

Old Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133270
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	360465
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	466
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mandie Haywood
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
School address	Brunel Road Telford TF3 2BF
Telephone number	01952 387250
Fax number	01952 387260
Email address	oldparkprimary@telford.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors who observed 12 teachers over 23 lessons. Meetings were held with governors, groups of pupils and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to pupils' achievement, the school development plan, policies and procedures to keep pupils safe and the minutes of the governing body. The inspectors analysed staff and parental questionnaires and the 38 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Whether standards are rising sufficiently in writing and the extent to which the school's strategies are helping to accelerate progress.
- The evidence, through the quality of teaching and the learning and progress of pupils to show that leadership and management can accelerate the pace of progress of pupils through the school.
- How effective the curriculum is in raising pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy and in meeting their individual needs.

Information about the school

This large, urban primary school is situated in the centre of the town. It was formed by the amalgamation of two primary schools in September 2007 and moved to a new building in October 2008. Most pupils are White British. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and an above average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities. A much higher proportion of pupils than is typical joins or leaves the school at other than the usual times. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.

The school has achieved the Nurture Quality Mark, Activemark, Healthy Schools status and the National School of Creativity award. The school's inclusion centre comprises a nurture group for 10 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as an area for pupils with behavioural difficulties.

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

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6 and their achievement is sound. Stronger aspects are the curriculum and the care, guidance and support of pupils, which are good. Together they promote pupils' greater security, happiness and enthusiasm for school, and increasingly, for learning. The school, from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, entrusts and empowers pupils, promoting their good personal development. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the locality in which they live and learn, though their knowledge of the lives of people who live further away in the United Kingdom, and abroad, is less secure. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is another good feature, enabling children to make good progress in Nursery and Reception.

The school's focus on raising attainment is having a sound impact, leading to pupils' satisfactory progress. While still lower than other subjects, attainment in writing is being promoted appropriately by the engaging curriculum, which has good variety, an emphasis on developing skills and relevance to learning. Key factors in this are daily lessons about letters and sounds throughout Key Stage 1 and regular and specific extended writing tasks. The frequent problem-solving activities in mathematics and the chances for pupils to learn by doing promote numeracy achievement well. Increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy as well as literacy skills in other subjects also underline to pupils the relevance of what they have learnt.

Although pupils make satisfactory progress through the school because the quality of teaching is sound, there are examples of better practice where progress accelerates. Teaching is generally stronger through the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 1. Here the school's strategies are working through and some teaching is outstanding. Progress is slower when the level of challenge in lessons is not closely targeted enough to accelerate the learning of pupils of all abilities. This particularly slows the progress of more able pupils. Expectations of the levels pupils will reach are not always high enough, although more challenging targets are being put into place. While classes have group targets, pupils do not have individual targets for literacy and numeracy, to ensure they know what they personally must do.

Leaders' and managers' clear commitment to and focus on raising attainment are resulting in pupils' more secure literacy and numeracy skills. Self-evaluation is reliable. Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' learning is regular and has had some effect, but it is not always robust enough, especially in identifying shortcomings in teaching and their impact on learning. Good practice is not always effectively shared. The governing body, while overseeing safeguarding effectively, and asking important questions of the school, does not yet have enough independent knowledge of its performance to be able to play a full part in determining its strategic direction. Nevertheless, the school's senior managers and

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headteacher have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and have established improvements in targeted areas. Development since the last inspection has been appropriate, for example in pupils' attendance and the quality of marking, and there is a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress, especially in writing, by:
 - making sure that learning is consistently good across all year groups through ensuring an accurate level of challenge in the tasks given to pupils, including for those capable of reaching higher levels
 - providing all pupils with challenging individual targets in literacy and numeracy that they know and understand.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of senior leadership and management and its impact on raising attainment by:
 - ensuring that effective teaching and learning practice is shared across the school
 - rigorously monitoring and evaluating outcomes of the school's provision, especially teaching
 - ensuring that the governing body has sufficient independent knowledge about the school's performance to influence better its future direction.
- Broaden pupils' understanding and engagement with different community groups through extending the promotion of community cohesion in national and international contexts.
- 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.

