

Park Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103910
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355488
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martyn Roberts
Headteacher	Caroline Logan
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed 10 teachers. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the coordinator of the local learning partnership, senior and middle managers and a group of parents and carers. Inspectors spoke to three groups of pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans, key policy documents, assessment information, minutes of the governing body meetings and pupils' books. In addition, 69 responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire were received and analysed, together with questionnaire responses from staff and 110 pupils from Key Stage 2.

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

- How well do teachers use assessment to plan for the different abilities in the class, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How effective is the curriculum in promoting literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills so that attainment rises?
- Are strategies to improve attendance working?
- How well are leaders at all levels using the information from their monitoring to plan for further improvement?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since September 2009. The governing body runs a breakfast club every morning, Early Birds, on the school site.

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 satisfactory school which is improving strongly. The headteacher and senior leaders have demonstrated concerted effort and determination in implementing focused plans to tackle areas for improvement. This has led to a reversal of the decline in attainment seen in the year following the last inspection. Attainment has risen in both mathematics and English, and all pupils make at least satisfactory progress from their various starting points. Key to this has been improvements to the quality of care, guidance and support for pupils. This is now good. Pupils' attendance and behaviour have improved significantly as a result of the implementation of sustained efforts and strategies. As a result, all pupils responding to the inspection questionnaire say that when in school they feel safe and are cared for well by the adults. They told inspectors that this is because of improvements to the security of the site and strategies such as the 'worry box' which helps them let adults know if there is a problem. The curriculum ensures they have a good understanding of how to keep safe, both in school and outside. They are particularly well-informed about safety when using the internet. Parents and carers also commented to inspectors on the improvements that they have seen. This comment is typical: 'The massive improvements in school life are there to be seen by all. Our children have plenty of extra-curricular activities and feel safe and happy in school.'

Improving the quality of teaching has also been a primary focus in the school's drive to raise attainment and achievement. It is beginning to improve as a result of a well-structured programme of monitoring and staff development. Although an increasing proportion of teaching is good or better, its overall quality is satisfactory. This is because teaching and the use of assessment are not consistently good enough to enable pupils to make good progress in their learning. Where teaching is good, assessment information is used well to plan tasks which challenge the range of abilities in the class and enable pupils to make good progress. Where it is less effective, assessment is not used consistently to plan for the full range of abilities and needs, so the pace of learning slows because the level of challenge is inappropriate. When it is regular and thorough, marking tells pupils what they have done well and gives clear guidance on how to improve their work. Marking is not, however, used consistently across all years. This is also the case in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where assessment is not used consistently to identify the next steps for a child or highlight areas of the curriculum where there are gaps in provision.

The school's self-evaluation has been accurate in identifying areas of weakness, and plans are in place to address these. The school's capacity to improve is, therefore, satisfactory. It is not better than this because leaders have not achieved consistency in all areas of provision and so some pupils make less progress than others. The systems to continue improvement are now embedded and are being used to drive further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and the use of assessment secures at least good progress, by:
 - matching activities throughout lessons more carefully to the range of abilities within the class so that all pupils are consistently challenged
 - using the school marking policy consistently to show pupils what they have done well and how they can improve their work.
- Accelerate progress across all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
 - using the information from regular assessments to plan the next steps in learning for each individual child
 - using analysis of outcomes for groups at regular milestones to address gaps in provision.
- About 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

When children join the Nursery they have skills and abilities which are below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall so that attainment is average by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. The progress made varies across the school with pupils making satisfactory progress in some years and good in others. Both boys and girls make satisfactory progress. The progress of boys has improved since the last inspection as a result of strategies introduced to improve their writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress because their needs are carefully identified and they receive appropriate support in lessons. The quality of learning in lessons is satisfactory rather than better because it is uneven. Pupils respond well to individual tasks and challenges. They work well independently when given the opportunity. They also make good progress in their learning when they discuss ideas with classmates. Pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning when they are actively engaged in a task or discussion. Then, their learning accelerates. This was seen in a Year 2 writing lesson where the teacher planned activities to prepare pupils for their writing. All members of the class contributed their ideas through talk with their partners using their 'chat@home' diaries for ideas. Individuals put their ideas on sticky notes which were shared on pictures. The pace of this learning was fast because it so actively engaged every member of the class and enabled pupils to make good progress in the writing which followed. In those lessons where teachers expect pupils to work on the same task at the same pace or when they talk for too long or do not expect all members of the class to make a contribution, the pace of learning slows because pupils lose concentration or lack the challenge to make them think.

Pupils told inspectors how their programme of personal development is helping them to get on better with each other and to understand and resolve differences more easily. It is also contributing to better behaviour in lessons and around school. School leaders are clear about those areas which require further development to strengthen their impact on,

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for example, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community. While Year 6 pupils have a number of responsibilities to help others in school and beyond, such as acting as buddies to Key Stage 1 pupils, there are few opportunities for other year groups to take responsibility. The role of the school council is developing across all years and meetings with other schools enable council members to widen their perspective. Pupils are developing a sound understanding of why actions to improve attainment and attendance will help to support them with their future choices.

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	3
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	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?

