

Park Community School

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

Inspection dates

24–25 January 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have established an ethos of high aspiration throughout the school. Staff are committed to the headteacher's vision to ensure that pupils' academic and personal needs are met.
- Strong leadership of teaching and learning has ensured that teaching is good. Lessons are purposeful and learning time is used well. Teachers carefully teach the required skills and then support pupils to apply and master them.
- Assessment is sharply focused on how well pupils are doing. Leaders use it carefully to identify progress and to provide effective support where needed both for pupils and teachers. Teachers make good use of assessment information to shape plans and teaching activities.
- Outcomes for pupils have improved. In 2016, the progress of Year 11 pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, was broadly in line with all schools nationally. The vast majority of current pupils make good progress in most subjects. Leaders are working to improve teaching in the few subjects in which pupils' progress is not yet rapid enough.
- In some lessons, the work teachers set for the most able pupils is not challenging enough. This means they do not achieve as well as they should.
- The broad and balanced curriculum effectively supports academic success alongside creative additional opportunities and ensures pupils are well prepared for their future lives.
- Effective provision through the welfare, support and guidance team helps develop pupils' emotional and mental well-being. Each pupil is well supported by the mentoring system, which successfully provides quality discussion about personal development and academic challenge for pupils.
- Strong safeguarding processes are embedded and help keep pupils safe. These processes are rigorously monitored and evaluated by governors.
- Governors are highly active and know the school well, visiting frequently. They provide useful support and are increasing their level of challenge to hold school leaders to account.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school and their achievements. They are respectful and supportive of each other, demonstrating good behaviour. The new behaviour policy is successfully addressing the inappropriate behaviour of the small minority who disrupt learning for others.
- Leaders' actions to tackle the persistent absence of a minority of pupils have brought some success. However, leaders are aware that they need to evaluate and refine these actions to improve attendance further.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders, including governors, evaluate the impact of their actions systematically, and adjust plans accordingly, particularly with regard to attendance so that it is at least in line with national figures.
- Continue the relentless drive to improve teaching and learning in all subjects so that pupils make rapid progress and there is increased challenge for the most able.
- Embed the successful new strategies for behaviour management so that all pupils behave as well as the vast majority currently do.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's strong and inclusive leadership balances a necessary focus on academic success alongside the existing strong pastoral care. The highly motivated staff fully subscribe to the ethos of the school and are ambitious for their pupils. Staff appreciate the many opportunities provided to help shape the school's new approach to teaching and behaviour management. Carefully planned changes to leadership, particularly heads of department, have cemented improvements.
- The headteacher's vision is to create 'more than just a school' by providing all pupils with a range of additional opportunities to raise their aspirations and ensure they are very well prepared for adult life. This is realised through a curriculum which balances academic and vocational qualifications with activities that promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Staff are committed to this vision and provide a wide range of opportunities and support for pupils. This combination develops pupils' well-being as well as promoting their academic achievement and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- 'Character education' effectively promotes qualities such as resilience, teamwork and self-esteem and ensures that pupils develop strong personal skills. This, alongside the improving academic attainment, helps to prepare pupils for their future lives. In addition, the curriculum is adapted and matched to the needs of individual pupils. For example, the vocational courses in horticulture and construction supplement the traditional academic curriculum.
- Extra-curricular activities are integral to the work of the school and enhance the curriculum effectively. Pupils have a wide range of activities to choose from, including sports leadership, caring for animals in the school farm or making the weekly 'Butterfly Broadcast' in the media suite. In addition, the school runs a pupil recruitment agency that provides real jobs around the school for pupils. As part of this, staff help pupils select and open a bank account and effectively develop pupils' financial education through this project.
- Leaders set aspirational targets for pupils' outcomes and monitor their progress closely. They use this information effectively to identify where any pupils are falling behind and quickly put in additional support.
- Staff are held firmly to account for pupils' progress. Leaders ensure that teachers' pay progression is closely linked to how well their pupils achieve.
- There are good opportunities for staff to develop professionally. Leaders accurately evaluate the quality of teaching through a range of information. They use the evaluations to tailor development opportunities for individual staff. Staff are very positive about the high-quality support they receive, especially the coaching programme, which enables them to become self-reflective and identify accurately their areas for development.
- Leaders make good use of external support from the local authority to improve identified weaknesses. Through useful training and advice to leaders, key areas have been improved and are now much stronger.
- Additional funding for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up with their literacy skills is used effectively. All pupils involved in the project made good progress during the first

term, with the vast majority making accelerated progress with their reading. Pupils told inspectors they enjoyed the extra learning and had a greater appreciation of reading as a result.

