

The Park Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112682
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357168
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marian Stockdale
Headteacher	Steven Hewitt-Richards
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 21 lessons or parts of lessons and saw eight teachers teach. They also looked at the work of higher-level teaching assistants. Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its development plans, records of pupils' progress and samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics. They scrutinised responses to 124 questionnaires by parents and carers, as well as questionnaire responses from pupils and staff.

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

- How much progress do pupils make in English and mathematics?
- How effective are the procedures used to track pupils' progress and the way that assessment information is used to inform learning?
- What is the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the impact of other additional support programmes?
- How effective have the federation and the new management structure been in supporting the work of the school?

Information about the school

The school is a similar size to other primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average and is increasing. An above-average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils are White British; a very small percentage of pupils are from other backgrounds. The school has gained Activemark, a Work Related Learning Award and was one of the first schools to gain a Personalised Learning Award. The school provides before- and after-school care which is reported on within this report.

The school is in a federation with the neighbouring infant school and shares a head teacher and governing body. The infant school was inspected in January 2010.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pupils make the most of everything this good school has to offer and they achieve well because it provides every pupil with outstanding care, guidance and support, which are at the heart of its work. They are enabled to make an outstanding contribution to the school community and are very keen to help the school and each other. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They work with a smile, receive visitors with pride and gain pleasure from doing their best. Their behaviour is good. The school provides an exceptional range of opportunities designed to help pupils to keep fit and healthy. The pupils embrace these enthusiastically.

Currently, pupils are reaching levels of attainment that are similar to those expected for their age and all groups of pupils are making good progress. This is because of good teaching that is underpinned by an exciting curriculum that provides well for the pupils' needs. Pupils learn well because many lessons are lively and engaging and move along at a good pace. In a small number of lessons seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory because the introduction was too long, reducing the time that pupils had to apply their skills. There is some excellent marking which clearly tells pupils how to improve their work, but this is not consistent in all classes.

Pupils' progress is better in English than it is in mathematics. While pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities make good progress in reading and writing, their progress in mathematics is also slower. Teaching sometimes does not have the best impact when these pupils are taught in small groups because practical mathematics resources are not always used effectively to aid pupils' understanding. In this situation, these pupils are not always actively engaged in learning and can start to lose interest.

The school recognised the dip in attainment that occurred after the previous inspection and took swift and effective action. The school's provision was reviewed thoroughly and a searching analysis, including exceptionally thorough checking of pupils' progress, allowed the school to pinpoint exactly where improvements needed to be made. Staff drew up very well-focused plans for improvement. These included detailed strategies for improving teaching and learning that were implemented robustly throughout the school. The resulting rapid improvements in levels of attainment and rates of progress illustrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupil's progress in mathematics, especially for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
 - ensuring that practical resources are used well to support learning

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- making sure that teaching strategies provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to be actively engaged in learning.
- Address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that lesson introductions are short enough to give pupils sufficient time to apply their skills
 - attending to variations in the quality of teachers' marking.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

When pupils join the school in Year 3, their attainment is below average, particularly in writing. Pupils are making good progress and many have closed the gap between their attainment and national averages by the end of Year 6. Consequently, attainment as seen in many pupils' current English and mathematics books is broadly average. In most lessons, pupils acquire knowledge and develop understanding at a good rate. They show great interest in all the school has to offer. Many pupils are making great strides in improving the quality of their writing. Work is consistently well presented and most pupils' writing is lively and engaging because they are using a good range of vocabulary and vary the way their sentences are constructed. The school has recognised that spelling is a relative weakness and has introduced a programme that encourages pupils to make more effective links between letters and sounds. Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as rapid as their progress in reading and writing. School leaders have investigated this and have correctly recognised that pupils' problem-solving skills need to be developed. Consequently, a strong focus on developing these skills can be seen in many mathematics lessons. When pupils are working in small groups, some teaching assistants use techniques which do not make the best use of time. Pupils are not always actively learning and sometimes spend too much time taking turns or watching demonstrations. Additionally, those pupils who find numeracy challenging are not always provided with sufficient resources to enable them to develop a thorough understanding of mathematical concepts. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make slower progress in mathematics than they do in reading and writing, although their overall progress is good. More-able pupils often make good progress in both mathematics and English because they are given activities to complete in lessons, which offer a good level of challenge.

Pupils respond extremely well to the school's system of rewards and strive to be a 'super student'. As a result, behaviour is good, especially in lessons. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They feel safe in school because they are confident that staff will listen to them and solve any problems they have. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the school and to the wider community. Opportunities to take responsibility are extensive, including a pupil-based school management team, an active school council and 'Guardian Angels' who look after pupils who are new to the school. In addition, the school's many monitors take their duties very seriously indeed. Pupils take part in a series of events that enable them to be thoroughly involved in the local community.

A strong sense of spirituality is evident in pupils' writing. Pupils are encouraged to respect and value the environment and to empathise with the feelings of others. Their social development is good; they learn to interact well and know how to work as a team. Pupils are encouraged to value their own cultures as well as to appreciate the cultures of others with a different background from their own. The school is working well to improve the

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attendance of a small minority of pupils. Attendance rates have risen and are broadly average. The school works hard to raise pupils' aspirations and equips pupils with the skills and personal qualities that they need to succeed. Pupils are aware of the wide range of opportunities available to them if they work hard in school and are well prepared for the future. At the end of Year 6, pupils 'graduate' at a grand event to celebrate their success. This is hosted by a local university and attended by pupils' proud parents and carers.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Teachers use assessment information well to plan learning activities and pupils' work is well matched to their individual needs, especially when they are working with minimal support from the teacher. In the very best lessons, introductions are sharply focused on the learning needs of pupils of different abilities. Those pupils who, quickly, grasp the concept that is being taught, quickly move on to independent work, while those pupils who need more help receive further instruction. This means that pupils are never left marking time. In some satisfactory lessons, introductions are too long and involve the whole class. Consequently, pupils have a reduced amount of time to work independently at their own level. When higher-level teaching assistants or other staff who do not have qualified teacher status teach whole classes, pupils usually make good progress. However, when small groups are taught by teaching assistants, rates of progress are inconsistent.

