

# The Parks School

Burley Road, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6GY

## Inspection dates

26–27 January 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Highly effective leadership has led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The quality of teaching is always of a high standard. Adults' daily assessment procedures ensure that everything each child does enables them to make rapid progress. Teaching consistently reinforces and develops learning across all areas of learning.
- Children's outcomes are outstanding. Their specific needs and difficulties are carefully addressed through personalised plans that identify academic and social targets.
- The curriculum is exciting and skilfully designed to focus on children's interests, needs and stages of development. It is further enhanced by visits out into the local community and regular swimming lessons in the school pool.
- Children's personal development and welfare is outstanding. All staff ensure it is given high priority throughout all activities.
- Attitudes to learning are extremely positive. Adults have very high expectations for each child. Personal and social skills are sensitively developed to enable all children to learn through play either individually with an adult or in a small group.
- Behaviour is usually exemplary. Children quickly learn how to behave in the different surroundings they experience at school
- Reciprocal communication links are fostered by staff and are much appreciated by parents. Parents have many opportunities to be fully involved in their children's education.
- Transition arrangements, in and out of school, are thorough and allow children to settle quickly and easily.
- School improvement has been successful because leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Recent school improvement has been extremely well focused on improving teaching, learning and assessment.
- Governors provide strong support and are very knowledgeable about all the school does. They bring a mix of experience and expertise, have high expectations and want the very best for each child.
- Safeguarding arrangements are extremely thorough and effective. Each morning, children separate happily from those who look after them at home. They come into school excited, and ready to learn. Children trust the adults who help them, because they feel safe and secure and consequently enjoy school.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Strengthen further the systems used to analyse children's performance information, to clearly show the progress children make in each area of learning and during each school term.
  
