

Park Way Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118302
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358306
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Orpin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Barker
Headteacher	Karen Dhanecha
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 12 lessons, and 11 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, four governors and a group of pupils. The inspectors scrutinised teachers' planning, the school's assessment information, safeguarding policies, the monitoring of pupils' progress and pupils' work. They analysed questionnaires from the staff and pupils, as well as 83 from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and how well children are helped to make a good start in school.
- The rate of pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 and the extent to which it has improved in the last year.
- The quality of teaching and how well it provides the right level of challenge for all pupils.

Information about the school

The school is average in size and located in an urban area. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and their needs are varied. Most pupils are of White British heritage, but an increasing number are from minority ethnic groups and their first language is not English. Some are at an early stage of learning English.

The school achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy Schools Status.

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: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

This satisfactory school has improved securely over the last year. The self-evaluation systems are accurate and rigorous so leaders are clear about what has to be done to become even better. The legacy of low standards is being effectively tackled through the successful and determined action taken by senior leaders and governors. Pupils' progress is improving securely and quickly, so it is now satisfactory overall. Some pupils are making better progress, especially in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and in English in Years 3 to 6, because unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated in these areas. Improvements have been achieved by better assessment of pupils, more effective teaching, a more interesting curriculum and improvements to attendance and behaviour. Despite these developments, standards remain low. Attainment in the Early Years has improved and children now get a good start to their education. These improvements are secure and demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Senior leaders know that although teaching has improved, there is still too much that is only satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and they manage their behaviour well, so disruptions to lessons are rare, an improvement over the last year. However, pupils' behaviour is only satisfactory because a minority require gentle prompting to maintain their attention to learning. Assessment is carried out well by some teachers, but in a few lessons it is not used well enough to make sure that tasks provide suitable challenge for pupils' differing abilities, especially the more able. Pupils readily undertake the responsibilities that they are given in lessons and around the school, but they have too few opportunities to think and work independently. The curriculum provides a strong focus on English and mathematics and is organised around international themes that make learning relevant and interesting. There is a good information and communication technology (ICT) programme that ensures pupils are taught new skills. There are also good opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in other subjects.

Pupils are well cared for and supported. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, and most parents and carers are confident in the school's ability to keep their children safe. Attendance is average and, although improving, not all pupils attend as regularly as they should, so they do not make as much progress as they might. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is satisfactory. The school council is beginning to give pupils a voice so they can contribute their views to improving life at school. Pupils value and care for each other. However, their understanding of cultures other than their own is less well developed.

The school is improving because senior leaders are helping teachers improve their lessons. The strong leadership of the headteacher has developed a purposeful team who are highly motivated to improve. However, middle leaders are not taking enough management responsibility. There is satisfactory engagement with parents and carers, most of whom

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are very happy with their children's experience at school. Parents and carers do not have enough opportunities to take a greater role in supporting their children's progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve learning and progress and raise attainment for all pupils in English and mathematics by: providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently
 - using assessment information more effectively to improve teaching so most lessons are good or better
 - making sure there is a clear purpose to lessons
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently
- Develop further the roles of middle managers so they are able to participate more fully in rigorous monitoring activities to help teachers improve their lessons and further improve attainment and progress.
- Improve attendance to be better than average by developing more effective partnerships with parents and carers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and most enjoy school. Pupils' learning and progress in lessons are satisfactory. Pupils make better progress when they are given a variety of interesting activities they can take part in, together with a clear purpose. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher used ICT to help pupils improve their spelling, a short period of physical activity to help them think more clearly and a short film clip from another school. Pupils then discussed and wrote a report about their school to send to pupils at the other school. As a result, the pupils were interested and attentive, so they were able to discuss the similarities and differences between the schools. However, in another mathematics lesson, pupils became bored by the repetition of a task and their rate of progress slowed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, are given satisfactory support and they make the same progress as other pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are friendly and they play and work together well. Their preparation for the next stage of their education is satisfactory. Although attainment is low, pupils are able to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other lessons. For example in a Year 2 class, pupils were able to use their ICT skills to develop their spelling ability.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The school is a calm and purposeful place where pupils and adults feel valued. The pastoral care for pupils is good and their well-being is a high priority. There is good provision for pupils with medical needs and vulnerable pupils are supported and monitored well.