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

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join the school at a later stage of their primary education, all of whom benefit from intervention groups, make satisfactory progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to their peers. Not enough pupils reach higher levels because work is not always sufficiently challenging for them to master the necessary skills. However, progress is accelerating because the school's strategies, including in writing, are working through. This was evident in a literacy lesson in Year 1 where an exciting stimulus and high expectations of pupils' learning, resulted in their outstanding progress in understanding alliteration. Pupils used computers to record their learning, enabling them to extend their skills and adding to their enjoyment. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils showed good independent learning skills, and their understanding of shapes accelerated in response to good questioning. In some other lessons, the pace of learning dropped, particularly for more able pupils, because planning had not resulted in challenging tasks and there were missed opportunities to quicken pupils' progress.

Pupils' positive attitudes towards school and good behaviour owe much to the trust shown in them by the staff and the range of responsibilities offered to them. Those who have had

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behaviour difficulties are responding well to school strategies. Membership of the effective school council, pupils' classroom responsibilities and, for example, roles as playground buddies, as well as taking part in regular forums for discussion, enable pupils to develop a range of personal and inter-personal skills. They show a good understanding of the need to keep fit and to eat healthily, reflecting the Healthy Schools status. Increasingly they transfer their knowledge into actions, such as the good adoption of nutritious lunches. Moral and social development is strong. There is an ethos of care and support in the school, which pupils increasingly model and which shows itself in their enthusiasm to raise money for charities in order to help people and animals who are suffering. They feel safe because the school is secure and because lessons explain how to stay safe. Pupils' spiritual awareness is promoted well through the curriculum. Attendance has improved and is average, with a drop in the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

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 modern building and bright displays of pupils' work provide a very positive environment for learning. Pupils are increasingly engaged in lessons because they have lots of opportunities to learn for themselves and in groups. Interactive white boards are effective in aiding pupils' learning, the purpose of which is made clear and often revisited in lessons. However, the group targets and targets to meet lesson objectives are not specific enough to accelerate individual pupils' progress or to encourage their ownership of

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learning. While there is some good and outstanding teaching, overall it is too variable to raise progress over time to a good level. This is primarily because planning does not always take sufficiently into account the levels at which pupils work. Marking is effective in promoting progress because it regularly tells pupils what they have learnt and the next steps to take.

The school's careful planning has resulted in a creative curriculum that effectively promotes pupils' progress and their good well-being. Based on acquiring skills, it provides many opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves, through imaginative experiences. Activities are chosen carefully to match the ways pupils like to learn, with information and communication technology far more central to learning than previously. However, tasks for more able pupils are not always closely enough matched to their developing higher level skills. Provision to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills provides a good springboard for their reading, writing and communication skills. Problem solving, and learning independently and in groups are intrinsic to most learning and encourage pupils' interest and their engagement in learning. The curriculum is supplemented by a popular and growing range of visits, visitors, after-school clubs and Wednesday afternoon enhancement activities, such as cookery. In particular, pupils praise the contribution these make to the relevance of learning, such as work with the Business Fayre Garden Centre, which promotes a range of literacy, numeracy and inter-personal skills.

The school nurtures its pupils so that they feel valued and can grow as young people and as learners. They express confidence in the staff's care towards them and the systems in place to help keep them safe, which are comprehensive and well-coordinated. The school has a detailed knowledge of its pupils and addresses individual needs promptly. This has led to significant improvements in the attendance, behaviour, attitudes and confidence of a number of them. The inclusion centre and the work of support staff are instrumental in achieving this. Pupils confirm the helpful preparation for moving to secondary school.

