

Park Way Primary School

Park Way, Maidstone, ME15 7AH

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She is ambitious for the school and has high expectations of staff and pupils. Her determination to improve the school is shared by all members of the school community.
- School leaders, managers and governors have worked well together to effectively address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection and bring about significant improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Their attitude to learning is very positive.
- Pupils are well cared for and kept safe. They have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Teaching is good and improving quickly. Teachers are supported effectively by school leaders through training and coaching to strengthen the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning.
- At Key Stage 1, the attainment of pupils in all subjects has improved since the previous inspection and is now at the national average.
- Attainment at Year 6 has risen since the previous inspection, although standards at the higher levels dipped in writing and mathematics in 2014. Current pupils achieve well and Key Stage 2 standards are improving rapidly, with all pupils making accelerated progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Progress has improved in all subjects at Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection and progress in reading was significantly above national rates in 2014. The proportion of pupils making above expected progress has been above or close to national figures in all subjects over the last two years.
- Pupils, including the most able, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils, those who speak English as an additional language, and those joining at times other than the start of the school year, make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start due to good leadership, teaching, and relationships between staff and parents.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure outstanding achievement for pupils.
- All pupils are not consistently challenged throughout lessons and moved on to more demanding learning tasks as soon as they are ready.
- Pupils' understanding and progress during lessons are not always checked systematically and thoroughly so that their progress in learning can be maximised.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 11 teachers. Inspectors observed one assembly. Four lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Short visits were made to observe the teaching of literacy.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body. In addition, the lead inspector met with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play during break and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's information on pupils' progress for the current school year and since the previous inspection, and pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at the school's checks on how well it is doing and school improvement documentation, planning, assessment information, documentation on the management of teachers' performance, and school policies and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.
- Inspectors took account of 26 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 28 replies to the staff questionnaire. The views of parents were sought at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school, and examined from a recent school survey.

