

Parkwood

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133571
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	360532
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Jan Brunton
Headteacher	Mr Iain Hutcheon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Four lessons were observed, covering all the pupil groups and all teaching staff. Discussions were held with senior staff, the chair of the management board and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with several pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including that relating to the safeguarding of pupils and school improvement. The work in pupils' books and files was scrutinised. No parent and carer questionnaires were returned.

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

- Whether pupils make enough progress to compensate for previous underachievement and to what extent does this facilitate successful reintegration.
- How effectively staff explain to pupils what they have learned and what they need to do to improve their work.
- How well the curriculum complements that of the mainstream schools for dual registered pupils.
- How well the different strands of 'governance' complement one another.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average pupil referral unit. It serves the whole of Middlesbrough. Pupils are referred either because they are permanently excluded from mainstream school or because they are at risk of this happening. Boys significantly outnumber girls. Most pupils are White British. There are very few looked after children. The majority of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils can be admitted at any time in the school year. Most are admitted in Years 8 and 9. All pupils have special educational needs relating to the behavioural, emotional and social difficulties they face.

Over the past two years there have been many changes to the leadership and management of the school and it is still in the throes of reorganisation proposals within the local authority. The current teacher-in-charge has been in post for less than a year.

About a half of all lessons are taught by staff who are neither qualified teachers nor instructors.

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 is a school emerging from a period of considerable change in leadership, management and circumstance. There are many signs pointing to a positive future but there are, equally, elements that are holding it back. Recent changes are having a good impact on helping to raise attainment and improve provision. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and takes good account of the views of a wide range of stakeholders and advisors. A good educational ethos is being created to supplant a tendency of the school to veer overly towards one of social care. The school exhibits a satisfactory capacity to improve. A good start has been made by the new teacher-in-charge but it is yet to be seen how the impetus is to be maintained and how well the school can emerge from the many changes facing it.

Pupils nearly always enter the school having fallen a long way behind the predictions made for them at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment on entry is nearly always low. The school frequently admits pupils late in Key Stage 3 at a point where their attainment is lower than it was when they left primary school. From this very low starting point, pupils are increasingly making good progress. Learning and progress remain satisfactory overall but the speed of both is improving significantly. There is a limit to this improvement because some teaching staff are unqualified teachers who show insufficient awareness of the importance of constantly checking on the learning of pupils and rapidly moving them on to harder work when a skill or concept has been mastered.

Strengths in the curriculum include a good focus on promoting the basic skills of, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) alongside the essential elements of personal, social and health education. There is a weakness in that curriculum policy does not make it clear what pupils are entitled to in a setting where National Curriculum requirements are set aside. Leaders and managers agree that most parents and carers are unaware of this change in entitlement. There is a small group of pupils who attend in the afternoon having spent the morning in their mainstream school. These pupils are predominantly taught essential numeracy and literacy skills but not enough is done to check whether this has also been the focus of their mornings' timetables. As a result, the breadth and balance of their learning experiences is compromised.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Speed up pupils' progress by:
- – ensuring that teaching staff demonstrate a greater awareness of when it is appropriate to move pupils on to a higher level of learning during lessons

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- – ensuring that the marking of pupils' work consistently gives them suitable advice about what they have learned and what they could change to do better
- – ensuring that teaching staff keep open a dialogue with pupils, through oral feedback, to reassure them about what they have learned and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - – ensuring that the local authority, in its position as the appropriate authority for the school, makes it clear to parents and carers what the curriculum for their children includes and excludes
 - – ensuring that the breadth and balance of the curriculum for pupils who attend part-time is not compromised by an overemphasis on numeracy and literacy.
 - Eliminate the dependency on unqualified staff to deliver lessons to ensure that lessons are led or supervised by qualified teachers or instructors in line with government guidance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Attainment on entry is nearly always low but because pupils work hard and enjoy lessons they make satisfactory progress. The rate of progress is improving because of the growing focus on pupils' education as well as their personal development. Pupils are responding well to higher educational expectations and are significantly improving their attendance and behaviour, giving them increasing access to learning opportunities. Lessons are rarely disrupted and misbehaviour is expertly managed, allowing other pupils to carry on learning. The progress pupils make is enabling increasing numbers to return successfully to mainstream schools. There are no significant differences in the achievement of any group of pupils.

Attendance is below the national average but in nearly every instance it improves over the time pupils stay at the school. Often this improvement is rapid, in some cases there has been a tripling of attendance over the past term. Coupling this with pupils' satisfactory academic progress, pupils are being suitably prepared for future economic well-being. Behaviour nearly always improves rapidly from the very low baseline that has resulted in pupils' initial referrals. Many remain over-dependent on adult support but this dependency usually reduces over time. The incidence of exclusion has plummeted over the past two terms. With good reason, pupils say they feel safe. They are well cared for and they know who they can turn to in times of trouble, confident in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with promptly.

