

Park Hall Junior Academy

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137797
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	393403
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2012
Lead inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bryan Sargeant
Headteacher	Geraldine Healy
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2009
School address	Park Hall Road Walsall West Midlands WS5 3HF
Telephone number	01922 720761
Fax number	01922 639087
Email address	postbox@parkhall-jun.walsall.sch.uk

Age group	7–11
Inspection date(s)	8–9 March 2012
Inspection number	393403



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

Additional inspector

Steve Howland

Additional inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 25 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Inspectors spent 13 hours directly observing pupils learning in class. They heard pupils read and scrutinised their work in workbooks and on displays. Groups that support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those falling behind in aspects of their class work were observed. Meetings were held with senior staff, governors, pupils, and parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parents View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan and systems of performance management as well as assessment data to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils. Questionnaire returns from 149 parents and carers, 95 pupils and 37 staff were analysed.

Information about the school

Park Hall Junior Academy converted to academy status on 1 January 2012. It is larger than the average primary school. The majority of pupils belong to ethnic minority groups, the largest being Indian and Pakistani. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than is typically found. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below that seen nationally. The number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, mainly moderate learning, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, is broadly in line with that seen nationally. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average. The school shares a site with Park Hall Infant Academy, and the school is used by Park Hall Community Association. The school has received many awards including Leading Parent Partnership award (Platinum standard), Healthy Schools award, Artsmark Gold, Activemark Gold, Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and Self-evaluation Quality Mark (Platinum award). The school meets the government's current floor standard.

Before- and after-school care is provided within Park Hall Junior Academy by Park Hall Community Association. This setting is subject to regular inspection by Ofsted and does not form part of this report.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Standards have been well above national averages for the last three years and parents and carers are delighted with the good progress that their children make. In mathematics, pupils’ achievement is outstanding as a significantly high proportion of pupils attain the higher levels. However, the school is not yet outstanding as some groups of pupils achieve less well than others in reading and writing. Pupils do not use their writing skills enough in other subjects and the presentation of their work is often untidy. A very small number of pupils in each year group struggle with sounding out unfamiliar words and do not have sufficient strategies for working them out.
- Teaching is good. Good relationships, secure subject knowledge and consistently good use of assessment tools are the hallmarks of the teaching in this school. Pupils enjoy learning and behave well both in and around the school. Learning is active; not a minute is wasted, and all groups of pupils make good progress, including those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The school is a safe and harmonious community. Partnerships with parents and carers are excellent. Attendance is high and pupils love coming to school because of an exciting curriculum underpinned with good opportunities for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher’s vision and drive are evident in ambitious performance management targets, identified as a result of tracking pupils’ progress. This has been instrumental in creating a good school whose track record demonstrates a good capacity to improve. The leadership of teaching is good as staff are given very clear targets for improvement through the thorough analysis of their work in the classroom. Self-evaluation is accurate but the school development plan is not rigorous enough in identifying precise success criteria.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for the very small minority of pupils struggling with phonics (recognising and using letter sounds) to have access to a structured programme so that they can quickly rectify their limitations.
- Plan more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of extended writing in other subjects by building in more time for writing during lessons.
- Improve the quality of presentation in workbooks by insisting that pupils take more care over their presentational skills and act upon the advice given to them in their marked work.
- Ensure that the school development plan has clearly defined and measurable success criteria which can further aid the school in monitoring the impact of all aspects of provision.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment on entry is above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence showed that from the moment they set foot in the classrooms they are set challenging targets which are monitored at regular intervals to ensure that no child is left behind. If any child struggles, immediate help is given to ensure equal access to the curriculum. Pupils are highly competent in mathematical operations, they use a good range of punctuation and vocabulary in their writing and they are avid readers who know the works of many authors and are adept at mimicking authors' sentence construction to put into their writing. However, pupils' skills in extended writing are not as well developed as they could be due to the limited opportunities for this in other subjects. Attainment in reading is well above average by Year 6. 'This is a listening school', said one parent speaking for many, 'we told the school that we didn't know how to help our children with homework and not only did they put on workshops for us but they also enabled our children to attend homework club'. The school's excellent partnership with parents and carers contributes significantly to pupils' good progress.

Learning in lessons is highly active, and from the moment the teachers start the lesson pupils are keen to learn. They share their learning with one another through good use of talking partners and listen attentively to instructions so that they do not miss out on any new knowledge. Teachers have high expectations of all groups of pupils. Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language learn as well as their peers because they are well supported in lessons and have equal access to the curriculum. Learning in this school is characterised by pupils being in control of their own learning. In an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils expertly applied their previously

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

acquired skills of calculation to solving complex problems of missing numbers, inequalities and balanced equations.

