

Park Community School

Middle Park Way, Leigh Park, Havant, PO9 4BU

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Achievement is not typically good. Results in GCSE examinations are below average. In 2014, GCSE English results improved by 8% but were still too low.
- Teaching, although improving, is not consistently deepening students' learning. Consequently it is not equipping them fully with the necessary skills and knowledge for the next steps in their education or employment.
- The teaching of extended writing, although developing well in English, is not securely replicated across all subjects.
- Homework is not set consistently enough across subjects to support the learning that takes place during the day.
- Some students' skills in spelling and grammar are weak. These skills are not being taught systematically enough across subjects other than English.
- A few teachers plan too many activities and race through them at too rapid a pace. Where this is the case, students are invariably engaged, but their learning is often superficial.

The school has the following strengths:

- Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's weaknesses and strengths. They have taken tough staffing decisions to ensure that there is no inadequate teaching within the school.
- Strategies to secure improvements are yielding success. Current achievement, particularly in English, mathematics and science, is improving.
- Strong systems to support the learning of disadvantaged students have resulted in improvements in their attendance and academic achievement.
- Students value the school and its place in the community. Leaders' development of students' moral code is strong. Strategies to prepare them for life in modern Britain are in evidence throughout the school.
- Behaviour and safety are good. In particular, systems to keep students safe during a chaotic period of rebuild without closure are robust.
- The development of students' reading and communication skills is strong. There is good evidence of rapid improvements in reading ages, especially in Year 7.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 34 lessons, of which nine were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to lessons and to assemblies.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders and members of the governing body. In addition, the lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors discussed lessons they saw with teaching staff. Senior staff also joined inspectors in a rigorous scrutiny of students' work in English, mathematics and science. Work in other subjects was scrutinised during lesson observations.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, their plans for improvement and current assessment information.
- Inspectors took account of 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of the 172 responses to the school's own recent questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered questionnaires completed by 40 members of staff.

Inspection team

Lesley Farmer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Theresa Phillips

