

The Parkgate Academy

Whinney Lane, New Ollerton, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG22 9TH

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders are an excellent team. They are aspirational and have high ambitions for every pupil.
- Leaders have accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses which exist in school. They are rapidly improving the already good quality of education pupils receive.
- Leaders have cultivated an effective staff team. Staff are proud to work at the school and value the support of leaders.
- The school is inclusive. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and for those who are at risk of exclusion, is good.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is effective. Most pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Trustees, together with the chief executive officer, hold leaders to account effectively. They have a precise understanding of the performance of the school.
- There is an effective safeguarding culture in school. Leaders are tenacious in seeking, and providing, support for vulnerable pupils and families.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in English and mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and know pupils well. They use this knowledge to provide highly effective, tailored feedback to pupils.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are tolerant, polite and friendly. Pupils behave well.
- The leadership of the early years is good. The quality of teaching and learning in the nursery class is excellent.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and engaging. However, the curriculum for science is underdeveloped. Some pupils do not have a deep understanding in this subject.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is improving. However, some older pupils do not have a secure knowledge of the other cultures and faiths in modern Britain.
- Teachers match effectively work to the abilities of most pupils. However, assessment information is not always used well to provide work that meets the needs of some lower-attaining pupils.
- The quality of pupils' writing is rapidly improving. However, some teachers do not consistently address weaknesses in pupils' spelling and handwriting.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the provision for pupils' cultural development is strengthened so pupils learn about other religions, cultures and traditions and are increasingly well prepared for life in modern Britain
 - leaders continue to develop the curriculum for science so more pupils acquire a deeper knowledge and understanding of what has been taught.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment and improve outcomes by ensuring that teachers, including those in the early years:
 - use assessment information more effectively to plan activities which are well matched to pupils' abilities, particularly lower-attaining pupils, so more achieve the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics
 - consistently address errors in pupils' spelling and handwriting so more achieve the expected standard in writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, supported by the vice-principal and assistant principal, are rapidly improving the quality of education pupils receive. Together, they are an excellent team who are aspirational and have high ambitions for every pupil. They have accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses which exist in school and are committed to making further improvements to teaching and learning.
- The principal leads by example. He is well respected by staff and pupils and has the overwhelming support of parents and carers. Together with support from the trust, he has established strong partnerships with parents and the local community. He has transformed the reputation of the school since his arrival. A typical parental comment was, 'My children are doing brilliantly. I cannot recommend the school highly enough.'
- Leaders have cultivated an effective team of staff. Morale is high and staff say that they are proud to work at the school. They value the support of senior leaders and the training they receive, such as professional development meetings, trust network meetings and the opportunities to complete research through the trust-funded Masters degree programmes.
- Despite significant staffing changes over the last two years, leaders have worked successfully to improve the quality of leadership. The leadership of English and mathematics is effective. Leaders have introduced and embedded consistent and systematic approaches to the teaching of these subjects. For example, reading is now taught through whole-class reading of high-quality texts, while phonics teaching has been designed and influenced through extensive research. These improvements to the quality of teaching are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders ensure that the school is inclusive and welcoming. The funding to support the provision for pupils with SEND, and for those who are at risk of exclusion, is used effectively. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive one-to-one support and personalised learning programmes to help meet their needs. Consequently, pupils with SEND make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics while the number of exclusions has reduced significantly over time.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils with positive impact. Funding is used to provide the earliest possible support for disadvantaged pupils. For example, pupils work in small class sizes so learning can be tailored effectively, they receive weekly support from a speech and language therapist and access a range of small group interventions. Funding is also used to provide social and emotional support to pupils using individual counselling sessions.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is used expertly to increase pupils' participation in a range of competitive sports and to improve the physical well-being of inactive pupils. A wide menu of sporting activities is offered to pupils, including football, dance and tri-golf. Many of these activities have been selected in collaboration with the pupils' sports council. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND can fully participate in sporting events, such as boccia and 'new age' curling.
- Leaders ensure that fundamental British values are reflected in the school's own

