

Purbrook Park School

Park Avenue, Purbrook, Waterlooville, PO7 5DS

Inspection dates 13–14 May 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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Purbrook Park School has significantly improved since its last inspection because of the decisive and concerted efforts of school leaders. Students are taught well and make good progress in all subjects. The school community is both happy and purposeful.
- Although GCSE results have been low in recent years, the decline has been halted. The school predicts that results in 2015 and beyond are set to rise rapidly because current students achieve well.
- Raising the quality of teaching has formed the main focus for the school over the last two years. As a result, teachers are now giving all students the support they need to make good progress especially in English, mathematics and science.
- The extra help given to disadvantaged and vulnerable students is robust and is boosting their achievement. Similarly, disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported to make good progress in their learning.
- Improvement in the attitudes, conduct and behaviour of students has also contributed to the rise in achievement. Students are lively but respectful of others and they value their learning. Attendance has rapidly improved. Bullying is rare. The development of tolerance and understanding of community responsibility is nurtured well.
- The school ensures that students are kept safe and this includes helping them to understand the risks they face in their lives now and in the future.
- The headteacher leads this school with utmost determination that the young people in his care are given the best possible education and preparation for life. His vision is shared and driven by the enthusiasm and optimism of his very able senior and middle leaders.
- Governors are ambitious for the school. They have taken active and effective measures to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to secure the rapid improvement of this school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Improvements made to teaching and learning have not yet had full impact on GCSE results. This is due to the residual underachievement of a small minority of students who did not fully catch up in their learning. Moreover, there remain gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others in the school and nationally.
- Some students are not taking sufficient pride in the presentation of their work.
- Not all students, including some of the most able, make accelerated progress. This is because some teachers do not always give them sufficiently precise and detailed feedback on how to improve rapidly. Furthermore, not all students respond to teacher feedback in a suitably productive way.
- Not all students are equipped with the skills to analyse and debate issues at a high level.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 30 lessons, some of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Additionally, they observed a Year 9 assembly and visited some tutor time sessions.
- The inspection team held meetings with two groups of students and spoke to many more in lessons and around the school during breaks.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and a range of students’ books separately to gauge the progress students are making.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior leaders and governors to determine the school’s plans and how well they are monitored and evaluated. They also held meetings with middle leaders and other staff members to ascertain their role in school improvement.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised including the school’s self-evaluation and its plans for the future. Inspectors also reviewed the school’s documentation about students’ achievement and data about behaviour and attendance as well as minutes of governors’ meetings.
- Inspectors took into consideration the views of 110 parents who responded to Parent View and 39 questionnaires from a range of staff members.
- The lead inspector met with the local authority school improvement advisor to discuss the school’s journey of improvement and remaining areas for development.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Goodall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Roger Garrett	Additional Inspector
Karen Roche	Additional Inspector
Paula Whyte	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Purbrook Park School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It does not have a sixth form.
- The work of the school is overseen by a trust. Members include the Principals of Havant College and South Downs College and representatives from Portsmouth University and the Girls' Day School Trust.
- The vast majority of students are of White British background and speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is lower than the national average. The majority of these students have moderate learning difficulties.
- Similarly, the proportion of students who receive support through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is extra funding provided to schools to support children who are looked after and those known to be eligible for free school meals. Students supported through the pupil premium are referred to as disadvantaged students within this report.
- Just under one fifth of students entering the school in Year 7 receive catch-up funding, which is for students who did not achieve the nationally expected level in English or mathematics at the end of primary school.
- A very small number of students in Key Stage 4 attend South Downs College in Waterlooville for part-time vocational courses.
- There is also a very small minority of students who attend the local pupil referral unit on a short- or long-term basis.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend and embed the most effective teaching and learning practices already in place to secure outstanding progress for all students. In particular, ensure that every teacher:
 - provides the work, support and guidance necessary for all students to achieve highly, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able
 - provides high quality feedback to students about their work and checks that students respond appropriately so that they rapidly improve
 - expects and promotes high standards of writing and presentation of students' work
 - equips all students, but especially the most able, with the skills to analyse and debate issues at a high level.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The resolute and uncompromising leadership of the headteacher has resulted in significant improvements to teaching, learning and behaviour. These improvements have been driven by the school's vision of a harmonious community where everyone is given the opportunity and help to succeed and achieve highly.
- In 2014, the achievement of students was not good enough. GCSE results have been too low because teachers had not enabled students to catch up after earlier years of unsatisfactory teaching. Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others within the school and nationally have been too large in recent years.