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sylvie Trevena

Additional Inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Park Community School is an average-sized, 11–16 secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students eligible for the student premium funding which is additional government funding for students eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority, is more than twice the national average.
- There are 35 students eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding. This is funding for students who did not achieve Level 4 (the nationally expected level) in English or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportions that have a statement of special educational needs or who have education, health and care plans are average.
- No students attend alternative provision.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staffing.
- A major rebuilding project is underway on the school's site.
- The headteacher is a national leader of education (NLE).
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' achievement in all subjects by ensuring that teachers:
 - check students' learning in lessons effectively before changing activity or moving to a different line of questioning
 - recognise that planning multiple activities to keep students engaged is not an end in itself, and does not necessarily lead to 'deep' learning
 - consolidate learning by ensuring that meaningful homework is routinely set, checked and evaluated.
- Improve students' spelling, grammar and extended writing skills by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide students with enough time in lessons to write at length
 - provide tasks and activities that not only develop the necessary subject knowledge or skills but also develop students' use and command of vocabulary and different styles of writing
 - allow time in lessons to enable students to correct inaccuracies in their spelling and grammar
 - include the teaching of spelling and grammar in their lesson plans when necessary.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- In readiness for changes to the accreditation of qualifications in 2014 and beyond, the headteacher and leaders have instigated a raft of necessary and far-reaching changes. These have had a positive effect on the school's ethos, students' attendance and their behaviour, but have yet to have a full impact on achievement.
- The headteacher has strong support from his staff. Over a period of two years, with input from governors, he has taken tough decisions to 'raise the bar' for students and staff. A relentless focus on teaching and learning, equipping students to succeed in GCSE examinations and only the vocational qualifications that provide a passport to success, has led to a necessary turnover of staff who were unwilling or unable to improve their practice.
- Nevertheless, leaders' strategies to improve GCSE performance in English in 2014 resulted in an overall improvement of 8%. Other changes have not been in place long enough to secure more significant improvements.
- In mathematics, leaders and teachers have responded positively to a review of practice led by the local authority. Advice from the review is already informing current practice, resulting in improvements in teachers' planning and sharper assessment of students' learning.
- Leaders' current checks on students' progress in English and mathematics and other subjects in relation to their targets are much more positive. Moreover, leaders across all subjects are fully involved in ensuring that teachers' assessments are externally verified through a partnership approach that involves nine local schools.
- Senior leaders in particular, have undertaken robust inspection training to ensure that they can accurately diagnose the impact of teaching on students' learning. Joint observations conducted with inspectors, not only confirmed the accuracy of their judgements, but more importantly, attest to their insightful ability to provide valuable feedback to teachers on what worked well and what precisely needs to improve.
- Discussions with teachers demonstrated the value that teachers place on the feedback and training they receive. As a result, they express confidence in their ability to improve their practice. Just over a quarter of the teachers have joined the school within the last 18 months. Most are new to the profession and many of them are already making a positive difference to students' achievement.
- The curriculum has been the subject of necessary redesign. It is broad and balanced and focuses on 'scholastic' excellence. The number of vocational courses has been greatly reduced. Those that remain are relevant and provide clear pathways to further education, apprenticeships and employment. In Years 7 and 8, more time has been created for the teaching of English and mathematics; this alongside focused interventions has ensured that significant gains are being made in improving students' reading ages and numeracy skills in those year groups.
- Leaders have secured links with the local education business partnership and provide relevant opportunities for work experience for all students. Students report that these strategies are helping them with decisions concerning the next steps in their education or employment.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. For example, in a Year 8 lesson in which students discussed the rise of Nazism, when asked about the purpose of the lesson a student commented, 'We are finding out about Hitler, how he came to power, so that we can learn from history and ensure that the same mistakes are never repeated.'
- Middle leaders understand their accountabilities and know where improvements in the work of their departments are needed. Their work with senior leaders has ensured that there is no inadequate teaching within the school.
- Equality of opportunity and tackling any discrimination are guiding principles throughout the school. Students demonstrate respect and tolerance for all groups in society. Leaders and teachers model this in many ways, notably through the sustained success of their commitment not to exclude students.
- Alternative sanctions, such as the use of extra taught sessions before and after school, are highly effective. No student has been excluded permanently since the last inspection and none temporarily since 2011. As a result, students show an awareness of the needs of others, empathy and understanding. This approach is preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders check teaching frequently. Pay increases are linked to sustained improvements in students' learning. Teachers who cannot demonstrate success do not receive pay rises.
- Leaders, including governors, give high priority to safeguarding. A dedicated lead for safeguarding with no teaching commitment is a member of the senior leadership team. Systems to keep students safe meet requirements and are effective.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have developed their challenge and support since results declined in 2013. Of necessity, they have been very vigilant to the need to keep students safe during the three year period of building construction and the demolition of the old building. They have a largely accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses in teaching and achievement, including for disadvantaged students. They have evaluated the impact of premium funding and know what difference it is making. They are fully involved in pay decisions and know where the best teaching takes place. They know that students' results must significantly improve for it to compare favourably with schools nationally. They have backed the headteacher in challenging mediocre teaching and taking necessary action with those unwilling to raise their expectations or improve their practice. They are reviewing their own practice and have taken steps to strengthen their expertise by securing additional governors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most have positive attitudes to their learning. This helps them to make good progress in their learning, especially where teaching is good. Their level of engagement is routinely high, even where teaching is less effective.
- Students conduct themselves well. They are conscious of the building restrictions that currently pertain, including the lack of access to space outdoors, owing to demolition and further new build. Their response in these circumstances is extremely mature and sensible.
- Respect for the new environment is exemplary. There is no litter or graffiti. Students have waited a long time for their new building and do not intend to spoil it.
- Despite staggered breaks and lunchtimes, spread of necessity over three time slots, students' behaviour during these times is calm and mature. Students report that behaviour is typically calm and has improved over time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students report that they feel safe in school and learn how to stay safe through a range of subjects and assemblies. They know that they can speak to staff about concerns that they may have and that their voice will be heard. They have a clear understanding of risk and how to respond, including to matters regarding e-safety.
- During this inspection, a very few students raised concerns with inspectors about leaders' responses to e-communication during weekends or after school. However, this was not borne out by further investigation.
- Leaders do not use permanent exclusion as a sanction. Equally, fixed-term exclusion does not feature. Effective liaison with a wide range of external agencies ensures that those who struggle to behave receive necessary support to attend and achieve. Rates of attendance have improved and are in line with national averages.
- Leaders draw effectively upon accredited volunteers and youth workers, whose daily presence in school enables students to self-refer. Some of these agencies also provide necessary support for parents and carers.
- Incidents of bullying are logged and addressed. Students report that leaders take firm action in relation to racist or other forms of prejudice-based bullying. A parent questionnaire conducted in February 2015, with input from over 160 parents and carers, confirmed that the majority of parents and carers believe their child is safe at the school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because although improving, it is not consistently good across all subjects and year groups.
- In some lessons, teachers do not always check students' learning sufficiently. Where this is the case, questioning is too rushed and students' learning is superficial.

