

Parkland Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114464
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	357549
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Prentice
Headteacher	Steve Gough
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons taught by eight teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, the headteacher, other staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, for example that relating to safeguarding, curriculum organisation, pupils' work and the information used to track pupils' progress. The 137 questionnaire responses from parents and carers were analysed and also staff and pupils' responses. One of the inspectors had an individual conversation with a parent who had requested it.

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

- The extent to which the school is continuing to improve the pupils' understanding and attainment in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's assessment systems and their impact on improving pupils' rates of progress.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school with eight classes. The vast majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than in most schools. Children mainly transfer from the infant school on the shared site. The current percentage of pupils designated as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. These pupils mainly have moderate learning difficulties. The school has gained several awards including Healthy Schools, Artsmark, Activemark, Investors in People and Quality in Study Support.

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 education for its pupils. However, the hard work of the governing body, senior leaders and other staff shows this to be an improving school which has resulted in rising attainment in recent years. The varied and interesting curriculum, the good care taken of the pupils, and very good links with the parents and carers are particular strengths. It is also a very happy school which the pupils are pleased to attend. Parents and carers express very positive views of the school. As one parent wrote, 'My child has enjoyed a wonderful educational experience over the last three and a half years at Parkland Junior School. The school values every individual child and incorporates their needs in a common learning experience and a community of fun and creativity.'

Teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve satisfactorily. The small group sessions support their needs well so that they make similar rates of progress to other pupils. Gifted and talented pupils also make satisfactory progress. The school has begun initiatives to increase the challenge for them, such as extra sessions in mathematics at the secondary school. Attainment overall is broadly average. While girls do well compared to the boys in English, they lack confidence in mathematics and overall have consistently attained less well than the boys. However, the boys have consistently attained less well than the girls in English. These differences are pronounced at the higher levels of attainment. Although attainment is improving in writing, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting skills.

The staff have become more rigorous in tracking pupils' progress in recent times, which is enabling teachers to be more focused in planning pupils' next steps in learning. However, pupils themselves do not always know well enough what they must do in order to improve to reach the higher levels so that they can have high aspirations for themselves. Pupils enjoy school. They develop good personal qualities shown in their attitudes to one another, to their work and the good relationships that they forge with their teachers. They develop a good understanding of healthy and safe living and contribute well to the school and local community. Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school's self-evaluation is honest but its grades for some aspects are optimistic. It has a good recognition of its strengths and weaknesses and has focused well on improving teaching and attainment. There is a trend of improvement but this is yet to show itself in consistency over time. Systems in place are enabling the school to continue improving. An insightful governing body provides good support. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the girls' confidence and attainment in mathematics so that it equals the boys' and increase the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels by:
 - using the increased rigour of tracking pupils' progress to identify pupils who need extra booster sessions in mathematics and so closing any gaps in their learning.
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their mathematics and to investigate number
 - extending the mathematics links with secondary schools to obtain voluntary student mathematics tuition partners for the pupils.
- Raise the attainment of boys in English to equal that of the girls and increase the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 by:
 - using the increased rigour of tracking pupils' progress to identify pupils who need extra booster sessions in English, so closing any gaps in their learning
 - reading good literature to the pupils more frequently to widen their vocabulary and stimulate their imaginations.
 - improving pupils' handwriting skills so that they present their work more neatly.
- Help pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve so that they can grasp the challenge and increase their rate of progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

When the pupils enter Year 3, their attainment is broadly average, although few pupils have reached the higher level. Results at the end of Year 6 have been improving, especially in mathematics, where there has been a distinct improvement in recent years. In the main, attainment is broadly average. Nevertheless, a pattern of pupils attaining more highly in English than in mathematics continues and pupils make better progress in reading than they do in writing. This is because of the well-planned daily guided reading sessions and the good use of additional adults in these sessions. Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers strive to make lessons interesting. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the hall was arranged like an aircraft and a simulation took place of a flight to Egypt as part of the pupils' historical work. The progress of the aircraft was viewed on a large screen. The staff acted as the crew and pupils were the passengers. The pupils later prepared to write a diary of the interesting journey and record their feelings. The good use of literacy in other subjects supports the pupils' English skills well. The use of mathematics in other subjects and investigation of number are less evident. Pupils' singing skills and their enjoyment of music are above those usually seen. They excel in school productions in both music and drama. Pupils also achieve well in a variety of sporting activities.

Pupils behave well. They show good attitudes to learning. They feel safe in school because they know that any concerns will be dealt with. Pupils show a good awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and select healthy choices at lunchtime. They manage their own allotment and cook the produce. Pupils engage well in the large range of opportunities for extra-curricular sport. Pupils take on different responsibilities related to their class or whole-school duties, such as membership of the school council. They raise money for

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different charities, often of their own choosing. Attendance is average. Pupils show a good level of respect for others, irrespective of race or culture, and they have a strong sense of fairness.

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?