- Leaders use additional funding well to support disadvantaged pupils through a wide range of projects including literacy support, motivational mentoring and trips. Consequently, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved, and in some cases are better than those of their peers.
- Leaders have taken some effective action to improve attendance. However, they have not analysed systematically whether these actions are bringing improvements. Although the attendance of some individuals is better, leaders recognise there is a need to further improve the attendance of some groups of pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors share the headteacher's vision and work effectively with leaders to develop and sustain the ambitious culture and ethos of the school. They know the school well because of their visits to see the school in action. Leaders welcome governors' visits during which governors hold leaders to account and check procedures for themselves, for example those relating to safeguarding. They also talk with pupils and visit lessons.
- Governors look carefully at school information about pupils' progress and attainment. They know where pupils' outcomes are not as strong and challenge leaders appropriately to improve them. Similarly, they are appropriately informed about the quality of teaching, and where improvements are required. Governors oversee the performance management process effectively.
- Governors know what additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is spent on but do not know which projects have been most effective in raising achievement for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The governor responsible for safeguarding monitors the processes carefully to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and that statutory requirements are met.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Pupils are clear that the school keeps them safe, and parents agree. Pupils frequently spoke to inspectors of the high-quality support always available from the welfare, support and guidance team whenever they had a concern.
- Training for all adults is effective and regular updates ensure they are fully informed. Consequently, they fulfil their responsibilities well, recording and reporting any concerns appropriately. They have a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe from extremism and radicalisation.
- Child protection issues are followed up swiftly and the school team has built strong and effective working relationships with external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Planning of lessons is effective and follows the school's agreed approach of developing understanding, application and mastery. This structure has supported teachers to deepen pupils' learning.

- Positive relationships between pupils and teachers are a common feature in lessons. Pupils told inspectors that they trust their teachers and understand the benefits of attempting work, even if they find it difficult. The whole-school focus on resilience means pupils know it is acceptable to get work wrong, as long as they have had a go and then learn from their mistakes.
- Well-crafted questions are a key feature of lessons. Teachers use a range of questioning styles and techniques to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their thinking. They support pupils to apply their knowledge in different situations, for example when solving problems in mathematics.
- Teaching and progress in English are strong and teachers skilfully support pupils to apply their learning about literature to the wider world. For example, a group of pupils engaged in a high-quality discussion about the relevance of the play 'Macbeth' to political events in the world today.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to plan learning to sustain pupils' interest and further develop their learning. Inspectors observed practical lessons in food technology, photography and dance that successfully engaged pupils and supported learning through carefully planned activities. As a result, pupils worked with determined focus, both in groups and individually, to achieve the lessons' aims.
- Homework is varied and interesting and helps pupils to make progress. Pupils are appreciative of the 'period 6' where they may stay, or are invited to stay, for help with this work. Alongside their weekly homework, Year 7 and 8 pupils are also given longer 'venture learning' tasks which offer a choice of activities and promote independent work and creativity.
- Carefully planned standardised assessments are used to closely track pupils' progress and attainment across subjects and year groups. Teachers use this information effectively in lessons to plan learning activities and help pupils understand their next steps. Pupils have a clear and accurate understanding of their current progress and the next steps they need to take to achieve their targets. Information about pupils' progress is reported well to parents.
- Leaders' work to develop extended writing across the curriculum has been successful. Lessons and pupils' books show that writing is sustained and of increasingly high quality across subjects.
- The most able pupils are sometimes given suitably challenging work. For example, in mathematics a group of Year 7 pupils had to apply their learning to more complex problems. However, this is not always the case across year groups and subjects and, as a result, these pupils are not always making the rapid progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The highly effective lessons in 'character education' support pupils' personal development and welfare well. Pupils were particularly vociferous in their praise for these interactive and enjoyable lessons.
- Very effective links between character education lessons, assemblies and mentor sessions mean pupils develop a strong understanding about their place within the

school community, and the wider community as they become adults. As a result, they demonstrate self-confidence, independence and resilience in lessons and around the school. Pupils' knowledge and ability to stay safe, including from all forms of bullying, are also successfully developed through this provision.