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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4
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?

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. About a half of that seen during the inspection was good. A mainstay in the quality of teaching is the quality of relationships between adults and pupils. This contributes enormously to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their willingness to work hard in lessons. Teachers frequently succeed in making learning enjoyable and memorable. All lessons are carefully planned but in some there is not enough variation in tasks for pupils of differing ability. Although staff are becoming increasingly confident and accurate in their assessment of pupils' progress, too many opportunities are missed to move pupils on to harder work when they are ready for it. Too often, this harder work is planned for a subsequent lesson rather than changes being made during the current one. This is most pronounced in lessons being taught by unqualified teachers. Pupils' work is always marked promptly but opportunities are sometimes missed to add comments to help them improve further and to ensure that work is finished and mistakes corrected. The balance in dialogue between teachers and pupils is sometimes too heavily weighted towards praise and encouragement with opportunities being missed to explain to pupils what they could be doing to improve their work.

The curriculum is suitably matched to pupils' needs and interests. The timetable is weighted heavily to the promotion of the basic skills of numeracy and literacy but teachers are adept at weaving in opportunities to promote other subjects such as ICT into their lessons. Provision for potentially vulnerable pupils is carefully planned, including for

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instance consideration of the best location for teaching those pupils who are anxious or emotionally frail. The curriculum has been improved over the past year by making sure that all activities can be seen to be educationally valid, thus creating an environment where academic progress is seen as being every bit as important as the promotion of personal development.

Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. There is clearly targeted support for individuals, for instance, to help them improve their reading. Significant improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour can be closely linked to successful sanction and reward systems which are implemented consistently and fairly by staff. The school works closely and effectively with a large number of agencies involved in the care and support of pupils and their families.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have made many changes for the better in the past year. These have resulted in the establishment of a school with a clear educational ethos. Extensive work has been done to improve teaching but the school is hampered by difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified teachers. In the meantime, the school has worked closely with local authority advisers to ensure that the quality of lessons taught by unqualified personnel matches that of the qualified teachers. The progress of pupils is increasingly well monitored but assessment rightly remains a key focus for development. Staff and pupils alike are of the view that the school is rapidly improving and becoming a happier and more effective place of learning.

The management board works alongside the local authority to ensure that statutory responsibilities are fulfilled and that the school is held to account for tackling weaknesses. Consideration is being given to replace the management board with a governing body.

Good care is taken to promote equal opportunities. As a result, no particular group of pupils is seen to be performing significantly differently to any other. There is no evidence of any form of discrimination. The last recorded instance of racism was over a year ago and there has been only one instance of bullying over the same period.

Pupils are well safeguarded and protected. Staff are well trained and the recommended good practice is carefully followed and monitored. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to avoid unnecessary risk and what constitutes a potentially dangerous situation.

The school operates as a harmonious community on a day-to-day basis but there is limited evidence of success in promoting community cohesion beyond the school. Leaders and

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managers are aware of this and are extending opportunities, for instance, by planning to entertain elderly residents from a nearby care home by introducing a series of coffee mornings.

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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

No questionnaires were returned by parents or carers. Evidence from the school's own surveys of parent and carer views shows that they are generally very happy with provision for their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parkwood 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 inspector received 0 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 28 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	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)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



18 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkwood, Middlesbrough, TS3 8RD

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me when I inspected your school recently. Your many offers of enticing food prepared by your own fair hands were much appreciated.

I was impressed by how well you behaved during my visit and your openness and willingness to talk to me. It was good to see how proud you are of your achievements, for instance, the status of 'Pupil of the Week' and recognition for those of you with 100% attendance each week.

I have judged Parkwood to be a satisfactory school. I also felt that there are many signs of improvement which I hope will come to fruition in the near future. It was good to hear you saying that you feel safe in school. You are right to feel this way because you are well cared for and safeguarded.

I have made some suggestions as to how I feel the school could become even better. I noted that you are making satisfactory progress but that this could be speeded up if all teachers took more care to explain more clearly what you need to do to improve your work. I have also asked teachers to move you on to harder work more quickly when they know you are ready for it. I have also asked the school to keep a closer check on the timetables of those of you who attend only in the afternoon to make sure that you do not repeat the same subjects that you have studied in school in the morning. On a final point, your leaders and managers are going to step up their efforts to recruit some more qualified teachers.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector

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