values. These are prominently displayed in every classroom and resonate throughout the school. Pupils embody many of these values. Most pupils are tolerant, respectful and becoming increasingly prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Pupils value the homework they receive. They speak with enthusiasm about the 'menu of choices' they are able to access for homework and how this is built around their learning in subjects other than English and mathematics. They enjoy the homework given and say it helps them to improve their learning in the classroom.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and meaningful. The quality of work in history and geography is particularly strong, with stimulating and relevant trips and visits linked to these subjects, such as visits to York to learn about the Vikings and the history of steam engines. However, the curriculum for science is not as well developed. Too few pupils have a deep enough knowledge and understanding in this subject, finding it difficult to recall and reflect on what they have learned. Leaders have made a positive start to improving the curriculum in science, but the full impact of their actions is yet to be realised.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is improving. Leaders are acutely aware of the context of the school and are determined for pupils to be aspirational, appreciate the arts and reflect on their own beliefs. For example, pupils talk about their 'dreams' for the future, reflect on historic events, such as Armistice Day, and undertake work of a high quality in art. While there are some opportunities for pupils to learn about people from other countries, such as writing letters to pen pals in Kenya, pupils do not have a deep and secure understanding of other cultures, faiths and traditions beyond their own locality.

Governance of the school

- Trustees, alongside the chief executive officer, are an effective team. They receive detailed reports from leaders about the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the school's performance, including the spending of additional funding and pupils' outcomes. Some trustees make regular visits to the school to meet with leaders, speak with pupils and examine the impact of leaders' actions on improving the quality of education pupils receive. They have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Trustees hold leaders to account effectively. Minutes of the meetings of the board of trustees show that many trustees ask challenging questions during meetings. The effective use of 'peer reviews' and quality-assurance visits from the chief executive officer are used to gather first-hand evidence of the impact of actions taken in response to this challenge.
- Trustees are reflective and ensure that the board of trustees possess the right skills to continue improving the school. For example, trustees have effectively supported the principal to ensure that the school's finances are well managed. Trustees, together with the chief executive officer, provide mentorship and support to leaders. This is particularly valued by the principal.
- Trustees ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties, including safeguarding. They complete thorough safeguarding audits and complete checks of the school's recruitment and vetting procedures so they can effectively hold leaders to account for

keeping pupils safe in school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture within the school. Staff are well trained and their knowledge is regularly updated. Staff are vigilant and aware of the signs of abuse and how to access help for pupils.
- Leaders know pupils and their families well. They are tenacious in seeking, and providing, support for vulnerable pupils and their families at the earliest possible stage. Leaders have positive relationships with families and support them to engage effectively with other agencies and services.
- Leaders contribute effectively to plans for pupils who are at risk of harm or who are on the child protection register. They liaise with and share information with external agencies, including the local authority's social care and early help professionals.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and are well cared for by staff. They talk about the 'worry boxes' they have in each class and how they write down their worries or concerns and post them in the box, knowing an adult will read it and help them. A typical comment from pupils was, 'Our teachers act like another parent.'
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe. They learn about fire and road safety, and how to stay safe online. They have visits from the local police to talk about 'stranger danger' and cyber bullying. Parents agree their children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants have positive relationships with pupils and know them well. They have established high expectations of what most pupils can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a consistent and effective approach to teaching across these subjects which is now well embedded and improving pupils' outcomes.
- Teachers provide highly personalised feedback to pupils. This feedback ensures that pupils understand and acquire new learning quickly. It is used effectively to extend and deepen pupils' understanding of concepts during lessons.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think more widely. For example, in one lesson, the teacher asked, 'Does an adverb always come at the end of a sentence?', while in another lesson the teacher asked, 'Why did this character enter the story at this point?'
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good across all subjects. In most subjects, they use this knowledge to develop expertly pupils' understanding and use of ambitious and technical vocabulary. For example, in key stage 2, teachers model technical language such as 'vowel suffixes' and 'root words', while in other lessons pupils talk about 'minute blood cells and atoms'.
- Early reading and phonics are taught well. A well-researched and systematic approach

to teaching phonics has been developed across the trust and implemented in the school. Teachers effectively model letters and the sounds they make, demonstrating segmenting and blending skills throughout English lessons. Because of this, pupils have a growing understanding of how to successfully read words, so they can access a range of texts with increasing fluency and accuracy.