- As a result of determined leadership and improved standards in the quality of teaching, school information and work in students' books shows that GCSE results for English, mathematics and science in 2015 and beyond are predicted to rise rapidly. Predictions are based on secure assessments and external checks and show that students are likely to achieve at or above their challenging targets. Furthermore, the school's targeted work and the use of extra government funding for disadvantaged students have resulted in this group making much better progress. Their progress is not yet outstanding but gaps are predicted to close over the next two years in English and mathematics.
- The journey of improvement has been challenging at times, particularly in regard to staffing but the headteacher has now secured a stable, motivated and increasingly skilled team of teachers. He has also established strong teams of senior and middle leaders who enthusiastically share and support his high expectations. There are well-constructed systems in place to embed high standards in all areas.
- There has been a whole-school focus on raising attainment through the improvement of teaching. Teachers take ownership of their training and contribute to the development programme. All performance targets are fundamentally linked to raising achievement; an important factor in school improvement.
- The way in which school leaders check the progress, attendance and well-being of every student is now outstanding. Subject leaders know how to improve teaching and learning and work closely with teachers to secure good progress. Year group and progress leaders also play a major role in helping every student to achieve. The joint impact of the work of school leaders, teachers and other staff is that all students are extremely well known and their learning needs are met more effectively.
- The school has changed the range and level of subjects and examinations offered. To raise expectations and increase opportunities in later life, all students now follow a more academic timetable. There are fewer lower level courses although more focused opportunities for vocational routes remain. The quality and effectiveness of careers guidance have increased. Students now receive more relevant information and advice. However, some students would like a greater opportunity for work experience. From 2016, virtually all students will follow subjects that will allow them to achieve the English Baccalaureate.
- The school provides a range of activities to promote the British values of tolerance, respect, liberty, law and democracy. These are explicitly and effectively interpreted through the day-to-day work of the school and underpin the school's work in reducing discrimination and maximising opportunities for all. There is also a wide range of clubs and activities as well as many opportunities within the school day to support the personal, social, moral and spiritual development of students. Advanced learning days and assemblies provide particularly valuable experiences and visits and trips broaden knowledge and consolidate learning.
- Students are kept safe in this school. There have been concerted and successful efforts to raise levels of attendance. Bullying has been reduced significantly. Students are aware of how to keep themselves safe now and in later life. All safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements.
- The attendance, behaviour and achievement of the very small number of students who attend alternative vocational courses or the local pupil referral unit are monitored exceptionally well. Consequently, they make good progress.
- School leaders form positive relationships with parents. There are weekly newsletters, regular updates on students' achievement, attendance and attitudes, and a parent steering group. The school has been able to make a range of improvements to the school's provision following requests from and discussion with members of this group. There remain a small number of parents who are not supportive of the school's work but this number has reduced significantly since the last inspection.
- The local authority's contribution to school improvement has been strong, especially following the last inspection. Support has been given in a range of subjects and aspects such as governance and the achievement of disadvantaged students. Support in this academic year has been reduced as a consequence of the improvements secured by school leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors reviewed their skills and performance critically following the last inspection and significantly restructured their work to ensure the school improved rapidly. The system of monthly meetings for all governors has enabled them to focus very strongly on school improvement. Governors have useful and relevant expertise and experience.
- Governors have a very good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development of the school because they come into school regularly as part of the school's monitoring and evaluation cycle. Through these visits, they see the school's policies and strategies for improvement in action, especially in regards to teaching and learning, and hold the headteacher to account. This process has helped them to understand and support the systems that are securing higher standards of teacher performance and consequent salary rewards.
- All statutory duties are carried out, particularly in regard to safeguarding. Governors have managed financial resources well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. School leaders have restored an environment in which teachers can teach and students can learn effectively.
- This is a happy and friendly school where most students are polite, look smart and show respect to others and their environment. Bullying, including through social media, is rare but is dealt with swiftly when it does occur. The focus on tolerance within the school has resulted in positive attitudes to differences in race, colour, beliefs, disabilities and sexuality; discriminatory language or behaviour is uncommon. Students behave sensibly and maturely in regards to the disruption to their site because of construction of a new building; they are looking forward to its completion.
- The conduct of students around the school and in lessons is typically good. They value the improvements made to their school and know the importance of their education. Consequently, attendance has improved and is now very nearly equal to the national average. The number of exclusions has reduced significantly.
- Most students follow the behaviour policy well and believe that the rules are fair. They are making better progress now because they respond positively to their teachers' guidance and want to be successful. While many complete their work tidily and in an organised way, some students do not take enough care with their handwriting and the presentation of their work.
- Typically, students are responsible and want to contribute to their school and their communities. They take on leadership roles with pride, have empathy for those less fortunate than themselves and engage in volunteering and fundraising to make a difference to the lives of others.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- The reduction in disruptive behaviour and bullying means that students now feel safe. There is a whole school approach to making the environment and activities as safe as possible and also a well-planned programme of topics to help students keep themselves safe. This includes activities undertaken on advanced learning days such as first aid and e-safety.
- Whenever students go off site, all necessary precautions are taken to keep them safe. There is excellent communication between the school and the local college and pupil referral unit.