Adults and pupils have positive working relationships which foster a supportive learning environment. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that support is deployed where it is most needed. Lessons have a clear plan and structure and learning objectives are shared with pupils. In the lessons seen during the inspection where teaching was good, pupils were quickly engaged in their learning by a range of activities. Planning used assessments to build on previous learning and meet the needs of different abilities within the class. A good example of this was seen in a Year 5 mathematics lesson where pupils were learning about the properties of two-dimensional shapes. The teacher knew the ability of individuals on this topic from previous assessment and planned and guided pupils to the appropriate level of work. Where teaching is satisfactory, planning is less effective in meeting the range of abilities within the class and does not consistently

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take account of what pupils have learnt before. Because of this, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always as high as they should be. When targets are set in marking, pupils respond to them well, showing that they have improved their understanding.

The curriculum is adequately matched to pupils' needs. In areas of recent development, it is contributing towards improved attainment. The emphasis on using writing skills for a purpose when linked to the study of topics, for example, is raising attainment in writing. Provision for developing information and communication technology skills is satisfactory. Opportunities to apply these skills across all areas of learning are limited by the number of available computers, but the school has plans to address this limitation. The coordinated partnership with other schools in the area provides a range of enrichment opportunities which might not otherwise be available. The school supports potentially vulnerable pupils and their families well, linking effectively with external agencies. A successful system of rewards and sanctions has led to substantial improvement in pupils' attendance. Work with families has reduced considerably the number of pupils who are frequently absent from school. The school's relationship with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers feel that the school's communication is effective. They find the texting service particularly helpful. Along with pupils, they value the Early Birds session, particularly for the children of working parents, because it provides a harmonious and stimulating start to the day as pupils meet up for a healthy breakfast and play session.

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?

Senior leaders share their vision for the school with all members of the school community. Increasingly, middle leaders and the governing body are involved in the school's monitoring and making a contribution to these plans. Clear systems are in place to track the progress of pupils throughout the year and leaders monitor this regularly. Where underachievement is identified, a range of strategies and support are used to address this. The school's analysis of the progress of different groups is thorough. Planned actions as a result are beginning to close gaps in achievement and promote equality of opportunity. Boys' attainment in writing has improved because of strategies introduced to help boys talk about and thus develop their ideas through drama, for example. The introduction of boy-friendly topics has provided greater motivation to write.

The governing body knows and understands the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is playing a more pivotal role in the school's development as, for example, in its recent consultation with staff and parents on pursuing trust status. It is exercising greater

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challenge to leaders, contributing towards the school's drive for improvement. The governing body ensures that staff and pupils are safe by applying safeguarding procedures which meet requirements and are regularly reviewed. Policies ensure that efficient procedures and requirements to vet staff are fully applied. School leaders have a clear understanding of the school's context within its community and have prioritised the promotion of cohesion within the school and the locality. Activities such as visits to the neighbourhood gurdwara and carol-singing in the community enhance pupils' understanding of different communities well. The school's plans to develop awareness of communities further afield are at an early stage of development.

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	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

Children make satisfactory progress overall but their rate of progress is uneven. They make accelerated progress in the Nursery because good teaching challenges children within a stimulating environment and planning ensures a lively approach to learning. This is matched well to the different abilities and needs of children in the class. Progress is satisfactory when planning is not sufficiently thorough to meet the needs of the full range of abilities and assessment is not used routinely to identify the next steps for individual children. The provision of an indoor and outdoor area is adequate, but the lack of cover outdoors means that use of the area is limited during inclement weather.

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, good relationships are established between adults and children and this fosters well-established routines. As a result, children settle to tasks independently and cooperate well with others. Good relationships are established with parents and carers through an effective induction process, and this contributes to positive learning activities being followed at home. Inconsistencies in the regular analysis of outcomes for the classes in the six areas of learning mean that gaps in provision are

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not always identified appropriately. These inconsistencies also have an impact on the quality of information on strengths and weaknesses which is passed on transition to Year 1. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has appropriate plans in place for staff development within the team. Welfare arrangements and policies to protect children are securely in place.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers indicate that they are happy with their child's experiences, particularly that the school keeps their child safe and that the school meets their child's needs. Of greatest concern to a small number of parents was that the school did not take account of suggestions and concerns. Parents and carers who met with inspectors welcomed the re-established parent teacher association because it increased the opportunities to be involved in the school's work. Suggestions and concerns raised during the inspection have been shared with the headteacher and will be included in the school's review of its work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Hill 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	59	26	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	58	29	42	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	33	42	61	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	41	37	54	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	42	39	57	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	43	36	52	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	36	40	58	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)	21	30	42	61	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	30	48	70	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	38	39	57	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	30	41	59	5	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	52	32	46	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	54	31	45	1	1	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.



3 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Hill Primary School, Wednesbury, WS10 0TJ

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome on our recent visit, and for sharing your views about the school in discussions and through questionnaires. These have been very helpful. Now I would like to share with you what we found out.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education and it is improving rapidly.

You make satisfactory progress in your work and reach average standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6. Your attainment in both these areas has improved. In lessons, you work hard, particularly when you are active, using drama or talk partners to help you learn.

You have a good understanding of how to keep safe. You demonstrate this well as you move around school. You told us that the worry box is helping to reduce bullying and you showed us how much you know about keeping safe on the internet.

Year 6 pupils make a positive contribution to the school being a happy and caring community. We were impressed by the way older pupils acted as helpers and buddies to younger ones particularly during the wet playtimes.

Your headteacher and her staff care for you well. This makes you feel safe when you are in school.

We have asked the school to do two things to make it even better:

- to make sure that activities in lessons match your ability so that you are challenged in your work, and that marking tells you all what you have done well and how you can improve
- to use information about how well the Nursery and Reception children are doing to plan the right activities for them.

We hope that you will do your best to help your headteacher and her staff to put these plans in place by working hard and always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook

Lead inspector

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