- Pupils read widely and often in school. There are many opportunities to read for pleasure throughout the school day, including in the breakfast club, during early-morning work with parents and after school in the book club.
- Parents agree that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. A typical parental comment was, 'Staff have such passion and enthusiasm for teaching. It captures and draws children in to learning.'
- With the exception of science, subjects other than English and mathematics are well taught. Pupils have a deep understanding of their learning in history, geography and art. They relish the opportunity to learn about different historical periods and people, such as the Stone Age and the Vikings. Teachers carefully make meaningful links in these subjects. For example, pupils were observed creating watercolour pictures of bridges and ponds in the style of Monet, linked to geography work on rivers.
- The teaching of writing is rapidly improving. Pupils have many opportunities to write at length and across the curriculum. Pupils use a range of creative and ambitious vocabulary within their work and punctuation is typically accurate. However, there are some occasions when teachers do not address pupils' weaker handwriting and spelling.
- Teachers plan work in English and mathematics that is typically well matched to most pupils' abilities. However, when teaching is not as strong, some teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan work which matches the ability of some lower-attaining pupils. When this happens, work is either too easy or too hard and does not provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve as well as they could in these subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud to be part of The Parkgate Academy. Pupils are polite and friendly. They greet staff, pupils and visitors with respect and kindness. A typical comment was, 'Everyone is welcome at our school.'
- Pupils are tolerant and accepting of difference. For example, typically summing up their attitudes one pupil said, 'We treat everyone the same at our school, regardless of skin colour or ability.'
- Pupils relish the responsibilities they have and the opportunities to represent the school in the local community. For example, the 'Junior Town Council' has recently been involved in litter picking and redecorating public areas of the community that have been vandalised with graffiti.
- Most pupils have increasingly positive attitudes to their learning and are becoming

more resilient to the challenges of work. Teachers regularly remind pupils, 'Don't say I can't, say I can't yet.'

- Pupils relish the many opportunities available for extra-curricular learning. Pupils say that they enjoy staying in school at the end of the day so they can participate in clubs, such as adventure club, cookery club and homework club.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They enjoy the two hours of PE every week, alongside lunchtime sports activities. Pupils understand the need to eat a balanced diet and to drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe and have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. Pupils are unanimous in the view that bullying does not occur in the school. However, they say that if it did, then 'Mr Nunn would sort it out straight away.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. They regularly remind pupils of the school's values, including 'discipline' and 'positivity'. As a result, pupils behave well and most conduct is good.
- Pupils listen well to staff and are well mannered. During the inspection, pupils were seen holding doors open for adults and some pupils thanked the inspectors and shook their hands following discussions with them.
- Pupils enjoy receiving rewards for good behaviour. For example, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about receiving 'house points and badges' and 'star of the week' awards in celebration assemblies.
- When behaviour is not good, leaders put effective plans in place to support those pupils who are at risk of exclusion. This extensive, bespoke support centres around pupils' individual needs and well-being and often results in much improved conduct. Consequently, the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly over time.
- Leaders have worked tirelessly to improve pupils' attendance. Despite still being below the national average, attendance is improving quickly. Leaders use a range of strategies to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school, including termly attendance reports, one-to-one family support meetings and referrals for early help. Pupils enjoy the rewards they receive for good attendance, including certificates, weekly 'tray bake' class rewards and the 'attendance raffle'.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Despite being below the national averages, the proportions of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stages 1 and 2 are improving over time.
- Current key stage 1 and 2 pupils' work in mathematics shows that most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, make strong progress from their starting points. The teaching of mathematics is well sequenced and pupils have many opportunities to use mathematical language, solve problems and reason

mathematically. There are more pupils working at the standard expected for their age than has previously been the case.