Inspection team

David Webster, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sally Craig	Additional Inspector
Fiona Robinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Park Way Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two single-age Reception classes of full-time pupils. Pupils are taught in both mixed-age and single-age classes through the rest of the school.
- One fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above the national average.
- Two fifths of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is just above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who spend all their primary school years in this school is lower than the national average, with two fifths of pupils joining the school during Key Stage 1 or 2 at times other than the start of the school year. Many have attended a number of different primary schools previously.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - ensuring all pupils are consistently challenged throughout lessons by moving them on to more demanding learning tasks as soon as they are ready
 - systematically and effectively checking all pupils' understanding throughout lessons and intervening to maximise their progress in learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well supported by her senior leaders, provides strong leadership. They have effectively addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, making significant improvements to teaching, achievement, and leadership and management. They responded quickly and effectively to a dip in standards at the higher levels in writing and mathematics in 2014 to ensure that all current pupils make good progress.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the work of the school, have clearly identified priorities for improvement, and have taken effective action to address these. They are determined to raise achievement and personal development further to the highest levels for all pupils.
- Senior and middle leaders check pupils' progress carefully so that underperformance is identified quickly. The role of middle leaders has been enhanced to involve them fully in checking the quality of teaching for their areas of responsibility and so their contribution to improving teaching has been effectively increased since the previous inspection.
- Responses to the staff questionnaire indicate how strongly supportive and proud staff are of the school. They speak very positively of the help and support they have received to improve their practice.
- The leadership of teaching is very strong. Effective management of staff performance has been a key factor in improving the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teachers' performance is linked effectively to levels of pay. Staff training and coaching have been used well to ensure that there is a sustained focus upon improving standards.
- The curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils, who are taught a full range of subjects in depth to enable them to develop their skills and knowledge. It strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values of democracy, tolerance, and the rule of law. For example, pupils experience a mock trial in the local magistrates' court and visit the cells. International links within the curriculum, such as those with a school in Namibia, help pupils learn respect for different peoples, regardless of race, religion, or appearance. They develop a sense of citizenship, for example through visits to a variety of institutions within the local community and through raising funds for a range of charities. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school tracks the progress of all pupils meticulously and if any fall behind, immediate help is given to ensure that they catch up quickly. Therefore, all have an equal opportunity to succeed. There is no discrimination.
- Provision for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and those supported with additional pupil premium funding is managed well so that these pupils make good progress.
- The primary sports funding is used effectively, enabling more pupils to take part in sport and to help them benefit from a wider range of sports, including archery, golf and trampoline. Expert sports coaches are working well with staff to develop their skills in sports teaching.
- Partnership with parents is good. The vast majority of parents are highly supportive of the school and involved in its life. The well-designed website is informative and encourages the sharing of views, for example in online surveys.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements and their effectiveness is a strength of the school. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and dealt with firmly if it occurs, as is any poor behaviour.
- The local authority now sees the school as a good school and has provided valuable support since the previous inspection in helping the school improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed and active in bringing a range of expertise to the school. They are skilled in understanding data about pupils' performance, allowing them to hold the school to account well for the progress pupils make. They keep a close check on the quality of teaching, linking it effectively to teachers' pay to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. Governors are fully involved in checking the effectiveness of the use of additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils and for the school's provision for sport. They make sure that all the school's finances are used well, and meet their statutory duties, such as ensuring that safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They understand the school behaviour policy well and regard it as very fair. They behave responsibly around school and are well mannered and courteous to one another and adults. They play happily together at break and lunchtime, and engage with enjoyment in the range of activities provided in the well-run breakfast and after school clubs.
- School records indicate that behaviour is good over time and continues to improve. Procedures for recording and dealing with incidents of inappropriate behaviour are thorough, and their effective use by staff has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of incidents recorded.
- Pupils are keen to take on extra responsibilities, for example as lunchtime monitors, librarians and playground buddies.
- In most lessons, pupils listen well and are keen to work together and improve. They have good attitudes to their learning. They say low-level disruption is rare, and were proud to show inspectors their books and keen to discuss their targets. At times, when the challenge of work is not continually matched to their needs during the course of a lesson, some pupils lose focus in their learning.
- Attendance is currently broadly average and improving for all groups of pupils, indicating their enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire consider that their children are happy, safe and well looked after in school. These views were echoed in conversations which the inspection team had with parents and in a recent school survey.
- Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. They believe bullying is rare, and if they had any concerns, are confident that an adult would help them. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, for example when using information and communication technology and the roads, because they are well taught in these areas.
- Pupils identified with behavioural needs are managed well so that their behaviour improves and they feel secure. The school engages quickly and effectively with parents and outside agencies when required to ensure that pupils' learning is not disrupted.
- Procedures for safeguarding are thorough and rigorous.

The quality of teaching is good

- As a result of good, and sometimes outstanding teaching, pupils learn quickly and make increasingly rapid progress. Work seen in pupils' books and during lessons, and feedback from parents, confirm that most teaching is good or better over time and improving quickly.
- Lessons are well planned and pupils respond positively to teachers' instructions and guidance. Classrooms are calm and well organised.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and encourage pupils to listen carefully to instructions and to each other. The considerable numbers of pupils joining the school at times other than the start of the year settle quickly into clear routines and expectations. On the rare occasions when pupils become a little restless it is because they either have not fully understood what they have to do, or they have finished their work and are waiting for others before moving on to the next task.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Accurate assessment enables them to adapt work and plan efficiently for groups and individuals. Consequently, they set work that is generally well matched to the abilities of their pupils and use questioning effectively to challenge and deepen their understanding. This enables the different groups of pupils to develop their skills and learn well. However, the understanding and progress of all pupils during lessons are not always checked systematically and thoroughly.
- The response of pupils to marking and feedback by their teachers has improved markedly since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils not only understand what to do to improve the quality of their work but take steps to do it.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, they currently make similar progress to their peers.

