

Purbrook Park School

Park Avenue, Purbrook, Waterlooville, PO7 5DS

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Teaching is improving but is not yet strong enough to lead to good or better achievement.
- In some instances teachers' expectations of students are insufficiently high and the work they set is too easy.
- Not all students are convinced that the school prevents and tackles bullying as well as it could.
- Despite a calm and orderly atmosphere around the school and in most lessons, minor disruption to learning still exists.
- A few teachers are not applying the rules on behaviour consistently.
- There is a growing body of parental support for the strategies taken to improve the school. However, a few parents and carers are not fully convinced that enough is being done.
- Some subject leaders are not yet able to recognise when good progress in learning is taking place.
- Actions taken by leaders to eradicate inadequate teaching and improve achievement have had an impact, but more work is still needed.

The school has the following strengths:

- The rate of improvement in GCSE results has improved, particularly in English.
- Systems to monitor achievement are stronger than at the previous inspection. They have triggered effective additional support for students who are in danger of lagging behind.
- The headteacher has resolve and has built a committed leadership team. New systems and policies to underpin his vision for success are very sound.
- A new behaviour policy has led to improvements across the school. These have been welcomed by students and staff.
- Students are adamant that the school keeps them safe. This was not the case at the time of the previous inspection.
- Governors are strong. They are realistic in their views about how much has improved. They have backed the headteacher in taking tough decisions to eliminate weak teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 42 lessons taught by 40 teachers; of these lessons, five were observed jointly with members of the school’s leadership team. A number of shorter visits were also made to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, school staff, including senior staff, a representative from the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair.
- Inspectors took account of the 72 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the 27 responses to the staff questionnaires. Three parents and carers came into school and met with inspectors. One parent or carer contacted the inspection team via email.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation including students’ books, the improvement plans, current assessment information and the school’s evaluation of how well it is doing.

Inspection team

Lesley Farmer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Mary Hoather

Additional Inspector

Margaret Faull

Additional Inspector

Gordon Jackson

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Purbrook Park is a smaller-than-average secondary school for 11 to 16 year olds.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below the national average.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion of those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A few students attend alternative courses at a local further education college for one day a week.
- The headteacher joined the school three months before the previous inspection. Since then there have been significant changes in staffing at all levels.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better, so that the achievement of all students rises in all subjects, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of students' capabilities throughout lessons, so that the pace of their learning is brisk and the level of challenge provided is sufficiently high
 - make links between assessment criteria and learning explicit, so that students can see how to make the next steps in their learning
 - plan lessons that are informed by the school's assessment data on individual students, so as to match learning to their particular starting points and needs
 - are able to manage classroom behaviour consistently, so that disruption to lessons is rare.
- Strengthen the monitoring of teaching by:
 - revising the criteria for judging the effectiveness of teaching in lessons so that there is less focus on the range of teaching activities and greater focus on the pace and depth of students' learning
 - ensuring that all heads of subjects insist that teachers in their subject areas plan lessons that move students forward in their learning and are able to recognise when this is happening.
- Rigorously monitor and routinely evaluate the school's strategies to prevent poor behaviour and bullying so that students and their parents and carers are entirely confident that any issues will be resolved effectively.
- Strengthen the partnership work that has already been initiated with parents and carers and enlist their full support in ensuring that students take greater responsibility for their behaviour by coming to school regularly, on time and ready to learn.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school in Year 7 with average starting points. Over time GCSE results have remained in line with the national average. However, the 2012 GCSE results show a better rate of improvement than in the past. Leaders have halted the decline in 2011, when results stood still against a national picture of improvement. They achieved this by strengthening the systems to monitor students' achievement and providing additional support where needed.
- Leaders now set more challenging targets across all year groups which are beginning to result in better progress. For example in English, GCSE results in 2012 were above average. Almost all students made good progress in this subject, whatever their starting points on entry to the school. This is because teaching in English is invariably well matched to students' needs.
- Students eligible for free school meals in 2012 did less well than other students in the school. Their average points scores, based on their GCSE results in English and mathematics, although higher than those of their peers nationally in both subjects, were usually a GCSE grade lower than those of non-eligible students within the school. The gap however, was not this wide in 2011 and the current picture is changing. It is now less wide across all year groups.
- Disabled students and those who need extra help with their learning achieve in line with their peers. Some are progressing well and better than in the past. This is because they are usually well supported by additional adults and most teachers pay good attention to their needs.
- A focus on the development of students' reading, writing, listening and speaking skills is evident across all subject areas and is usually reflected in helpful marking and feedback to students. Leaders have recently appointed a member of staff to lead improvement in this area and also to develop the library as a learning resource but it is too soon to evaluate the impact.
- Students who attend alternative courses away from the school site achieve well. Their progress towards targets is carefully monitored and support is provided if they fall behind.
- The school typically enters students early for mathematics in order to build their confidence. Over time this has not adversely affected students' potential to gain the higher grades at GCSE, although there was a slight dip in 2012.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that their child is progressing well.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, there is still not enough good and outstanding teaching across the school. Teachers do not take enough account of students' abilities or prior learning when planning lessons. They are not always clear about what they want students to learn and sometimes, despite believing their expectations of students to be high, the work they set is too easy and students' progress is too slow.
- Not all teachers provide suitable resources to support students of differing ability or need within the class. Inspectors observed that teachers had invariably identified students in their classes who might underachieve, but they did not routinely provide any additional help or alternative activities to support their learning.
- Typically lessons are calm and productive. However, in a few lessons, where there are too many planned activities in which learning is too easy or superficial, students become restless or begin to lose interest. When this happens students' progress is too slow because teachers fail to recognise the need to adjust what they are doing to keep the learning moving forward.
- When teaching is good or better, teachers plan activities that move students on in their learning from their starting points at a brisk pace. For example, in a high-quality English lesson, disabled students and those needing extra help considered techniques that writers use to attract the readers' attention in advertisements. The teacher skilfully moved students through a range of tasks, questioning them individually and as a group, enabling them to work independently, to

reflect and express their views effectively. Levels of confidence were high; the teacher knew the level of ability of each student well and planned extremely effectively for individual progression.