- Currently key stage 1 and 2 pupils' work in reading shows that more pupils than previously are working at the standard expected for their age and making strong progress, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Most pupils read widely and often and effectively use inference and deduction skills to understand the texts they read.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the end of Year 1 national phonics screening check is improving towards the national average. The increasingly effective teaching of phonics ensures that more pupils accurately decode the words they read.
- Current pupils' English books show that most pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make strong progress in writing. Most pupils' work is of a high standard and consists of accurate punctuation, ambitious vocabulary and increasingly demanding sentence structures. However, some pupils, particularly lower-attaining pupils, do not always spell common words accurately. This prevents them from making better progress and attaining more highly.
- The quality of pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics is typically very good. Pupils make strong progress in most of these subjects. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of what they learn in science is not always sufficiently deep to allow them to confidently recall, discuss and reflect upon their learning in this subject.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years is good. The recently appointed early years leader has made a positive start to improving the quality of teaching and learning. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has effective plans in place to address these.
- Children enter the early years with skills well below those typically expected, particularly in communication and language. Leaders recognise this and rightly prioritise this area for development. Staff have been well trained by speech and language therapists and children, including disadvantaged children, receive personalised support from therapists and 'communication' teaching assistants to help boost their language development.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning to encourage children to explain their thinking. For example, during a number activity in the nursery class, the teacher asked, 'Can you show me a different way of making five?'
- The quality of the provision in the nursery class is excellent. Teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations of what children can achieve. Some children in this class can already write recognisable phrases and can identify pairs of numbers which make 10.
- The standard of children's writing in the Reception classes is rapidly improving. Teachers in the Reception classes model how to segment words orally to help children

write them. Some children already write sentences with capital letters and full stops. An increasing number of children are well prepared for the next stage of education in Year 1.

- Staff successfully model language and vocabulary while interacting with children. For example, staff build children's positional language by asking questions such as, 'Can you find the blue monkey, next to the green monkey?'
- Leaders, and staff, ensure that children with SEND are supported and cared for well. Teaching assistants provide tailored support for children with SEND and adapt the curriculum to meet their needs. For example, children with complex SEND in the Reception class were engaged in developing fine motor skills by pressing, squashing and stretching playdough. The teaching assistant skilfully moved this on to pressing gem stones into the dough and asking children to count how many gems they had used.
- Children listen carefully and behave well. Staff establish clear routines and spend considerable time modelling their expectations of children's behaviour. As a result, children are polite, friendly and well mannered.
- Leaders continue to develop an effective partnership with parents. Parents have many opportunities to visit school and see learning in action. For example, they share 'wow' moments between home and school, attend reading and phonics workshops and visit school for 'biscuits and books' mornings so they can read with their child with the support of early years staff.
- Leaders work with a range of external agencies to support children and their families. For example, children with SEND have access to speech and language therapists and the local authority early years SEND team.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable, including in paediatric first aid. They respond quickly when they believe a child may be at risk of harm and make timely referrals for early help support.
- Leaders ensure that the early years curriculum is varied and exciting. However, in the Reception classes, there are occasions when learning is not well matched to some children's abilities, particularly when children are expected to work independently. It is sometimes unclear what the learning intention is, and these areas are sometimes not resourced well enough to allow children, particularly lower-attaining children, to sustain their concentration and interest.

School details

Unique reference number	143140
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10087330

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	328
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sue Trentini
Principal	Mark Nunn
Telephone number	01623 860584
Website	www.theparkgateacademy.co.uk
Email address	office@theparkgateacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher of the school took up post in December 2017. Many leaders and teachers are new to the school following significant staffing changes in the last two years.
- The school is governed by the board of trustees and is part of The Forge Trust.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well below the national averages.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Inspectors listened to pupils read in key stages 1 and 2. Inspectors met with groups of pupils to talk about their learning and experiences in school. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with the leaders for English and mathematics. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and around school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, vice-principal, assistant principal, the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND, the leader of the early years, middle leaders and members of the board of trustees and chief executive officer of the trust.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, pupils' performance and attendance, and records of the school's monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education. Inspectors also examined the school's plans for improvement, plans for the use and impact of the additional funding, minutes from meetings of the board of trustees and information available on the school's website.
- Inspectors spoke with parents informally during the inspection. There were also six responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Steve Varnam, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Hawkes	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Rigby	Ofsted Inspector

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