Teachers are well organised and they plan their lessons carefully. They are confident and knowledgeable in the subject they are teaching. Teachers manage their pupils' behaviour well, even when it is more challenging. Teaching assistants are skilled in helping less able pupils understand the lesson. Teachers assess pupils regularly and this information is used well to monitor their progress. However, teachers do not always use their assessments of pupils to help them plan their lessons, so at times the tasks they set are either too easy or too difficult for some pupils, who then quickly lose motivation and become less attentive. The majority of teachers mark pupils' work well, giving pupils a very clear indication of how to improve, but other teachers are less conscientious about the marking of work. In most classes, pupils are given clear targets to help them learn, but these are not consistently used in all classes.

The recently introduced curriculum effectively provides interesting and real topics that help make learning more interesting and enjoyable for pupils. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are represented well and effectively linked with other subjects where appropriate, contributing well to the improvement to pupils' progress. There is a good programme of

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personal, social and health education, which is making a positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. There is a good range of visitors, trips and after-school clubs and extra activities that are well attended.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's strong leadership and clear vision have had a significant impact on the work of the school. She is well supported by other staff, who mostly share her determined ambition for improving the school's effectiveness. The staff are cohesive team who work closely together and are receptive to advice. The governing body is enthusiastic and has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the extent of the challenges ahead. Systems for seeking and acting on parents' and carers' views are not developed sufficiently to enable their views to inform important policies and procedures on areas such as safeguarding.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination in a satisfactory way. There is good support for pupils for whom English is not their first language and the pastoral team of staff work closely with other agencies to make sure vulnerable pupils are fully included. The progress of pupils requiring additional help, such as those at an early stage of learning English, is monitored closely and there is good use of teaching assistants to provide extra activities and support. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion, especially within school, although there are too few links at local and national levels.

The school's procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory and it is a high priority in every aspect of school life. Pupils have secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe, but there is not always sufficient use made of parents', carers' and pupils' views in the procedures the school adopts.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well. The two leaders work closely together and they have improved provision significantly in the last year. There are good arrangements to ensure that children make a smooth transition to school. Weaker areas have been identified and are being tackled rigorously so children's progress has improved, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and emotional development. Children's progress is good, so by the end of the Reception Year they are working at the levels typically expected for their age.

When they join the school, most children are working well below the levels typically expected for their age. Their learning is continuously assessed and lesson plans adjusted to make sure children's differing needs are met well. Occasionally there is insufficient challenge for the most able children. The well-planned curriculum provides a balance between activities that have been planned for children and those they have chosen for themselves. Children enjoy learning and they actively participate in lessons most of the time. For example, in a lesson on hearing and saying sounds, children were encouraged to sing a song and say sounds, being rewarded with praise from the teacher. Children make full use of indoor and outdoor environments. Adults provide good quality interaction with children, contributing well to their progress. There is good communication with parents and carers through regular personalised leaflets.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was an average return of questionnaires. Those received were mostly positive. Almost all parents feel the school helps their children lead healthy lifestyles. About 10 per cent of parents and carers raised concerns about different aspects of the school's work, but a higher proportion were concerned about how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and how well their children are prepared for the future. Inspectors found that behaviour has improved and that while pupils are prepared for their future lives in a satisfactory way, there is room for improvement in the progress that pupils are making in developing their basic skills. Other concerns were about how well the school is led, how well the school helps parents and carers to support their children's learning and whether the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. These are satisfactory and dealt with elsewhere in this report. The views of the parents and carers were discussed with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Way Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 248 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	53	30	36	5	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	34	41	39	47	7	8	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	25	47	57	11	13	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	25	47	57	10	12	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	27	33	44	53	6	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	28	41	49	15	18	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	29	53	64	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	16	43	52	15	18	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	25	45	54	10	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	27	40	48	11	13	8	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	17	49	59	10	12	7	8
The school is led and managed effectively	18	22	44	53	8	10	7	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	34	36	43	9	11	5	6

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



14 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Way Primary School, Maidstone ME15 7AH

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. You were polite, friendly and a pleasure to meet. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that we found that there are some good things in your school, but also some things that need improving.

Here are some of the things we found out about your school.

- Most of you enjoy school and so you are coming to school more often.
- The topics you learn are interesting and your behaviour is improving.
- You know how to stay healthy and safe.
- All adults in the school are kind and caring, helping you with any problems in school.
- Leaders in the school know what to do to improve your lessons so you can learn faster.

This is what we have asked your school to do now.

- It should make sure that the work for everyone is not too easy or too difficult to help you learn more quickly.
- It should make sure that more teachers help make your lessons more interesting and exciting.
- It should make sure that all of you attend school regularly.

We wish you all well for the future. You can help your teachers by making sure you attend school regularly and continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Susan Orpin

Lead inspector

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