- Strategies to improve students' literacy skills have yet to have an impact on students' ability to write at length. Furthermore, weaknesses in students' spelling and grammar are evident across all year groups. Inspectors found little evidence of time in lessons being devoted to the teaching or correction of spelling and grammar across subjects.
- Better progress is being made with reading. A new requirement of all students to read for four mornings weekly during registration is already yielding significant gains, particularly for students whose reading age is below their chronological age.
- Year 7 students, supported through the additional catch-up funding to improve their reading ages and levels of numeracy, are making good gains. Leaders track the learning of these students in English and mathematics carefully to ensure that strategies to improve make a positive difference.
- Where teaching is effective, activities are focused; teachers check students' understanding effectively and adjust the pace of activities accordingly. Sufficient time is spent on writing and learning is effectively consolidated.
- In an impressive Spanish lesson, students demonstrated good listening skills and fluency in their responses. A writing task was not rushed and the teacher was able to check students' learning before moving on. The teacher also corrected the wrong use of English.
- In lessons across all subjects, students are routinely offered opportunities to read and communicate their ideas. Writing tasks, however, are invariably limited to five or 10 minutes, particularly in lessons where teachers plan too many activities. When this happens, students are unable to use the new vocabulary they have acquired or develop new styles of writing.
- Marking is comprehensive. Across all subjects, inspectors found evidence of good quality marking and feedback to students. However, for some students, limitations in their writing skills are significant barriers to them making better progress.
- Although homework is set across all subjects, the policy is not implemented consistently. A few subject areas set more homework than others and not all subject leaders evaluate if or how well homework is consolidating learning.
- The school's marking policy requires all teachers to address spelling and grammar inaccuracies. This was clearly seen in work during the inspection. However, this strategy alone has yet to secure significant improvements across all year groups.
- Teaching assistants are deployed sparingly and effectively to support the learning of students with special educational needs. Their work is focused and informed by teachers' plans. As a result these students generally make steady progress. However, as with other students, they do not make the gains of which they are capable where teaching is less effective.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students routinely join the school with attainment that is significantly below the national average. In 2014, the percentage of students gaining five or more good grades in GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, improved from a very low base. However, despite this, results were below the governments' minimum expected standards.
- Students' progress from their starting points on entry to the school in English improved in 2014 and came closer to national figures. However, their progress in mathematics declined because the overall percentage of students securing a good GCSE grade reduced.
- Leaders do not enter students early for GCSE examinations. As an alternative strategy, leaders' use of 'mock' examinations is helping to build students' confidence to succeed.
- In 2014, the progress of disadvantaged students in English improved. In mathematics, their progress overall significantly exceeded that of disadvantaged students nationally. However, their progress in both subjects was less than other students' nationally. Nevertheless, the percentage of disadvantaged students securing five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, improved.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students' results in GCSE English were half a grade lower than those of other students in the year group. In GCSE mathematics there was a difference of one whole grade. However, students with low prior attainment made exceptional progress in mathematics, exceeding that seen nationally.
- The GCSE results of disadvantaged students in both mathematics and English in 2014 were lower than those of other students nationally. The gap was wider in mathematics than in English. However, gaps between their progress in both subjects and that of other students nationally are narrowing.
- Most able students typically achieve in line with their peers nationally. In 2014, the percentage of these students gaining five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was in line with those of their

peers nationally.

- Current achievement across all year groups is improving. Inspection evidence from observing teaching and learning, rigorous scrutiny of work in English, mathematics and science, the school's current assessment information and discussions with students point to significant improvements as a result of leaders' strong actions to re-staff departments. Improvements are particularly strong in Years 10 and 11.
- Leaders track carefully the progress and attainment of students with special educational needs. Systems to support them to achieve are well developed. Teachers show a good awareness of their needs and ensure that their lesson plans incorporate additional support strategies. However, where teaching is less effective, not all of these plans result in good progress for these students.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged students to achieve as well as they should, including Year 7 catch-up funding for English and mathematics, is yielding success. This is especially true in relation to strategies to improve students' reading. For example, significant gains have been made during this academic year to bring students with a lower reading age back up to their chronological age.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116473
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	444362

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	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	883
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fred Deekes
Headteacher	Christopher Anders
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
Telephone number	02392 489800
Fax number	02392 481012
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