

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Park Mead Primary School

Michelham Priory Road, Upper Dicker, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 3QP

Inspection date:

22 October 2024

Outcome

Park Mead Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff have created a friendly and nurturing environment in this small, inclusive school. They know pupils well. This helps pupils feel safe, happy and valued. Pupils know that the school will help them if they have a concern. They especially appreciate the 'worry boxes', where they can post their thoughts. Pupils are respectful to each other and staff. They are kind and caring. One pupil said, 'We are one big team. We look after each other.' Pupils understand the school's values of respect, resilience and responsibility. They demonstrate these in all areas of school life.

Pupils enjoy learning and undertaking challenging tasks. They talk excitedly about their lessons and other educational experiences. The school has high expectations for what pupils should learn and remember. Pupils rise to these expectations and are keen to do their best.

The school expects pupils to behave well. This is reflected in pupils' positive conduct and attitudes to their education. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They follow instructions and routines well. In class, pupils listen and work hard. They play and collaborate well at breaktimes. Pupils who are 'play leaders' love to help younger pupils. They are proud of their responsibilities and positive contributions. Pupils enjoy the many resources that are available for them to play with, particularly the gym equipment.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school and the federation it is part of have worked skilfully together to design an ambitious curriculum. It is clearly sequenced and planned so that new concepts build on prior learning. The school has high expectations for pupils with special educational needs

and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff provide the right support for these pupils. This helps pupils with SEND embed their knowledge alongside their classmates. The school has identified the important knowledge and subject content that they want all pupils to learn and remember. This helps teachers know what to teach and to explain curriculum content clearly. At times, teachers do not routinely check what pupils know carefully enough. As a result, some activities are not adapted as well as they could be in order to give pupils the help they need to achieve the task set. This means that, on some occasions, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

The curriculum in the early years is engaging and meaningful. There is a sharp focus on developing children's communication and language skills. Children learn through stories, rhymes and songs. They develop their knowledge through imaginative play and purposeful adult interaction. This helps children build strong foundations for the next stage of their education.

Reading is prioritised from the moment children start at the school in Reception. High-quality texts are woven into the school's curriculum. All pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. The phonics curriculum is taught well. Books that pupils read are carefully matched to the sounds that they have been taught. This helps them to quickly become confident, fluent readers. If pupils are at risk of falling behind, high-quality support helps them catch up quickly. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to practise writing the sounds that they are taught in phonics lessons. This helps them to write simple words and sentences accurately.

The school prioritises and celebrates pupils' high attendance. The school carefully tracks and analyses pupils' absence and takes swift action if a pupils' attendance begins to decline. Pupils know the importance of coming to school every day. This is reflected in many pupils' improved attendance. The school works closely with families and pupils who need extra support with this.

Pupils' broader development is well considered. Pupils are active citizens in their community. For example, pupils are currently working to slow down the traffic outside their school. During road safety week, pupils aim to rally the support of their local member of parliament and the parish council by writing them persuasive letters.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They understand and respect difference. Equality and diversity are celebrated. Pupils are taught about the fundamental British values. They gain an understanding of democracy when voting for school roles such as eco warriors, school council and house captains.

The collaborative work of the governors and leaders from the federation is highly effective. Together, they provide support, guidance and challenge to school leaders. All staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, teachers' checking of what pupils know and can do does not sharply identify the knowledge, gaps and misconceptions that pupils have. As a result, the adaptations that teachers make to meet pupils' emerging needs do not have as much impact as they could. The school should ensure that staff routinely and precisely identify when pupils have not secured new learning so that the right support is provided for pupils who might be at risk of falling behind.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

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Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	114408
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10341319
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alan Brundle
Executive Headteacher	James Procter
Headteacher	Heidi West
Website	www.pioneerfederation.co.uk/parkmead
Date of previous inspection	2 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Pioneer Federation. There are currently four schools in the federation.
- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

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