- Develop further the outside provision so that it fully supports all areas of learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher and his senior staff, along with all other staff, have extremely high expectations regarding creating a culture that allows children to do their very best. The senior leadership team are very well focused on improvement, and accurately and successfully identified what needed improving, particularly with regard to teaching, learning and assessment, which are now outstanding. School improvement planning shows that leaders and governors have a realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and have strived for excellence.
- Staff morale is high and relationships between everyone are exemplary. This contributes much to the progress children make. Staff and governors understand how performance management is linked to checks made on children's learning. Targets are set for all staff and these are regularly reviewed. Adults are well supported through continuous professional development. For example, they have been effectively supported in developing early years expertise from the adjoining primary school staff.
- The curriculum is exceptionally well planned and specially adapted to provide individual personalised programmes, which include academic and social targets, for each child. Children learn about life in their immediate surroundings through visits out to the local community, where they converse with people at work such as shopkeepers. This not only develops personal and social skills but also their academic skills. On a recent visit, children hunted for things beginning with 'p' and came back with pork pies and pastries. Back in the classroom, they identified objects beginning with 'p'.
- Many opportunities are provided for children to learn about different cultures and world celebrations. All of these rich experiences allow children to begin to develop an understanding of life in modern Britain. During a slide show, children sat enthralled as they looked at photographs of their past learning, especially when they noticed that not everyone dressed the same as they do.
- The need to keep safe is very well promoted and is high-profile in all that the children do. Children were observed putting on appropriate clothing when playing outside on a cold day. They begin to learn about danger around them, such as electricity and not to touch electric plugs.
- The system to track the progress of cohorts and individual children is thorough. However, the analysis of children's performance information does not always show how well children achieve in the different areas of learning or show children's progress term by term.
- Links between staff, governors and parents are extensive. Parents are extremely well informed of their children's education and encouraged to become involved through assemblies, newsletters, learning journeys and the website. Parents say they are happy with how well their children are doing.
- Since the previous inspection, regular reviews, provided by the local authority, have guided the school effectively.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors know the provision that is offered is of high quality and continually look to ensure that the decisions they make are in the children's best interest. Their monitoring duties ensure they visit regularly and equip them with secure information about how well the school is doing. Consequently, governors are able to talk about all of the systems, procedures and documents that are established in school.
  - Governors are extremely well informed and consequently are able to support and challenge, and ask questions when necessary. They have high standards and recently asked for children's performance information to be simplified so that it is easier for them to understand.
  - Governors and leaders have developed robust systems for managing children's welfare and safety. A thorough system to vet staff and other adults who come into school and the checking of the school site ensures that children are kept safe and secure.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and enable children to play safely as they learn. All governors and staff receive appropriate training and are highly committed to protecting the children in their care.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding because adults have extremely high expectations regarding promoting and reinforcing children's academic and social skills. Adults skilfully develop learning in all areas because they have a secure understanding of the early years curriculum and the stages the children are working towards.
- A major strength in the teaching is the way adults reinforce and develop language skills and promote the need to sit and listen carefully at every opportunity. As a result, children, all with limited speaking skills, were often seen listening carefully and having a go at using words to make themselves understood.
- Children have excellent opportunities to explore and discover. There was much excitement when children saw the ice castle which staff designed because the children had shown an interest in a popular musical fantasy film. At another time, children thoroughly enjoyed exploring what blue paint felt like to touch. One boy said 'cold' when asked, and then moved his fingers, with much enthusiasm, to make indentations in the slimy blue paint.
- There is an excellent focus on individual needs and targets which relate to academic and social skills development. All adults know each child's strengths and what their next step of development is. Targets are clearly identified and referred to on planning and during individual interactions.
- The teaching of letters and sounds is skilfully undertaken by adults. Children focus on the letter sounds they can identify and much reinforcement takes place before they move on. One child was seen identifying initial sounds and then objects beginning with the same letter sound. The quality of adult support was excellent because the activity was resourced in a way that excited the child, there was constant checking of understanding and much praise was given. As a result, learning was outstanding.
- Children take part in many activities where adults expertly reinforce and develop numbers and counting, along with vocabulary related to mathematics such as tall, small and long. All adults are skilful at promoting numeracy skills in many activities. As a result, children begin to understand what numbers are and how to count.
- During an extremely well resourced activity that promoted listening to, and making, music, all children made excellent gains in their learning. Adult expectations were extremely high as children selected and used percussion instruments with great excitement while listening carefully to the teacher.
- Ongoing assessments are continually collected by adults. This information identifies the next steps of learning for all children and is fed into future planning. This process results in every child working to a personalised plan which supports their academic and social needs. All children are treated as individuals in this school.
- The relationships between all staff and parents are exceptional in meeting children's needs. Parents are regularly involved in their children's learning, for example through the home/school books that are used each day. These clearly show how each child is learning both at home and school.
- Relationships between adults and children are excellent. Adults have been responsible for creating a learning environment that is calm, safe and which allows all children to achieve their very best. This contributes very effectively to the outstanding learning that takes place.
- Although the outside area is an exciting place to explore, climb and develop physical skills, it is not always used to support all areas of learning as successfully as the classroom area does. However, staff have identified this as an area for development.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote children's personal development and welfare is outstanding. Adults miss no opportunities to promote the development of personal and social skills in all activities.
- The children's social needs are well known by all adults and children receive excellent-quality care and support. As a result, children settle into school quickly, display excellent attitudes to learning and gain the confidence to complete little tasks such as saying 'morning' to the adults and each other when they arrive at school. Others are encouraged to take on jobs of responsibility. For example, one child was observed looking very excited when she took the register to the office, with adult support.
- Parents spoke of how much they appreciate the effort staff go to when children enter or transfer to other settings. Nothing is too much trouble, they say. This results in children settling extremely well into the

different settings they transfer to. These include mainstream nursery and primary schools or other special schools.

