

Inspection of Park House School

Andover Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 6NQ

Inspection dates: 2–3 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They show a high level of respect towards each other and have a high level of respect for adults in the school. They have many after-school and lunchtime activities and clubs that they can attend and enjoy. Many do so regularly.

Pupils appreciate the work staff at the school do to help them learn. They try to do the best they can from the very start of school because leaders and staff have the highest ambition for all pupils to do well. Pupils take part successfully in national programmes to develop their individual characters, and they learn to become responsible citizens and to contribute positively to wider society.

As pupils move up through the school, they can choose from a wide of range subjects to study. Sixth-form students particularly enjoy developing their sporting and artistic interests alongside studying their chosen specialist subjects.

Pupils feel very safe in this school. Their learning is rarely affected by pupil misbehaviour. Pupils say that bullying does not occur very often. However, when it does, they are confident that staff will intervene and sort out their problems.

Most parents are very positive about the school and would recommend it to other parents.

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

Leaders ensure that pupils' experiences challenge them to learn more over time. Staff have high expectations and expect pupils to try hard. They plan lessons that enable pupils to make progress across a range of subjects and build on what they have already learned. Teachers check pupils' understanding often during lessons. Pupils particularly enjoy the checks that their mathematics teachers use, including tests in the sixth form and 'silent starters' at the beginning of lessons in other year groups. Pupils say that these activities help them keep focused and try harder. Inspectors' visits to lessons showed this to be the case.

Teachers adapt the order that they teach topics with care. For example, pupils in Year 11 learn about different Spanish foods before learning about Spanish cultural festivals. As a result, pupils use the knowledge they already have to better understand the Spanish way of life, as well as developing their language skills in Spanish.

In key stage 4, more pupils are studying geography, history and modern foreign languages than in the recent past. Despite this, leaders aspire for even more pupils to study these subjects as part of the English Baccalaureate in the future.

Most teachers plan appropriate learning experiences to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use the personalised plans that are in place for pupils with SEND to make sure that they meet the individual needs of each pupil well. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are also supported well by teachers. Outcomes for pupils in this vulnerable group are better than previously seen because staff have high expectations and challenge them appropriately in lessons.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to learn how to stay fit and healthy. After-school sports activities such as tennis are very popular. Many take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, where they learn about responsibility and how to develop their leadership skills.

Pupils are well informed about a range of interesting topics that impact on their daily lives. They learn about invitro fertilisation (IVF) and carbon footprints in science lessons for instance. Leaders have also introduced 'character and values' and 'wellness' lessons for pupils. In these, pupils learn about mental health issues as well as respect and tolerance. As a result, pupils talk confidently about equalities and about everyone being treated similarly well in school.

Leaders have not yet fully established a well-planned careers guidance programme for all pupils. They have recently introduced better support to help pupils make decisions about what they would like to do next in their education or training. Despite obvious improvements, this initiative is still at the early stages of development.

Trustees carry out their legal responsibilities well. However, the roles and responsibilities of trustees and school governors sometimes overlap, leading to duplication. This means that the work of governors and trustees can be repeated unnecessarily on occasion.

Students in the sixth form receive a good quality of education overall. Leaders have developed an appropriate offer of subjects to meet the needs of all students. Consequently, students study the subjects they enjoy and want to learn more about. Most go on to higher education, other training or employment. Students are happy in the sixth form. They value the support they receive from their teachers highly. They are confident and respectful and strong ambassadors for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture where the welfare, health and safety of all pupils are given the highest importance. They have ensured that appropriate procedures are in place when there are concerns about the safeguarding of pupils. As a result, staff respond quickly to support pupils and their families when needed.

Leaders work well with other agencies. Those with additional safeguarding responsibilities are well trained and carry out their duties well. Consequently, staff are confident and know how to report any concerns that they have about pupils' welfare.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are not supported well enough in making the right choices in their next steps in education, employment or training. Leaders have recently introduced better support for pupils. This is most evident in the sixth form. However, this support is not yet established well enough for all pupils across all year groups. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils receive the guidance and support necessary to help them make informed choices to move to the next stages of their education or training.
- The school has been part of a multi-academy trust since September 2018. The trustees are responsible for governance. They work closely with school governors. Sometimes there is unnecessary repetition in the work trustees and governors carry out. Trustees and governors have recognised this. The trust board need to make sure that there is clarity in the roles of both committees so that they are even better placed to support and challenge school leaders to improve the school further.

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're 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

Unique reference number	136733
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10114911
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1147
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	238
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mrs Amanda Timberg
Headteacher	Mr Derek People
Website	www.parkhouseschool.org
Date of previous inspection	22 April 2016

Information about this school

- The school became part of the Achievement for All Education Trust in September 2018.
- The school uses two alternative education providers: Newbury College and Upper Lodge Farming Project.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, subject teachers and pupils. An inspector also met with a representative group of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and the deputy chief executive officer of the trust. He also met with members of the board of trustees

and the local governing body, as well as holding a telephone conversation with an individual trustee.

- The lead inspector reviewed the school website, publicly available pupil performance information, the multi-academy trust's scheme of delegation and other relevant school and trust documentation.
- 209 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, 70 pupils' survey responses and 49 responses to the survey for staff were considered as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding procedures in place at the school, including checking the single central record and safeguarding policies. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads.
- A parental complaint was received by Ofsted and passed to the lead inspector during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and as pupils moved around school.
- Mathematics, physical education, English, business studies, science, art and design and modern foreign languages were considered in more depth as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

Dylan Davies, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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