The quality of teaching is good

- Over the last two years, senior leaders have led the school community in a concerted effort to improve teaching and learning. This drive has been rooted in an expectation that all teachers have a detailed knowledge of how well each of their students is learning and take systematic and effective action to help them make rapid progress. Senior and middle leaders support teachers in this expectation through the provision of focused training and modelling of outstanding practice.
- As a result of this drive, teaching throughout the school is typically good and sometimes outstanding. The high frequency use of supply teachers has reduced because staffing levels are now more stable. This improvement in teaching means that most students achieve well in all subjects but especially in English and mathematics. The development of literacy and numeracy skills features in all subjects but is also

reinforced weekly in tutor times.

- Every teacher now tracks the progress of students rigorously against challenging targets. The school has a very comprehensive picture of how each student is achieving and teachers use this information well to plan work that helps students to make progress. Many teachers give students high quality feedback and expect them to respond to it. Consequently, these students make rapid progress in their learning. However, not all teachers are sufficiently rigorous in this process. When this happens, improvements in learning are less marked.
- The focus on support for individuals is considered vital for disadvantaged students, to ensure that they catch up in their learning where necessary. This means that there is a clear, personalised programme for improvement for each disadvantaged student, monitored rigorously by middle leaders. The programme may involve one-to-one teaching, extra in-class support, more frequent communication with parents or using the school minibus to get the student to school on time.
- A similar approach is used to support disabled students and those with special educational needs, using additional specialised support where necessary. This group of students makes good progress because of this support and care which extends to all subject areas, including physical education. There are only a small number of teaching assistants but these are well trained and are used effectively for a variety of support activities.
- Most-able students are now making more rapid progress in line with the vision of high achievement for all. Many teachers now give most-able students challenging tasks that stretch their understanding, creativity and thinking. Provision for this group is not always outstanding, however, and in particular, fewer teachers are giving students opportunities to analyse, express opinion and debate at a high level.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement in recent years has been too low. Students joining the school with average levels of achievement, or just below, have left with GCSE results still below the national average. In 2014, 24 students achieved only one of the basic GCSEs of English and mathematics. This affected whole-school results considerably. Because of the drive for improvement, however, GCSE results are set to rise in 2015 with further rapid improvements predicted from 2016. The school is confident in its predictions because of the extensive range of information on achievement collected from ongoing teacher assessments and more formal testing. Students' achievement has also been verified externally.
- Students now make particularly good progress in English and mathematics. Their learning is enhanced by literacy and numeracy development across the subject range. In science, the rate of improvement has been slower but secure standards are now established so that students achieve more highly. Adjustments have also been made to science courses to ensure that students study at the right level.
- There remain gaps between the progress of disadvantaged students and others within the school and nationally. Those joining the school with low levels of achievement have made considerably less progress than others in English and mathematics. In 2014, however, the progress of the most able of this group was above others nationally. The group as a whole achieved around one and a half GCSE grades lower in English compared with others in the school and nationally. In mathematics, there was a similar gap between disadvantaged students and others in the school and a slightly larger gap nationally. Disadvantaged students now make much better progress throughout the school. Gaps in achievement are set to narrow to less than a GCSE grade in both subjects in 2015 and to close completely over the next two years.
- The well-focused support for disabled students and those with special educational needs enables them to make good progress and they generally achieve well in their Year 11 examinations.
- The most able students in the school generally achieve well but in recent years, have not always achieved their potential. The school now has higher expectations of all students and increasingly, teachers provide more stretching work for this group. Consequently, their progress is more rapid. This practice is not yet widespread enough for their achievement to be outstanding, however. Although many students are adept in expressing their views clearly through writing and speaking, not all are so confident in developing reasoned arguments at a higher level.
- Adjustments to the range of subjects studied are having a positive impact on achievement. Students are now set challenging targets in qualifications that will help them in the future. The school only rarely enters students early for examinations and students who attend alternative provision make good progress because of the care taken to support them in their learning.
- In addition to improved academic achievement, students demonstrate creativity and high standards in performing and expressive arts. For example, achievement in dance and photography is high. Such opportunities enrich the school experience and increase motivation and aspiration. The school strives

to prepare students well for their futures and provides experiences and opportunities for them to develop work-related skills.

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	462428

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	675
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Evelyn
Headteacher	Paul Foxley
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 May 2013
Telephone number	02392370351
Fax number	02392617941
Email address	admin@purbrook.hants.sch.uk

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