

# Inspection of an outstanding school: The Parks School

Burley Road, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 6GY

---

Inspection dates:

11–12 February 2020

## **Outcome**

The Parks School continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have ensured that The Parks has continued to be a caring school that helps children to be the best they can be. Parents and carers say that their children are eager to go to school. Children like being with the teachers and adults who help them. The adults in school know the children very well. They make sure that the work the children do matches their interests. For example, they link stories, and work in mathematics, to the theme of ‘bears’.

Adults make sure that they intervene quickly, and successfully, if children begin to get upset or frustrated. This means that children’s behaviour is exemplary. There is never any bullying. The school works hard to keep the children safe. Parents have very high levels of trust that this will happen.

Leaders want the children to do well. They want them to have the same opportunities as children have in the adjacent mainstream primary school. Children go on many trips and visits such as a train trip to Melton Mowbray and visit to Whipsnade Park. Children enjoy these opportunities.

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

Leaders have established an ambitious curriculum for the children. The curriculum is planned so that each child has the opportunity to work towards the same early learning goals as children in mainstream schools. The school sets no barriers for the children for what they can learn.

Teachers plan carefully the work that the children will do. They make sure that the work the children are given is of high quality and that it matches the children’s needs. Adults plan learning that follows on from what children have recently learned and prepares them for what they will be learning next.

Teachers make stories and reading time fun. For example, teachers use resources when they read 'We're going on a bear hunt' so that the children become engaged and excited. Teachers have very high expectations of what the children can achieve. They use their knowledge of what the children can already do to get the best of out of the reading sessions. They reread books with children so that the children become really familiar with them. Children learn to anticipate what will happen next. Teachers emphasise clearly the sounds they want the children to learn from the stories and the children have fun repeating them.

Teachers use strategies such as pictures, signs and symbols to help children learn to communicate clearly. This is done with precision for each individual child. Typically, parents told us that their child's ability to communicate has increased dramatically since starting at the school.

Teachers use resources that interest and engage children such as bears, ponies and dinosaurs. This makes learning meaningful for children and helps them to feel safe emotionally.

Staff use every opportunity to encourage learning. During breaktimes and lunchtime, staff take resources outside and use them with the children to build on the learning that has been taking place in the classroom. Staff take every opportunity to maximise the children's learning, including in their personal and social skills.

Leaders ensure that staff benefit from training that improves their subject knowledge. They have worked with colleagues in local schools. Teachers have improved how well they plan learning for children. They have spent time learning to be experts in the teaching of reading and mathematics in the early years.

Leaders provide exceptional opportunities for children to learn about the wider world. The children go into the adjacent primary school to attend assemblies and to work with mainstream children in their classrooms. Leaders have secured the support of a music therapist who works alongside children to help them manage their feelings and emotions.

Children learn how to make, and keep, friends because the teachers explain clearly to them how to do this. Teachers help children learn how to be happy, sad and funny in appropriate ways.

The school is well led. All staff say that the leadership team is extremely supportive and engages well with them. They all work together as a team to support the often complex and varying needs of all the children. Leaders help the teachers to manage their workloads well. The adults look forward to coming to school as much as the children do.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all adults know how to keep children safe. Staff recognise the particular vulnerabilities that young children with SEND might have. Leaders provide staff

with the up-to-date training they need to keep the children safe. Leaders work well with external agencies when this might benefit a child.

Adults in the school have clear procedures to follow if they are worried about a child. They act upon these concerns in a timely, proportionate way. Record-keeping is organised and appropriate.

## Background

When we have judged a special school, pupil referral unit or maintained nursery school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged The Parks School to be outstanding on 26–27 January 2016.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

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

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120355
<b>Local authority</b>	Rutland Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121290
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	10
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Stewart Needham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steven Cox
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk/topic/the-parks-school">www.oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk/topic/the-parks-school</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26–27 January 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Included within the school is provision for two-year-olds.

## Information about this inspection

- I did deep dives in these subjects: English and communication, mathematics and numeracy and personal and social education. This meant I viewed documents relating to the intent leaders had of what pupils would learn and scrutinised plans of how they would implement this. I visited lessons by myself and with senior leaders and I examined children's work. I heard children read, saw examples of children's work over time, talked to the adults in the school and the children themselves.
- I examined the single central register. I talked to staff about the safeguarding training they had received. I talked to children and parents to find out their views of the school. I examined safeguarding records.
- I looked at policies and records related to children's behaviour and attendance. I talked to children, staff and parents about the behaviour in school. I looked at children's work

and talked to them about the wider opportunities they had in school. I talked to the adults in school about what it was like to work in the school.

### **Inspection team**

Steven Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:  
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020