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Good links have been made between subjects and this has stimulated pupil's interest in writing and improved its content. For example, pupils were able to recognise the emotional cost of being an evacuee in the Second World War and used a very good range of words and similes to describe how they might have felt in that situation. Visits have also been used well to bring learning alive. The learning of basic skills has been made more interesting and this has contributed to improved levels of attainment, particularly for boys. The school has a wide range of strategies which are designed to help pupils of all abilities reach their full potential. The teaching of English and mathematics in ability sets has been very successful because teachers address the individual needs of pupils within the set. Groups such as the 'Rising Stars' help pupils to gain confidence and other initiatives like one-to-one tuition have been relatively successful. Pupils in Year 6 have access to personal laptops which helps them to improve their technological skills. Pupils take part in many exciting activities outside class. These range from being involved in 'Rock School' and 'Young Voices' to taking part in a wide variety of sports.

Arrangements for care, guidance and support have made an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development. An excellent level of support for all pupils, including those whose circumstances could make them vulnerable, means that pupils' attitudes are highly positive. Pupils feel that they are very much valued as individuals and have great confidence in the staff. Pupils' progress is very carefully tracked and pupils who are in danger of falling behind are offered support that is carefully tailored to their personal requirements. The school works successfully with families, children and a range of agencies to sustain learning and ensure the well-being of children. Mentoring arrangements are valued by pupils because they help them to cope with change in their lives. The federation with the infant school has led to much improved transition arrangements. A substantial effort is made to ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils are well supported and feel confident to move on to secondary school. The breakfast club and after-school club enhance this high quality care further. It is valued by pupils who say they are 'always able to do lots of things'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher make a very effective team and have had a significant impact on school improvement. They share with the staff a strong sense of purpose, high expectations of the pupils and an ambitious vision for the school. Middle leaders are equally effective. They carry out their duties diligently and have also contributed well to school improvement. Much work, including partnership work with the local authority, has been done to improve the quality of teaching and learning, although

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the school is aware there are still small pockets of teaching that remain satisfactory. Despite achieving rapid improvements in outcomes for pupils, there is no sense of complacency and targets have been raised further. Management arrangements for the federation are strengthening provision for pupils as the two schools develop a consistent approach in many areas of their work.

The school works hard to promote equal opportunities for all and ensure that no group is subject to discrimination. Senior leaders monitor the progress of different groups of pupils and staff have taken concerted action to close the gap between different groups. Currently all groups of pupils are making good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are more able and pupils who join the school other than at the normal time. Safeguarding procedures are good. The school is particularly rigorous in the way that it identifies pupils' needs. Changes since the federation was formed have strengthened the work of the governing body and governance is good. The governing body is well informed and plays a full part in the life of the school. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It knows its local community very well and works hard to make pupils aware of and tolerant towards people who are different from themselves.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers that responded to the questions were pleased with the quality of education provided by the school. A small number made positive comments relating to supportive teachers and the helpful headteacher. A few parents and carers were concerned about the information they get about their children's progress. In response to parental/carer concerns, the school has recently altered the format of pupils' annual reports. The new format provides exceptionally clear information about pupils' attainment

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and progress, as well as very pertinent comments about children's personal development. Other written information is also supplied to parents and carers during the regular parent's and carers' evenings. Individual parents and carers raised a number of separate issues, which were also followed up during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Park 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 received 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 220 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	52	51	41	6	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	73	59	51	41	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	35	61	49	17	14	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	41	60	48	6	5	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	59	48	58	47	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	48	53	43	10	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	52	53	43	3	2	1	1
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)	55	44	58	47	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	44	56	45	11	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	39	59	48	12	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	31	68	55	9	7	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	59	48	52	42	7	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	44	60	48	6	5	1	1

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.



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Park Junior School, Mansfield, NG20 8JX

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking with you all and we listened very carefully to what you had to say. It is clear that you are very proud of your school and we can understand why. You go to a good school. You say that your teachers care about you a lot and we agree. They do value each and every one of you. We were impressed by your good manners and the way you behave well. We admired the work of the management committee, the school council and the monitors. We know that every single one of you plays a very important role in creating the atmosphere at The Park. We enjoyed particularly attending the assembly run by the older pupils and thought that everyone involved did a great job.

You make good progress and you reach standards similar to those reached by children at other schools. We have asked your teachers to help those of you who find learning difficult to make better progress in mathematics by making sure that you spend more time actively involved in learning and use resources to help you understand how numbers work. Teaching in your school is good. Occasionally lessons are satisfactory and sometimes you have to listen to introductions for too long a time and do not always have enough time to work on your own. We also noticed that some teachers do not give you enough advice about how to improve your work. We have asked them to work on these areas.

You certainly have lots of exciting things to do at school. We were very impressed by the letters you wrote after your 'experience' as an evacuee and also by the writing you produced after your visit to Castleton.

Managers at your school are doing a good job. They are working very hard and are trying to make your school into one of the very best. You can help your school to improve further by continuing to do your very best in all your lessons. Thank you again for being such good company. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh

Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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