

Park Wood Infant School

Deanwood Drive, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 9LP

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 executive headteacher has worked closely with governors and senior leaders to lead the school successfully through a period of change.
- Senior leaders provide strong leadership for teaching. They are clear about teachers' responsibilities and provide effective guidance and training. Improvements in teaching have ensured that pupils continue to achieve well.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, standards are much higher than the national average.
- In 2014, standards improved in reading, writing and mathematics. There was a substantial increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in all three subjects.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers' enthusiasm is reflected in pupils' excitement about learning.
- Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding during lessons and clarify any confusion.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide effective support for individuals and small groups of pupils.
- Pupils who attend the school's nurture group (The Hub) make excellent progress in the development of personal skills because of high-quality teaching.
- Early years provision is effective so that children make good progress. Adults ensure that parents are well informed about their children's progress. Caring relationships help children to settle quickly and feel secure.
- The school is a happy, caring and inclusive community. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and feel safe and secure.
- Most parents who completed the online questionnaire feel that the school is well led and managed and would recommend the school to others.
- Middle leaders' roles have developed rapidly. Leaders play an active role in the school's improvement.
- Governors know the school well and provide good levels of support and challenge for leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not use information about progress sharply enough to check how well different groups of pupils are learning.
- The work set for the most-able pupils is not consistently challenging to ensure they achieve their full potential.
- The school has not yet used the sport premium funding to improve pupils' participation and achievement in sport.
- The school does not use the outdoor areas in the Reception classes to support children's learning to the fullest extent.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part lessons, including seven lessons observed jointly with the executive headteacher and deputy headteachers.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, deputy headteachers, business manager, senior leaders, teachers, parents and pupils. Discussions were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 48 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, they spoke with individual parents during the school day. Inspectors also took account of 22 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and considered a range of policies and documents. These included the school’s improvement plan, information about pupils’ progress, attendance records, and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils’ work provided by the school, as well as in lessons. They also listened to a number of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Richard Barnes

Additional Inspector

Carol Vant

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. Pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in three Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The Park Wood Infant School federated with Park Wood Junior School in September 2014. The two schools share a single governing body. The executive headteacher oversees the leadership of both schools, dividing his time equally between the two.
- The two deputy headteachers and the business manager work closely with the executive headteacher and are central to the day-to-day running of the school.
- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club on the site. Both are privately run and are inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers set work which consistently challenges the most-able pupils
 - teachers make improved use of the outdoor areas in the Reception classes in order to support children's learning to the fullest extent.
- Ensure that leaders use the school's information about progress more rigorously to check how well different groups of pupils are learning.
- Make sure that the school quickly puts into effect the plans to use the sport premium funding.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher has effectively united the two schools following the federation process. His success is reflected in staff morale, which is high, and in parents' confidence in the school.
- Senior leaders provide good role models for staff and pupils. They work closely with the executive headteacher and share his vision for the school's future. Senior leaders complement each other's strengths well.
- The executive headteacher has strengthened the school's capacity to improve. For example, he has raised expectations of middle leaders so that they are more accountable for pupils' achievement. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility.
- Senior and middle leaders have a wealth of information about pupils' progress. They regularly use this information to check how well individual pupils are learning. However, the use of this data to evaluate the progress made by different groups is not yet sharp enough. This means that leaders are not always clear about how well different groups are achieving.
- Subject expertise is shared well across the federation. This is improving the quality of teaching. Closer links between the two schools have enabled leaders to introduce greater consistency in the way subjects are taught. Improved transition arrangements between Key Stages 1 and 2 mean that pupils are more confident about moving into the junior school at the end of Year 2.
- The executive headteacher and senior leaders provide effective leadership for teaching. Good teaching and achievement have been sustained since the previous inspection, despite a period of rapid change in the school.
- The school's positive and inclusive atmosphere supports good behaviour very well. The school's behaviour policy is consistently applied throughout the school.
- Leaders and other staff are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils' achievement. Any incidents of discrimination are tackled robustly.
- The local authority has responded promptly to the school's changing needs during a period of rapid development. For example, local authority representatives provided helpful advice for leaders during the federation process.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching regularly, and set teachers challenging targets which include improving pupils' progress. As a result, teaching has improved. The executive headteacher quickly eradicated any weaker teaching following his appointment.
- Teachers and support staff understand their responsibilities in relation to achievement. They share leaders' commitment to securing further improvements. Leaders' evaluations of the school's work are accurate. Leaders know what the school does well and which aspects need improvement. However, leaders do not yet use progress information well enough to accelerate rates of improvement in the school, including pupils' achievement.
- School leaders have planned appropriately for the use of sport premium funding to increase pupils' achievement and participation in sport. However, the funds have not yet been spent due to changes in procedures following the federation process.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For instance, lessons and assemblies successfully encourage pupils to accept and respect differences between people, cultures and beliefs. Class assemblies give pupils regular opportunities to speak publicly, so that they grow in self-esteem. Pupils develop the confidence to reflect and to make sensible choices about their learning.
- School leaders and other staff ensure pupils are taught a broad range of subjects in a lively and stimulating way. For example, teachers often start topics with an exciting activity so that pupils are eager to learn more. Leaders have introduced more opportunities for pupils to develop artistic skills. Their good quality work is displayed with care throughout the school. The school's principles of understanding, tolerance and respect are consistent with British values and are taught and reinforced throughout the curriculum, as well as during assemblies.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective in ensuring pupils' safety.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has supported the school well during a period of change. Governors have worked effectively with the executive headteacher to secure consistency across both schools. They have an accurate view of pupils' achievement in relation to other schools nationally because they have attended relevant and helpful training. In addition, the executive headteacher provides regular feedback and