- Reading and writing skills are taught well by staff who have received high-quality training, including training in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Pupils benefit from opportunities to be involved in book weeks and library visits, and to write about their experiences, for example on school trips. Staff and parents regularly listen to pupils read and so they become competent readers.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective because staff have been well trained and supported in the introduction of the new curriculum.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- At the end of Key Stage 1, the attainment of pupils in all subjects has improved steadily since the previous inspection, and is now in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels has also improved and is now broadly at the national average for all subjects.
- Attainment in Year 6 has risen overall since the previous inspection, and has significantly improved in reading to broadly in line with national averages in 2014. School leaders have taken prompt and well-judged action to reverse a dip in standards in 2014 at the higher levels in mathematics and writing.
- Since the last inspection teaching has improved rapidly. There is well-focused intervention to support and challenge pupils of all abilities. As a result, pupils' rates of progress have increased in all subjects. Progress in reading was significantly above national rates in 2014. The proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress has been above or close to national figures in all subjects over the last two years.
- Robust records of pupils' progress held by the school, and the work seen in their books and in lessons, indicate that current pupils across year groups are making accelerated progress and are on track to achieve well in all subjects.
- Reading skills and the teaching of phonics have been given careful attention and, as a result, standards in the Year 1 national screening check on phonics have improved rapidly. Those pupils in Key Stage 1 who read for inspectors used their phonics skills well to confidently sound out and read unfamiliar words. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy reading an assortment of fiction and non-fiction books by a variety of authors and do so fluently and expressively.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' writing and found clear evidence of accelerated progress, with regular opportunities to write at length and good examples of writing inspired by the different places pupils visit.
- Pupils now make rapid progress in mathematics because senior leaders have focused closely on this subject, providing high-quality training and coaching to improve teaching.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language are effectively supported by other adults. Work is planned well to meet their needs, which has ensured these pupils make good and sometimes exceptional progress. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every pupil is given an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Successful induction procedures, well-tailored, careful support, and high-quality pastoral care ensure that those pupils who join the school at a later stage than their peers thrive and make good progress.
- The additional funding provided to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively through provision of extra support. As a result, their progress has accelerated since the previous inspection, and gaps between these pupils and other pupils nationally have closed in reading and writing. Gaps with their school peers closed in all subjects. In the 2014 national tests, Year 6 disadvantaged pupils were one term behind other pupils nationally in reading, two and a half terms behind in writing, and four terms behind in mathematics. Within school, they were half a term behind their classmates in reading, one term behind in mathematics, and the gap had been closed in writing. Currently, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 is above that of other pupils nationally for the previous academic year in reading and writing and the gap has significantly decreased in mathematics.
- The progress of the most-able pupils has been a key focus of the school. Current data and work in their books indicates that they are currently making rapid progress. This is due to specific sessions to boost their learning and careful attention in lessons to providing them with suitable challenge.
- Achievement in both Reception classes is good.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children make good progress during their Reception Year so that they are well prepared for the work they will encounter in Year 1.
- Teaching is good. The indoor classroom and outdoor area are bright, stimulating environments and teachers provide a good balance of teacher-led tasks and activities children choose for them. Activities are well organised and based upon accurate and regular assessment. This results in children being confident, engaged and active in their learning. Adults' questioning to extend learning is of a high quality, as is their modelling of language.
- Children settle well and learn happily. The high expectations of adults ensure their behaviour is good. They are well motivated and keen to learn. They behave sensibly at all times and respect each other when working together on tasks.
- Children are very well cared for within a safe environment. Safeguarding procedures are secure.
- The early years are well led and managed. A strong team has been developed through helpful coaching and support. The curriculum is well planned to cover all areas of learning and enriched by high-quality work on topics and Spanish, and excellent provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. One boy, for example, confidently engaged an inspector in extended conversation about his dinosaur discoveries in the outdoor 'jungle' area. The early years leader is focused on making continual improvements, and uses her accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development within the setting to drive these forward. Careful checking ensures that individual children receive the support they need and partnerships with external agencies are effective.
- Strong partnerships are established with parents, who are kept well informed on their children's progress and engaged in their learning.

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	118302
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	453632

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ralph Edwards
Headteacher	Karen Dhanecha
Date of previous school inspection	28 February–1 March 2013
Telephone number	01622 753651
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