- There is some good use of assessment criteria or examination requirements to support students in challenging themselves to make progress independently. However, in lessons where assessment criteria are taught discretely for too long or without a model, their impact is lost. The pace of learning slows because the link with the expected outcome is no longer evident.
- In a few instances, where teachers are temporary or have taken over a class whose teacher has left, leaders have neglected to provide sufficient or accurate enough information about how much work has been completed or how well students are progressing. This has undermined the confidence of a few students and parents and carers and has resulted in slower progress for some students.
- Over time, additional funding to support the needs of those eligible for the pupil premium has been effectively targeted through a range of interventions including individual tuition and the creation of smaller groups in mathematics and English. Current data and other inspection evidence indicate that the progress of these students in all year groups is better than in the past.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have taken a tough stance on instances of poor behaviour around the school and in lessons. Their concerted and insistent approach has brought about improvement from a low base. However, behaviour and safety are not yet good because new systems and policies are not being monitored tightly enough and they are not yet resulting in consistently good behaviour.
- Exclusions, including internal sanctions, have risen as a result of the introduction of the revised school policy. School leaders are aware of the need to ensure that this approach is a short-term strategy used to reduce exclusions in the longer term.
- Students say that interruptions to their learning are less frequent than in the past but do still exist. They also assert that some teachers do not follow the school's behaviour policies consistently, so some disruption goes unchecked. However, they are very clear that behaviour around the site outside of lessons is much improved and that they now feel safe.
- The behaviour of the very small number of students who attend off-site provision is good.
- Parents and carers, along with school staff, are generally positive about improvements in behaviour but parents and carers also indicate through the online questionnaire, Parent View, that it requires improvement to be consistently good.
- Students' understanding and perceptions of bullying are variable; most are confident that the school's leaders will deal effectively and quickly with any issues that arise. However, this confidence is not universal. Parents and carers echo the views of students in that there is more to be done. Some do not know what the school's stance is on these matters. Others asked to come in to speak to inspectors about the positive progress being made in this area.
- Attendance is now broadly average and has improved since the previous inspection. However, leaders recognise that there is still more to be done to reduce the numbers of students who are persistently absent.
- The school's leaders have established a parents' forum which has grown in numbers since it was set up and meets on a regular basis. Inspectors met with a few of these parents and carers and were impressed with their commitment to help secure further improvements. Leaders recognise that they now need to develop this partnership further to enlist the support of all parents and carers in ensuring that students take greater responsibility for managing their own behaviour.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not yet succeeded in bringing about standards of achievement, behaviour or teaching that are consistently good or

better.

- Senior leaders, governors and the local authority share a realistic view of the school's performance. They have brought about evident improvements from a low base since the previous inspection, such as in behaviour and safety, and are restructuring the governing body and senior leadership team and tackling inadequate teaching.
- The establishment of good or better teaching is at the heart of school leaders' work. The management of teachers' performance, links to training and development and the routine monitoring of teaching have all strengthened. School leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching in jointly observed lessons concurred with those of inspectors.
- The headteacher has steered the school through a period of significant turbulence. Recognising the need to significantly improve behaviour and teaching he has effectively restructured his senior team to provide him with the capability at a senior level to lead the necessary improvements. His approach to managing teachers' performance is thorough. Teachers only progress through the pay scale if their students achieve well.
- Senior leaders are growing in confidence and capability. They have put together sound policies and monitoring systems to underpin continual improvements in each aspect of the school's work. No such policies or systems were in place when the school was previously inspected.
- Subject leaders understand their accountabilities for improving teaching and are keen to make a difference. However, not all are clear about what constitutes good progress or are able to recognise when this is not happening in lessons. Leaders' criteria for judging the effectiveness of teaching lack clarity and focus too much on what teachers are doing rather than on how well students are progressing and the pace or depth of their learning.
- Courses offered meet students' needs and provide effectively for students' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Leaders have recently revised the offer in Key Stage 4 to provide additional vocational pathways and a greater focus on academic pathways to include triple sciences for the more-able with effect from September 2013.
- The monitoring of students' achievement against targets set has been strengthened so that leaders are now well equipped to evaluate the school's performance and secure improvement, including the promotion of equal opportunities. There is still some variation in the alacrity with which this information is analysed and fed back into improvement planning.
- Leaders have sound plans for the use of the Year 7 'catch-up' funding to enable students that join the school with below average levels of attainment in English to move forward quickly in their learning.
- The local authority has provided very effective support to the school's leaders in tackling areas of weakness. Feedback to senior staff and governors has been robust and challenging, for example, in relation to the need to sustain the confidence of all parents and carers in all matters and in connection with the use of temporary staff to fill vacancies.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious for the school and have an open and honest relationship with the headteacher and his team. They have a thorough understanding of teachers' performance management and support the headteacher's decisions about awarding or withholding pay rises, alongside those about addressing inadequate teaching. They understand how students eligible for the pupil premium are doing and want to see further improvements in this area. They know how the school's achievement compares with that of similar schools and since the previous inspection they have worked with the full support of the local authority to strengthen their skills and knowledge. They have fully restructured the governing body and are offering a much higher degree of challenge than in the past.

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	116506
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	408871

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	835
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Evelyn
Headteacher	Paul Foxley
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2012
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