Pupils acquire excellent learning habits because they are encouraged to have a go and they learn from their mistakes. However, occasionally in their written work too few opportunities are provided for them to undertake corrections, resulting in some mistakes being repeated. There is a slight inconsistency in the progress made by a small minority of readers in each year who previously had not fully mastered their skills of sounding out unfamiliar words. The school has recognised this through effective monitoring of teaching and learning. Plans are in place to rectify this issue.

Quality of Teaching

'Teaching in this school is good. Our children want to come to school to learn', said one very happy parent. Inspection findings support parents' and carers' positive views on the good quality of teaching and learning. Teaching is consistently good because teachers are highly motivated to do their best and make the best use of all the professional development opportunities offered to them to improve their practice. For example, the school had highlighted the issue of questioning as an area for development. Having received training, teachers consistently use open questions to encourage pupils to develop their thinking skills. Lessons are interesting due to a good, well-structured, curriculum which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. In a good religious education lesson in Year 3, pupils marvelled at the similarities and differences in religious art in different faiths. However, they did not capture their learning by writing extensively about what they had learnt but had talked about it intensely in groups, demonstrating good learning.

Teachers are very skilled at checking any misconceptions pupils might have and this contributes to the consistently good progress. Classrooms are bright and celebrate pupils' work through eye-catching displays. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well through well-structured classroom routines which are consistently applied throughout the school. As a result, pupils listen attentively and use computers well to support their learning. In an excellent literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher immediately noticed some pupils struggling with describing a character. He reminded the pupils of previous learning on sentence construction and eased them back into completing the task with renewed energy. Marking is regular and thorough. Although teachers use a good range of methods to promote learning they occasionally miss opportunities to encourage pupils to learn by correcting errors. Nevertheless teachers assess the progress of pupils constantly and adapt the pace of lessons to match pupils' changing needs.

Behaviour and Safety

Pupils behave well and the majority of parents and carers said they are delighted with the behaviour of their children in school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concern with the occasional less-than-satisfactory behaviour of a very small group of pupils with behavioural problems. Inspectors found that these

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

pupils were very well supported in lessons and because of the good relationships and exciting learning opportunities they were fully engaged in learning. The school has good systems for managing behaviour which are consistently applied by staff, resulting in the school being a calm and purposeful learning environment. Behaviour over time has been consistently good. School records support this and there are very few incidents of concern. Incidents of bullying, racial harassment or homophobic name calling are very rare. Pupils say that there is no bullying because, 'we all get on with one another'. They feel safe in school because they can go to their teachers or their friends to ask for help should they need it. Parents and carers are confident of their children's safety. The high levels of pastoral care, good relationships throughout the school, effective teaching and an exciting curriculum contribute to pupils' above-average attendance. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their leadership skills through the school council, playground buddies and classroom monitors.

Leadership and Management

Good outcomes for all pupils are attributable to the good leadership and management of the school. The headteacher and senior leadership team have been instrumental in ensuring that systems and procedures aimed at improving teaching and learning are consistently applied by all staff. The headteacher has created an effective team who will stop at nothing to add value to pupils' learning. Robust performance management is underpinned by well-thought-out training for staff. This addresses any issues arising out of rigorous monitoring and accurate self-evaluation, and contributes to pupils' good outcomes. The school is well placed to continue improving as it has successfully maintained standards that are well above the national average for over three years. Governance is strong and provides the correct balance of support and challenge. It ensures that regulatory requirements for safeguarding and protecting pupils, including those who are potentially vulnerable, are secure. The school development plan identifies accurately what needs to be done to improve the school further but success criteria are too imprecise and this limits its effectiveness in monitoring the impact of actions taken.

The curriculum is well planned and is underpinned by both a broad range of clubs and global perspectives. The topic-based approach, together with a strong personal development programme, is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils appreciate art, culture and music from a range of contrasting cultures and pupils in Year 5 relish the thought of being involved in an annual drama production in Year 6. All pupils regardless of background or ability have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Hall Junior Academy, Walsall, WS5 3HF

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school and thank you for taking the time to tell us, both in discussions and through your questionnaires, how much you enjoy learning and how much you respect and like your teachers. We found that your school gives you a good quality of education.

These are some of the things that we liked most.

- You make good progress in reading and writing and your achievement in mathematics is excellent. We were particularly impressed by the way you talk your learning through with other pupils.
- You are polite, well behaved and friendly, and are good ambassadors for your school.
- You behave well in lessons, demonstrating positive attitudes to learning.
- You are safe in school and you get on very well with all of your friends.
- Your teachers take good care of you and they teach you well.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governing body to do the following things to improve the school.

- Help those of you who find some words difficult to read by teaching you to break down and put together letter sounds.
- Make sure that you have more opportunities to develop your writing skills in a range of subjects and that you present your written work more neatly.
- Ensure that you do your corrections so that you do not keep repeating the same mistakes.
- Improve a very important document called the school development plan by precisely identifying how your learning will improve as a result of actions taken.

All of you can help by always doing your very best and continuing to behave well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**