Staff manage the pupils well so that lessons proceed smoothly in a positive atmosphere. Teachers prepare the lessons well and assign the teaching assistants effectively to work with groups in a focused way. Marking is satisfactory overall with some that is good. Written comments are sometimes too imprecise to benefit the pupils' learning and staff are not always consistent in referring to the pupils' individual termly targets to assess their progress towards them. Assessment for learning is, nevertheless, developing well in other ways. Staff are becoming more skilled in using the results of previous work to plan the next piece of learning and this is particularly effective in mathematics. Teachers' planning pays good attention to different pupils' abilities, including those who have special educational needs. Tracking the progress of individual pupils has recently become more rigorous as the result of involving key staff in regular meetings. Staff share the learning intentions of the lesson well with pupils but they are not consistently made aware of how they can evaluate how well they have done.

The curriculum is lively and imaginative, and carefully thought through. Good links are made between subjects. Staff are engaging boys more effectively in writing, for example

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writing diaries as a Victorian child or an evacuee during the Second World War. Pupils dress up in Victorian costume during their studies of this period to gain a closer understanding of what life was like. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities. They were making masks of the Pharaohs in their Egyptian studies and had produced other attractive artwork. Music is a good feature of the curriculum. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities for extra-curricular opportunities, including several sports, which contribute to their healthy lifestyles. The good attention to personal, social and health education contributes effectively to the pupils' good social and moral development. There is an increasing rigour in providing more precisely for pupils who are able or who have specific learning needs.

The school provides a very welcoming and attractive environment for the pupils and creates a sense of ease and security. All pupils are known well. Transition arrangements between schools are well organised. Infant children are invited to the school performances. Pupils whose challenging circumstances make them vulnerable are closely monitored and the recent introduction of nurture groups is designed to strengthen this support even further. The very close links with parents and carers through both informal and formal arrangements ensure that any worries or concerns are dealt with quickly. The school works hard to ensure that pupils attend regularly and has good systems in place to monitor attendance.

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 staff and governors are working hard to embed ambition and drive improvement further. The recently increased rigour involving key subject and senior staff, together with the class teachers, to analyse pupils' progress and making staff more accountable has not yet had time to make a consistent impact. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning is accurate and thorough but the school recognises the need for staff to observe one another more frequently to share strengths and learn from one another.

The governing body knows the school well and has effective systems to do so through visits, attending progress meetings with staff, observing lessons and evaluating policies. It has its own governing body development plan. New members have brought in additional expertise. It takes its duties very seriously and is often proactive in school improvement. It has taken the lead on community cohesion, auditing provision and formulating a plan. The school has links at home and abroad, for example with a London inner city school and also with schools in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, so that pupils gain a good understanding of cultural diversity. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Appropriate policies and

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procedures are in place and carried out effectively. Child protection training is kept up-to-date and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Health and safety matters are given good attention.

The partnership with parents and carers is very strong and reflected in the inspection questionnaire responses and written comments. The school ensures that pupils have equal opportunities in their curricular experiences but it has not yet tackled successfully enough the continuing gaps between the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics and English, especially, but not only, at the higher levels. There is no evidence of discrimination. The school has good links with outside professional help and the links with the secondary school to support pupils with particular problems in mathematics which are motivating the pupils' interest in this subject well.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Many more parents and carers completed the questionnaire than is usual and their responses show an overwhelming support for the school. In the written comments, parents and carers praise the approachability of the staff, including that of the headteacher, and the inclusive ethos. They are confident that their children are well cared for and rightly feel that their children are happy, safe and learning. Very few of the written comments or questionnaire responses contained negative comments. Of these, a few would like more regular updates on progress and this has been shared with the school. Parents and carers of pupils who have special educational needs feel that the staff are always around if they need anything. Communication is rightly highlighted by parents and carers as a particular strength and the headteacher is always on the playground each morning to meet parents and carers so that any issue can quickly be resolved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parkland Junior 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 246 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	64	49	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	64	48	35	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	65	47	67	49	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	51	62	45	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	56	58	42	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	70	51	61	45	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	45	70	51	4	3	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)	64	47	69	50	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	50	62	45	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	49	62	45	6	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	45	68	50	2	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	85	62	48	35	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	90	66	44	32	2	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	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.



20 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkland Junior School, Eastbourne BN22 9QJ

We really enjoyed our two days in your happy and friendly school where everyone gets along very well together. Thank you for your help when we visited, for talking to us about your work and giving your views. We found this very useful. You told us that you like meeting your friends at school and that you have fun. We enjoyed meeting you and the staff and seeing you at work in lessons. The staff take good care of you. We found that the school provides a satisfactory education for you. The school is improving further because the staff work hard for you and results are going up. Your parents and carers are pleased that you attend Parkland Junior.

We have some suggestions to make the school even better. We noticed that boys do much better than the girls in mathematics and girls do much better than the boys in English. We have asked the school to try and close the gap so that boys and girls do equally well in both subjects and also so that more of you reach the higher level. We have also asked the school to help you improve your handwriting. Finally, we have requested the school to help you to understand what you need to do to get to the next level in your work so that you can make even better progress.

Thank you once again for all your help. By the way, we thought you behaved really well and your singing was wonderful. Carry on working hard and doing your best. With your help and hard work, the school could soon become a good school.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector

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