- Visits out of school, where children liaise with the local community, enable them to learn about how to become a good citizen. They learn about why they must cross roads carefully. During visits to the local library children borrow books and begin to develop an awareness of the love of reading.
- Lunchtime is a delightful occasion which reinforces and develops children's personal and social skills. The importance of eating healthily and developing acceptable table manners is promoted expertly as children sit and eat with the adults, who help them. Similarly, in the classroom at snack time, children were observed eating pizza which they had made the previous day. The necessity of saying 'please' and 'thank you' was skilfully demonstrated by the adults, who acted as excellent role models.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of children is outstanding as they play and work with adults or take part in a small group activities. All adults have extremely high expectations and expertly promote good behaviour throughout the school day. Consequently, children quickly learn how to behave in the classroom, outside and during the times they eat their lunch and snacks.
- Children learn in a calm and relaxed environment. Excellent behaviour was observed as children worked in one-to-one situations because adult interactions were pitched at the correct level and enabled children not to fail. Activities are accurately chosen to meet children's individual needs. Children have plenty of opportunities to be pleased with their own successes.
- There is a consistent approach to the way adults deal with behaviour. Challenging behaviour is dealt with very effectively and is not allowed to interfere with the learning of others.
- Children begin to learn about the importance of listening to others and not lashing out at others because adults promote these important issues skilfully throughout the day.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **are outstanding**

- In relation to their starting points, school performance information showed that children made outstanding progress throughout the last academic year. Similarly, children's achievement from September to December 2015 was outstanding. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection.
- Achievement is outstanding because adults plan activities that are extremely well tailored to children's individual needs in all areas of learning. Assessment is now used expertly, throughout the day, to identify next steps and allow children to make more gains in their learning. Adults carefully track how well they are doing, both academically and socially, through regular progress meetings. As a result, children make the best possible progress over time.
- Outcomes are outstanding because children are given more opportunities to explore and discover things for themselves and adults know exactly when to move in and give more support or reinforcement. In addition, the promotion of language and listening skills is excellent and this plays an important part in the outstanding progress that the children make. Children know what is expected of them and develop extremely positive attitudes to learning.
- Children make outstanding progress during their daily one-to-one support sessions with adults. These sessions are always exciting and expertly resourced to promote children's individual targets very well.
- Regular swimming lessons where children receive outstanding support enable them to make excellent progress as they develop an awareness of floating in water and begin to develop swimming skills.
- 'Learning journeys' show the wide range of activities that are offered in all areas and the progress made from children's starting points. However, the information is not analysed into each area of learning so it is not always clear on the exact progress children make in each area.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120355
<b>Local authority</b>	Rutland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10001794

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	8
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nick Cooper
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Steve Cox
<b>Telephone number</b>	01572 722404
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk">www.oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@parks.rutland.sch.uk">office@parks.rutland.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17–18 December 2013

## Information about this school

- The Parks School provides specialist nursery provision for children with severe and complex learning difficulties. Many children have associated learning needs such as autism, communication difficulties and developmental delay. A number of children also have medical needs.
- This term the school has started to admit two-year-olds. There are two on roll but none were observed during the inspection. Children attend either full time or part time.
- The school currently provides for 10 full-time equivalent places. Children either have an Education Health and Care plan or are currently being assessed.
- The Parks School is co-located with Oakham Church of England Primary School. The two schools are federated and have a single governing body and headteacher. The headteacher was appointed in September 2015.
- There has been a high turnover of staff since the previous inspection.
- A private nursery is housed in the building but was not part of this inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine parts of lessons taught by one teacher, two nursery nurses and two teaching assistants.
- The headteacher was involved in most observations with the inspector.
- A number of documents were looked at, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, children's learning journeys and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and his staff, a few parents, representatives from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The views of parents were considered by looking at responses from recent questionnaires which the school sent out. There were too few responses to Parent View, the online survey.
- The views of staff were considered by analysing four questionnaires which were submitted online.

## Inspection team

Nina Bee, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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