- The carefully planned assembly programme develops pupils' understanding of fundamental British values effectively. It also links to human rights and supports pupils to explore issues around identity, equality and democracy.
- Pupils develop self-confidence through the high-quality pastoral programme. For example, a pupil-made 'Butterfly Broadcast' titled 'When confidence can save your life' was followed by a mentor session named 'Can you be too confident?' Pupils appreciate and benefit from the relevant content and the careful structure of this programme and value its place in their learning. The team of pupils making these broadcasts links them to the school's learning themes of the week, for example 'putting my view across' and 'doing the right thing'.
- Inspectors saw high levels of pride and respect throughout their visit. Pupils held doors open for each other and for visitors, sat to eat at lunch and cleared up after themselves. They were keen to talk about their school, often listing many ways in which they felt well supported by staff and describing the array of extra-curricular activities they enjoyed. This strong sense of community pride reflects the positive way in which the vast majority of pupils regard their school and the opportunities they can see it provide.
- Mentoring provides individual careers advice along with support from external specialists. Pupils are confident in their option choices because they understand how these will help them with their next steps. Year 10 work experience placements are carefully matched to pupils' aspirations.
- Equalities are promoted along with tolerance and celebration of diversity. For example, during a tutor time, pupils considered the Holocaust and held a thoughtful discussion about racism and discrimination today. Staff challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language through lessons and around the school.
- The welfare support and guidance staff, ably supported by youth workers and counsellors, promote pupils' welfare effectively. Pupils were very positive about the impact of this team and value their availability to discuss any topic of concern.
- Despite efforts by leaders and school staff, attendance is not yet in line with national figures. The welfare support and guidance team has had success with individual pupils. They provide many different levels of support, for example providing a bus to collect pupils, creating individual timetables shaped around specific needs and working with parents. However, reducing absence remains a priority.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The new behaviour policy has brought about improvements because pupils are clear about the rewards for and consequences of their actions.
- Staff maintain a highly visible presence around the school, supporting pupils' behaviour and taking the opportunity to talk with them.
- Pupils behave well around the school and are proud of their high-quality school environment. They use the spaces thoughtfully and are orderly and respectful of each other. For example, inspectors saw no litter around the school and pupils cleared up after themselves in the school restaurant.

- In lessons, pupils are generally polite and respectful, which creates an atmosphere that helps them to learn. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers apply the behaviour policy consistently, providing rewards and applying consequences. As a result, pupils understand the boundaries set and what is expected of them, and behave well. In some lessons, the rewards and consequences are not applied consistently and pupils' behaviour is sometimes off-task. A minority of pupils can be disruptive and prevent others from learning. Leaders are working to embed the policy consistently.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved over time and are now good. Leaders successfully raised standards overall in GCSE examinations in 2016. In these examinations, pupils and groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, made better progress than the previous year. Overall, pupils and groups made progress which was broadly in line with all schools nationally. Attainment also improved for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Current pupils make good progress across most year groups and subjects. This reflects the effective support which is put in place as soon as anyone falls behind.
- The school's assessment information shows that pupils continue to make good progress in English, as they did in 2016. Progress in mathematics, having been less successful in the past, is improving and pupils are on track to make good progress, matching that of all schools nationally. Scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations confirmed this improving trend.
- Progress has historically been far weaker in science, the humanities and modern foreign languages. New approaches to teaching and robust line management of teachers are already generating good progress, although this needs to be accelerated in order to help pupils to catch up.
- The reading programmes and staff support, funded by the Year 7 catch-up additional funding, are very effective in improving pupils' fluency, comprehension and expression. The vast majority of pupils involved with this work made good or better progress in their first term.
- Disadvantaged pupils are performing well and differences in progress between this group and other pupils nationally diminished in 2016. This trend continues for current pupils, with the exception of the most able disadvantaged pupils, who are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making good progress in most year groups. The personalised curriculum provision, including opportunities in horticulture and construction, open to this group and other pupils, helps these pupils to build on their strengths and achieve well. However, some of the work provided in the support centre was too easy.
- The most able pupils are not doing as well as they could across all subjects. Often, the work they are set in lessons is not challenging enough. School leaders have rightly made this a priority for improvement.

School details

Unique reference number	116473
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10021141

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	885
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Fred Deeks
Headteacher	Christopher Anders
Telephone number	02392 489 800
Website	http://www.pcs.hants.sch.uk/
Email address	info@pcs.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2015

Information about this school

- Park Community School is an average-sized secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 16.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than in other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average.
- The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Woodlands Education Centre.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 36 lessons across a range of year groups and subjects. Six of these were joint observations with school leaders.
- Inspectors also visited mentor sessions, tutor groups, the seclusion room and assemblies.
- The views of pupils were taken into account and inspectors met formally with three groups of pupils, as well as speaking with pupils in lessons and around the school. They listened to readers and considered 42 responses to the pupil online questionnaire. They scrutinised pupils' work in books. Inspectors also visited the school's off-site provision.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account 26 responses to the online Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View, including 24 free text responses.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders, groups of middle leaders, teachers and representatives of the governing body. They also telephoned the school's local authority adviser and leaders of alternative provision.
- Inspectors evaluated key documents, including the school's strategic planning documents, minutes of governors' meetings, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, reports of attendance and behaviour, and records relating to pupils' safety and academic progress.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Fry	Ofsted Inspector
Harry Ingham	Ofsted Inspector
Keith Pailthorpe	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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