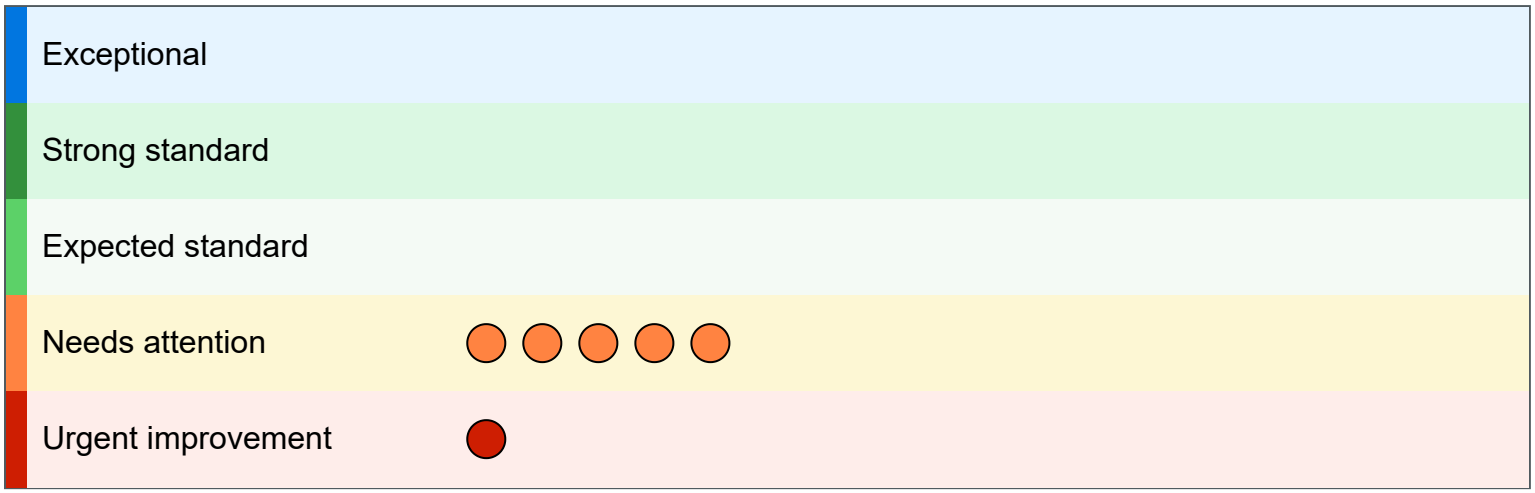
Parkgate Junior School

Address: Southwold Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD24 7DN

Unique reference number (URN): 117162

Inspection report: 16 June 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

This school requires significant improvement

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **significant improvement** because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Pupils' achievement is uneven over time. Published results show weaker attainment in reading and mathematics, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. This means that some pupils have gaps in basic skills that are not being closed quickly enough.

Work in pupils' books shows a mixed picture across curriculum subjects. Some pupils make appropriate progress through the curriculum and can apply what they have learned. Others have gaps that remain over time, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. This is more common where learning has been disrupted by poor behaviour or where teaching does not build skills step by step. Variability in staff confidence and expertise in teaching early reading and other basic skills also contributes to this uneven progress.

Some pupils achieve, and attain as expected, but too many pupils do not progress through the curriculum as they should, particularly those who face barriers to learning. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they need to be.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Leaders, including subject leaders, have set out an ambitious curriculum and are clear about what pupils should learn. The curriculum design shows appropriate coverage across curriculum subjects, and leaders have identified teaching consistency as a priority. However, leaders' oversight is not sufficiently consistent to ensure that agreed approaches are implemented reliably across the school.

Teaching quality is variable. In some lessons, pupils are supported well and can engage with learning. In others, behaviour disrupts learning and expectations are not clear enough. Teaching does not consistently check pupils' understanding or address any misconceptions, so learning sometimes does not develop securely over time. At times, pupils do not get the teaching that they need to help their learning build up step by step over time.

