils do not learn as well as they could. Sometimes, teachers do not design tasks that enable pupils to learn the curriculum effectively. As a result, pupils do not always develop the detailed knowledge and understanding that leaders expect. This is because the way that teachers deliver learning in some subjects is not yet applied consistently.

Teachers enable pupils to become confident and enthusiastic readers. This year, leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching phonics. Helpful staff training has led to a consistent approach to teaching phonic knowledge. Teachers ensure that children in the early years learn to read simple words confidently. Pupils read books that allow them to practise the sounds that they know. This builds their confidence as readers. When pupils fall behind with their reading, staff support them well to catch up quickly.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They understand staff's clear expectations for behaviour. Pupils see these as fair. In the early years, children listen carefully to instructions. They remain focussed and engaged in activities. This helps them to explore their ideas well. Older pupils are attentive and keen to share their ideas. They participate positively in class and show a genuine interest in what others say.

Staff provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn beyond lessons. Pupils experience a rich variety of visits that enhance their learning. For example, pupils visit sites in their local community to deepen their geographical knowledge. They also use the school grounds to develop scientific skills. Staff provide a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Clubs include 'Eco warriors', puppetry, archery, football and chess. Leaders ensure that all clubs are accessible for all, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils learn to explain their feelings. They are supported well to develop their emotional resilience. Pupils value the 'reflection garden' as a space where they can be calm and thoughtful during playtimes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive training to help them identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff are clear about what to do if they have a concern about a pupil.

Leaders act on concerns swiftly. They work with outside agencies to support pupils and families. Leaders check that all adults who work in the school are safe to work with children.

Teachers help pupils to recognise the possible dangers of being online. Pupils are confident that there are trusted adults in school who they can speak to if they have a worry or concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers have implemented the recent changes to the curriculum inconsistently. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders need to continue to embed the curriculum changes so that all pupils can achieve highly across the whole curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in April 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

Unique reference number	114482
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10256420
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Siobhan Murphy
Headteacher	Helen Punter-Bruce Derek Hollywood
Website	www.parksideprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 July 2017 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Wealden Education Improvement Partnership, a local authority partnership hub with 27 schools.
- The school runs a nursery on site that caters for 2- 3- and 4-year-old children.
- The school is currently led by two co-headteachers who share the roles and responsibilities of headship. One co-headteacher is leaving the school in August 2023. From September 2023, there will be one headteacher in post.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other leaders, and a range of staff at the school. The inspector met with the chair of governors and representatives of the governing body. The inspector met with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents including those related to the governance of the school.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers through responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey. The inspector spoke to staff, parents and pupils during the inspection and took account of the staff confidential online surveys.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and considered safeguarding documents and records. This included the school's records and plans for supporting pupils who have been referred to outside agencies. The inspector also talked to pupils, staff, governors and parents.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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