information at governors' meetings. The introduction of 'governor days' provides good opportunities for governors to observe the school's work at first hand and to discuss their observations with senior leaders. This enhances their understanding about the quality of teaching and helps them to ask pertinent and searching questions. They are well informed about the school's procedures to appraise teachers. They know, for example, that teachers have targets related to pupils' achievement as well as to whole school developments. They receive information about salary progression and pay awards and understand what is done to support and recognise teachers' practice.

- Governors know how the additional government funds are used and how these are making a difference to disadvantaged pupils' achievement. However, at times, the school's evaluations lack clarity. This is because information provided by senior leaders is not always sharp enough to convey the key messages about success and areas in need of further improvement. The governing body ensures that all safeguarding requirements are in place and up to date.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils understand the school rules and want to do well. They move around the school safely and sensibly and most are attentive in lessons. Pupils are very polite and respond quickly to adults' instructions.
- Pupils enjoy playing and socialising with their friends and care about how others are feeling. They understand why name calling is unkind and bullying is harmful.
- Most pupils are keen to learn and want to do their best. Teachers' enthusiasm is reflected in pupils' excitement about learning.
- The executive headteacher has introduced systematic procedures for recording and analysing any incidents of poor behaviour. Records confirm pupils' views that incidents of misbehaviour are infrequent.
- Leaders do not tolerate discrimination of any sort and they respond swiftly and robustly to any concerns. Incidents of bullying, including racism, are very rare and are dealt with appropriately.
- Most parents who completed the online questionnaire feel that pupils are well behaved. Staff reinforce this positive view.
- Attendance is typically in line with the national average. A small dip in 2014 has been reversed. Robust procedures are in place to check the attendance of individual pupils, and of groups, so that any concerns are addressed promptly. Leaders work successfully with agencies, such as the education welfare service, to help pupils who need support. They can point to improvements in individual pupils' attendance as a result.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because sometimes a few pupils stop concentrating during lessons and become fidgety. When this is the case, their progress slows.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They play safely during breaktimes and treat their environment with respect. Pupils told inspectors that they are taught how to look after things from an early age.
- Most parents consider their children to be happy and safe in school. Parents appreciate the recent improvements made to school safety following the installation of security gates.
- Leaders arrange regular events for parents and pupils to increase awareness of internet safety. As a result, pupils know some of the steps they can take to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good quality teaching ensures that pupils make rapid progress. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that their school is a good school because teachers help them to learn about new things, such as The Great Fire of London.
- Teachers inspire pupils to find out more because they take care to plan lessons which interest and engage pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils were enthused by the sporting theme of a mathematics lesson and were eager to tackle the investigation set. The teacher made full use of their interest by ensuring that pupils of differing abilities were able to succeed in a challenging investigation, so that all made rapid progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well. Teachers make sure that

pupils who are finding tasks more difficult to understand are given the extra help they need to be successful. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide effective support for pupils. They work closely with teachers so that they are clear about the aims of the activities and about pupils' individual needs.

- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is consistent and effective. Children in the Reception year quickly learn how to use phonics to help them to read and write. Teaching in the Year 1 and Year 2 classes builds well on this good start, so that pupils become confident readers.
- Teachers give pupils many opportunities to use and practise mathematical skills to investigate and solve problems. Teachers make sure that pupils know and understand key mathematical vocabulary, appropriately reinforced by the use of practical equipment and resources.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They use questioning well to check pupils' understanding during lessons and to clarify any confusion.
- Most teachers make sure that the most-able pupils are fully extended by the tasks set. For example, they routinely provide additional challenge for pupils who are finding the work too easy during lessons. However, in some cases, these activities do not extend the most able well enough, so that their progress slows.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education by the end of Year 2.
- In 2014, attainment in reading and mathematics improved substantially to levels which were well above average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels also increased. This ensured that pupils were well placed to continue learning in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils rapidly develop the basic knowledge and skills needed to succeed in mathematics. In 2014, attainment in mathematics was much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was also above average.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Pupils say they get on well with their reading because their teachers help them to improve. They are able to talk about the types of books they prefer to read and can name some of their favourite authors. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 was well above the national average in 2014. The more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics has led to an improvement in the results of the Year 1 screening check. In 2014, pupils' attainment improved to broadly average.
- An increased focus on developing pupils' writing skills, from the Reception year through to Year 2, means that pupils' progress in writing is improving rapidly. While still broadly average, pupils' attainment in writing in 2014 was higher than it has been for the past five years. Information about current pupils' progress indicates that this improvement has been sustained.
- Effective teaching ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. In 2014, this group's attainment was above average. Highly effective teaching in the school's nurture group equips those pupils who attend with the skills and attitudes needed to achieve well.
- Higher expectations mean that the most-able pupils make more rapid progress than in past years and achieve well. In 2014, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels increased in reading, writing and mathematics. However, despite these improvements, the activities in a few lessons are not consistently challenging to ensure that the most-able pupils achieve their full potential.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was about eight months behind other pupils nationally and about a year behind their classmates in school in reading, writing and mathematics. This group included a high proportion of pupils with additional needs, including social and emotional needs. While these pupils' attainment was lower than that of other pupils, school information indicates that these pupils made good gains in learning from their starting points. By the end of Year 2, they were better equipped with the attitudes and skills needed for the next stage of their education. Current information indicates that disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than previously, so that gaps are narrowing, particularly in reading and writing.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children enter the Reception classes with a wide range of knowledge and skills. They are eager to learn and enthusiastically join in with school life. Effective teaching ensures that they make good progress. By the end of Reception year, they are well equipped with the basic skills and attitudes needed to continue learning successfully in Year 1.
- Children's starting points are often lower in language and writing skills than in other areas at the start of the Reception year. The teaching of early writing skills has been a focus for improvement. Teachers and leaders now ensure a sufficiently strong focus on the development of these key aspects of children's development when children join the Reception year. As a result, children are making better progress.
- Senior leaders and the early years leader have worked closely together to secure improvements. However, sometimes the most-able children make slightly slower progress than their classmates because the activities are not sufficiently challenging.
- Children quickly grow in confidence and self-esteem because they are given regular opportunities to make choices about their learning. Good relationships mean that children quickly feel secure in school. They are eager to learn and behave well.
- Leaders have improved the way teachers use the outdoor areas to support learning. For example, these areas are now used extensively throughout the school day and activities are usually well planned. For example, during the inspection a group of boys thoroughly enjoyed aiming and throwing bean bags into a set of tyres. They labelled each tyre with a number and kept a record of their scores. This enabled them to practise and hone basic number skills in a fun way. However, the outdoor areas are not yet used fully to support children's learning. Some of the resources and activities are not well planned, so that children make slower progress at times.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors said that they were happy with the early years provision in the school. They feel that teachers give them useful information about how well their children are learning and that their children enjoy school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Classroom areas are well organised to ensure that children can move between activities safely and the outdoor areas are securely fenced. Adults are well qualified in child protection and safeguarding procedures.

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	118472
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	449756

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Pearson
Headteacher	Alex Moir (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 January 2010
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