Teaching does not consistently help pupils to build strong basic skills, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Lessons are sometimes not matched closely enough to what pupils already know, especially for pupils who struggle in these areas. Staff confidence and expertise in teaching early reading and other foundational skills are uneven, and agreed approaches are not consistently applied. This means that gaps in pupils' learning last longer than they should.

Curriculum and teaching are not sufficiently inclusive. Some adaptations are made, but sometimes they are not precise enough to fully meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Inclusion

Needs attention

Leaders show a commitment to inclusion and have taken some recent action to support pupils who face barriers to learning and wellbeing, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care. Staff know individual pupils well, and there are examples where targeted support has helped pupils to attend school more regularly and engage more positively.

Leaders' work is not precise or consistent enough to reduce barriers effectively for all pupils. Across the school, identification of needs, assessment and target setting lack sufficient clarity. While plans are in place, pupils' targets are sometimes not clear, measurable or closely linked to pupils' learning. Staff do not consistently use assessment information to adapt teaching or the support provided. This means that provision is sometimes not as well matched to pupils' needs as it should be and some pupils do not make the progress expected of them.

Support for disadvantaged pupils is in place, but leaders are not able to show that the use of pupil premium funding improves learning and outcomes. Oversight of pupils known to social care is not systematic.

This whole-school lack of precision is also reflected in the school's internal provision. While all pupils who access this provision have improved their attendance and social and emotional development, clearer curriculum planning, assessment and target setting are needed to support pupils' academic attainment.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

The school has experienced a period of change, including recent leadership changes. Leaders are at the early stages of embedding systems to secure consistent improvement. Very recently, they have developed an increasingly secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This includes recognising the need to improve behaviour, increase consistency in teaching and strengthen support for pupils who face barriers to learning. Leaders have begun to act on these priorities, for example by revising behaviour approaches and focusing on clearer expectations for staff and pupils.

However, these actions are at an early stage. Leaders' monitoring and evaluation do not give a clear enough picture of which actions are making the greatest difference for pupils. Leaders are not able to adjust their work quickly or ensure that improvements are embedded across all areas.

Those responsible for governance understand their statutory duties and ensure that requirements are met. They have supported recent leadership changes and have worked with leaders to review key priorities, including behaviour. However, governors do not consistently use precise information to challenge leaders or check the impact of leaders' actions. They are aware of this and are taking steps to address this.

Leaders have worked to support staff during a demanding period and staff value this support. However, staff workload remains affected by inconsistent behaviour and systems. Professional development has focused on key priorities, but leaders do not evaluate clearly enough how this improves staff practice over time. Leaders engage with parents and carers and external professionals and recognise the importance of working in partnership.

Personal development and wellbeing

Needs attention

Leaders have planned a suitable programme to support pupils' personal development and wellbeing. This includes personal, social, health and economic education and opportunities for pupils to learn about relationships, respect and difference. Most pupils can explain what they have been taught in these areas, and many understand who they should speak to if they need help.

However, the impact of leaders' work in this area is uneven. While pupils can describe learning about relationships, safety and respect, this learning is not consistently reflected in pupils' understanding or behaviour. Pupil discussions indicate that some pupils are uncertain about why certain language or behaviour is unacceptable, including the use of derogatory or racist language. This suggests that for some pupils, their understanding of values such as respect and tolerance is not secure or consistently applied.

Teaching about online safety and wellbeing is in place. Pupils can describe basic messages about keeping themselves safe online and know some of the dangers and risks. However, pupils' understanding is variable and leaders do not evaluate well enough whether this teaching helps pupils to make safe, responsible choices over time or apply what they have learned independently.

Pastoral support makes a positive difference in many respects. Counselling and targeted emotional support have helped some pupils to improve attendance, manage their emotions more effectively and re-engage with school. This support is effective when it is closely matched to individual needs. However, the way this support is planned, tracked and evaluated is not consistent. Leaders do not have a clear picture of which approaches are most effective or how widely any positive impact is sustained.