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 senior management team has a clear focus on raising standards, which is driving all of its work. The staff's commitment to this is having a sound impact on the rate of pupils' progress, aided by the local authority's focused support. This is especially clear in pupils' writing, which, while still lagging behind reading and mathematics, is improving. Middle managers, who have been effective in improving the quality of marking, are beginning to extend their role in monitoring pupils' progress through more formal lesson observations and by using data. However, the school's monitoring of teaching and learning has not

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always been sufficiently focused to enable it to identify inconsistent practice promptly and take rapid action. The school evaluates pupils' involvement in school life and their performance, promoting sound equality of opportunity and enabling the school to tackle any discrimination. It has promoted community cohesion in school and locally, thoughtfully, and has identified the comparative weakness in the national and international contexts. Governors oversee safeguarding effectively through regular checks on policies and procedures and ensuring good quality training of staff is in place. Overall, the governing body discharges its duties satisfactorily, and recognises the areas in which it is weaker. Partnerships with a range of organisations, including secondary schools, make an effective contribution to pupils' personal development and to the curriculum. Similarly, the school shows its valuing of parents and carers by communicating regularly with them, taking their views on board when making changes and most importantly, increasingly enabling them to support their children's learning. A recent example is the development of speaking and listening workshops.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter Nursery with levels of knowledge and skills that are below expectations and well below expectations in communication, language and literacy. They settle quickly because the staff have met them and their parents or carers several times beforehand and know the children's needs and circumstances. Termly meetings to help parents and carers to support their children's learning pave the way for good home-school relationships and communication through the school. Children are proud to be given responsibility, such as being the helper of the day and setting up activities, both of which promote their good behaviour and personal development, including their independence. Safety and welfare are high priority and children can explain why it is important to behave safely.

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Children are encouraged to learn for themselves and to work cooperatively. Speaking and listening skills are promoted through all activities, both in the classroom and outdoors, where a wide range of activities interest the children and enable them to move towards their early learning goals. Wheeled vehicles, for example, are very popular, and promote a range of skills. It is the variety of learning opportunities and the happy and secure environment that promotes children's good progress. Teaching is effective but sometimes planning does not focus sharply enough on meeting individual children's specific needs. The regular monitoring of their progress by the leader and manager and the comprehensive knowledge that key workers have of the children's abilities, including speaking and literacy skills, ensure that the children move forward confidently in their learning. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's attainment is broadly average, though still below average in communication, language and literacy.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

A comparatively low percentage of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire than is typical. However, there were no indications that the sample was unrepresentative. Responses were positive about all aspects of school. Every parent and carer responding judged their children to be safe at school, evaluated teaching as good and overall was happy with their child's experience. One parent or carer described the school as, 'A wonderful school with such caring teachers.' There were a very small number of individual concerns that have been shared with the headteacher while preserving the writer's confidentiality.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Old Park 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 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 466 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	61	13	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	71	11	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	50	17	45	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	45	20	53	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	61	15	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	53	16	42	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	53	14	37	2	5	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)	20	53	10	26	5	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	50	17	45	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	61	9	24	5	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	50	12	32	4	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	55	15	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	63	14	37	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	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.



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Park Primary School, Telford TF3 2BF

Thank you for your politeness and friendliness towards us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed the two days that we spent watching you in lessons and at breaktimes. It was very helpful to be able to talk with you and to find out your thoughts about your school. Your school is giving you a sound education.

You enjoy school and feel safe. Your behaviour is good. You say, and we agree with you, that the school cares for you well. It also gives you regular chances to take responsibility and to practise working in teams and being leaders. We are pleased that your attendance has improved and is now average. It is better than that for lots of you. Well done!

You make satisfactory progress through most of the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. We have asked your headteacher to help you make quicker progress through Year 1 to Year 6 by making sure that your work is at the right level for you in all your lessons. The curriculum is good. We like the way that you can learn lots of new skills and find out for yourselves. We are also glad that you have targets in lessons. However, we have asked that you all have targets of your own in literacy and numeracy to help you to make quicker progress. The headteacher and the governors are going to check the school's work very carefully so that they have a very clear idea of how well the school is doing. They are also going to make sure that the activities that happen in good lessons happen more widely. All of these things will help you to make quicker progress.

Finally, we have asked the school to help you to find out more about the different beliefs and lifestyles of people in this country and across the world.

You can help the school to enable you to make faster progress by trying as hard as you can in all of your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector

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