

Inspection of a good school: Parkgate Infants' and Nursery School

Northfield Gardens, Watford, Hertfordshire WD24 7RL

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

Outcome

Parkgate Infants' and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Parkgate thrive in a strong school community, where cultural diversity is respected and celebrated. There are positive relationships among adults, parents, and pupils. This helps create a safe and supportive environment.

Children in the early years get off to a good start to their education. They learn how to stay safe and keep healthy. The school provides pupils with many opportunities to share experiences from their different religions. This fosters mutual respect for other's beliefs.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those new to English, learn to love stories and books. The school's own library bus plays an important role in fostering a love of reading.

The school is aspirational for pupils, teaching them that 'anything is possible' with hard work. Through the school's curriculum, pupils learn about people who have made a difference. They see that individuals can have the power to have a positive impact on the world around them. This encourages them to believe in themselves and work hard.

Pupils behave well. They understand and follow the school's 'Golden Rules' and the 'Parkgate Way'. These reinforce the school's high expectations and fosters a culture of respect, responsibility, and strong achievement among pupils.

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

The school curriculum outlines crucial knowledge and vocabulary that pupils will learn and when they will learn it. It emphasises the importance of developing pupils' communication and language in all aspects of learning. This approach supports pupils, including those who are new to English, in developing essential skills from the very start of school.

Subject leaders support teachers to adapt learning, as necessary. They ensure that important vocabulary, skills and knowledge are taught at the right time in each year

group. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They revisit pupils' learning to connect ideas across subjects. This helps deepen pupils' understanding. Pupils are given many opportunities to write across curriculum subjects. This helps them to consolidate learning and practise fundamental writing skills. Children in Reception engage with purposeful activities that help develop independence and confidence. This helps prepare them for learning in Year 1.

Teachers check learning to ensure that pupils remember important information about their learning, such as important events and significant people from the past. Pupils can explain how historians can learn from Samuel Pepys and his diary, for example. Children in Reception can talk about changes in their own lives, over time. The school ensures that they address areas where pupils are less confident in subsequent years. This approach ensures that pupils acquire essential knowledge without missing important concepts.

In a few subjects, teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to provide pupils with suitable tasks. In a small number of cases, tasks provided are too easy or too difficult. This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they should.

The school works effectively with specialists to identify pupils that need additional support early on. This helps the school adapt learning and provide appropriate training to staff. Pupils, including those with SEND, receive precise support to access the school's curriculum confidently, and achieve as well as they can.

As soon as children start in Nursery, they engage with a wide range of books, stories and rhymes. They begin to learn phonics taught by skilled adults. Across the school, staff teach phonics well and carefully check which sounds pupils have learned. Pupils receive precise and timely support to ensure they do not fall behind. Teachers use a range of successful strategies that ensures pupils with SEND and those new to English are well supported to learn to read. As a result, most pupils become confident and enthusiastic readers.

The school ensures that through clubs, visits and trips, all pupils can enjoy new experiences. The school welcomes visitors such as Paralympians to share their aspirational journeys. Parents and grandparents visit the school to speak about their many different religious celebrations. This fosters cultural awareness and inclusivity among pupils. Pupils take on a variety of roles as play leaders or school councillors and learn how to be responsible young people.

The school reinforces the importance of pupils' attendance by collaborating with the junior school to deliver the same important messages. This helps families to establish consistent routines and improve attendance for some pupils.

Governors share the school's vision for high achievement for all. The school places a strong emphasis on staff well-being. This creates an environment where staff feel valued and supported. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the training they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not use assessment effectively and routinely in all subjects. For example, they do not consistently plan work for pupils that matches what pupils need. Sometimes, teachers set work that is too easy or too difficult for pupils to do independently. This means that, at times, some pupils do not make the progress they should. Teachers need to ensure that they use the information about pupils' learning to set tasks that precisely match pupils' needs so they can be successful in their learning.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and

pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	117163
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10323639
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Jennifer Pattison and Jackie Trench
Headteacher	Gwyn Pritchard
Website	parkgateinfants.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has breakfast club provision daily.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector met members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector considered the views of staff and pupils through meetings and informal discussions. The inspector also considered the views of staff through their responses to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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