All pupils have access to personal development opportunities although the impact on pupils' learning is inconsistent. While some pupils develop confidence and emotional resilience, others do not build sufficient independence and judgement that they need to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Urgent improvement

Attendance and behaviour

Urgent improvement

Attendance overall is broadly typical. Leaders can demonstrate that targeted support has helped some pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and others who face barriers to regular attendance, to re-engage with school. However, leaders' understanding of attendance is not sufficiently strategic. Oversight focuses mainly

on individual cases rather than patterns over time or groups of pupils. Leaders are not able to demonstrate clearly how attendance is improving for disadvantaged pupils and others who face ongoing barriers. Leaders do not have a secure picture of emerging risk or whether improvements will be sustained.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are a significant concern. Evidence from stakeholder surveys, staff and pupil discussions and inspection observations, shows that behaviour is frequently poor. Pupils experience regular disruption in lessons, including calling out, refusal to follow instructions and incidents where learning stops because behaviour is not managed quickly enough. Pupils report frequent use of unkind and discriminatory language, including racist language, and describe repeated incidents that are not dealt with consistently. A significant minority of pupils regularly ignore instructions or refuse to follow expectations. This is evident in lessons and at social times, where some behaviour, including rough play and aggression, is not challenged consistently. This disrupts learning, causes some pupils to feel anxious and makes it difficult for pupils to focus and take part in lessons. Overall, behaviour does not support pupils' learning.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils generally arrive at school calmly and settle into clear routines. Most attend regularly. Pupils value opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as being play leaders or members of the school council. Some pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well, particularly when teaching is engaging and well structured. For example, pupils spoke positively about learning in mathematics, while others enjoy activities such as gardening and caring for the school environment.

Pupils’ day-to-day experiences in school are uneven. While many pupils say they feel safe some of the time, others sometimes do not feel safe. This is the case in lessons and at social times when behaviour is poor or inconsistent. Pupils describe lessons being disrupted by calling out and repeated interruptions, which means learning is often slowed or stopped. They also report more serious incidents, including unkind comments, swearing and, at times, racist language.

At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy the new playground activities and some play together well. Pupils know that they should tell a member of staff if they are worried. Some pupils experience unsafe behaviour, including rough play and others do not follow instructions. Staff do not intervene in a consistent way and pupils do not consistently respond when they do. Pupils are not fully confident that concerns about behaviour will be taken seriously or dealt with quickly. This contributes to inconsistency in how behaviour is managed and makes it difficult for pupils to feel safe. This affects how well all pupils can take part in school and succeed.

Next steps

- Leaders must ensure that all staff consistently apply behaviour expectations and address disruptive and discriminatory behaviour quickly so that pupils learn in a calm environment and feel safe.
- Ensure that leaders and governors use clear monitoring and evaluation to identify weaknesses quickly and take effective action so that improvements are implemented consistently across the school.
- Ensure that staff have the expertise consistently deliver all areas of the curriculum and are able to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge, so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, receive precise support and build secure knowledge.

About this inspection

The co-chairs of the board of governors in this school are Khadija Pieterson and Dipesh Patel.

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

This inspection took place from 16 to 17 June 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Kellie Barton

Lead inspector:
Sarah Stevens, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Georgina Nutton, Ofsted Inspector
Rob Morley-Smith, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

238
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

240
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

14.29%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.68%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.81%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	55%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	66%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	68%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	81%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	63%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	53%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	76%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	59%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	28%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	43%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	9%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	86%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	71%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	27%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	48%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	71%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	57%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	27%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	36%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	43%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	18%	59%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	28%	68%	-40 pp
2024/25 (final)	43%	69%	-26 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	67%	-25 pp
2022/23 (final)	9%	66%	-57 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25 (final)	86%	81%	5 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	80%	-8 pp
2022/23 (final)	27%	78%	-51 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	48%	78%	-30 pp
2024/25 (final)	71%	78%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	78%	-20 pp
2022/23 (final)	27%	77%	-50 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	36%	80%	-44 pp
2024/25 (final)	43%	81%	-38 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	18%	79%	-61 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.3%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.2%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	7.0%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	14.3%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	14.0%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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.

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, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at https://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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026

© Crown copyright