

Park Junior School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 121870 |
| Local Authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 359103 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 May 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Peter Clifton |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 238 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Heather Saunders |
| Headteacher | Lyn Mura |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 July 2008 |
| School address | Great Park Street Wellingborough NN8 4PH |
| Telephone number | 01933 224501 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed eight teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. The inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and at break times. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including: development planning, monitoring information, evidence of safeguarding procedures and pupils' books. They analysed 114 responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire and took account of the views expressed by them during informal meetings and conversations.

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

- The accuracy of the school's information about the progress and learning of pupils from different backgrounds and ethnicity, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well work challenges different groups of pupils and the effectiveness of intervention strategies for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The quality of provision to promote the application of skills across the curriculum, especially in writing and mathematics.
- How effectively learning targets are used in lessons.
- The impact of the work of leaders to improve provision to tackle areas of weaker progress.

Information about the school

This is an average sized school of its type serving the local area. There are eight mainstream classes. The school has a small, designated, specially resourced provision for pupils with BSED (behaviour, social and emotional difficulties) referred to as the 'ready room' by staff and pupils, which draws pupils from across north of the local authority. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is just above average. The majority of pupils are of White British origin, with others coming from a wide range of minority ethnic heritage. A few are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little higher than that found in most schools. Their main needs relate to learning and social and behavioural difficulties. The school has a number of awards, most recently an Anti-Bullying Award in recognition of the work done in this area. The school runs a daily breakfast club. A group of Year 4 pupils were away on a residential visit during the time of the inspection.

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

Park Junior is a satisfactory school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and attainment is average. The progress of pupils from all backgrounds and ethnicities is satisfactory and improving. However, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the high level of expertise in the school which ensures that extra support is very well targeted to their particular needs. There are strengths in pupils' personal development and in the specially resourced provision - the 'ready room' - for pupils with BSED.

The many pupils spoken to during the inspection and questionnaire returns indicate that pupils feel safe at all times and have great confidence in the adults who look after them. Parents and carers strongly agree. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of a good diet and regular exercise and are keen to improve their health. Many pupils comment that they love coming to school and their attendance is above average. In and around the school, pupils are very polite and get on noticeably well together. Pupils are very loyal and proud of their school and all that it offers. They express their views with a great deal of assurance. Their exceptional involvement in the life of the school and the local community has fostered an unusually strong awareness of conflict resolution and sense of justice. Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes enable them to contribute actively to their own learning. They work well in groups, for example, to solve number problems in mathematics. Highly effective provision in the designated special unit enables most pupils to be successfully reintegrated into mainstream classes, and at their 'home' school.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. However, inconsistencies in pupils' progress remain between different classes. This is mainly because lesson planning and delivery are not always sharp enough to meet the needs of every individual and, occasionally, teachers' expectations are too low. Teachers provide pupils with activities, including practical and collaborative tasks which promote good enjoyment of learning. A new curriculum has been recently introduced. It is not yet fully embedded into practice and does not give a consistent approach to building skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in science. Leaders have improved the use of learning targets in English and mathematics and there are good opportunities for pupils to assess their own work to identify how well they are doing. This practice is not consistent across other areas of the curriculum.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory. While senior leaders have acted to improve key areas of the school's work that are weaker, the pace of improvement in some classes has been slower because the implementation of change is not yet concerted. Pupils apply their reading, writing and number skills securely for a range of purposes, a key issue identified in the previous inspection. In science, the pace of improvement has faltered. Senior leaders

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acknowledge that the role of some subject coordinators to evaluate the effectiveness of provision is underdeveloped, including monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment. Nevertheless, given the improvements that have already taken place, including the rising trend in pupils' progress, the school is demonstrating a satisfactory capacity for sustained 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and, particularly, overcome inconsistencies in progress in different classes by:
 - ensuring lesson planning and delivery consistently meet the needs of every pupil in each class
 - embed changes made to the curriculum to ensure there is a more consistent approach to building skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in science.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of subject coordinators to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision in their subjects so that the pace of improvement is accelerated
 - improving the monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment to enable action to be taken to address weaknesses more quickly, especially in science.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' progress from their broadly average starting points is satisfactory. There is an improving picture over the past three years. Pupils from different backgrounds and heritage work together well and make similar progress. Those who are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language are provided with effective additional specialist support. Consequently, they gain confidence and fluency in using the English language. In Year 6, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics because provision in these classes is consistently good. For example, in mathematics, pupils confidently applied their basic skills to find a range of ways to make different numbers. In English, they worked together well to identify how the different features in writing created an effect for the reader. In a Year 5 class, inspectors noted a buzz of excitement and interest when pupils worked with decimal numbers and used persuasive language in letter writing. In some lessons in mathematics and science, the learning was no more than satisfactory. This was mainly because too little notice was taken of the pupils' prior knowledge and understanding and resulted in a lack of challenge in the work given.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made good progress in most lessons observed. The success of the school's work with pupils, who joined the school having social and behavioural difficulties, can be seen in how they are now happy and settled in classes and making a positive contribution to their learning. Effective support for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who learn in mainstream classes enabled them, for example, to explain their understanding of decimal places and to write fluently about 'vibration' in science. In the 'ready room' pupils with challenging

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behaviour learn to modify their behaviour, build self-esteem and make secure gains in developing basic reading and writing skills.

Pupils say they would, without hesitation, seek help from 'loads of staff' if they ever felt unsafe. They say they are given a great deal of advice and information in their lessons which helps them with their personal safety. Bullying, racism and other harassment, like cyber-bullying, are seen as being unacceptable and very seldom occur, reflecting the school's anti-bullying award. Pupils have a strong understanding of the possible dangers of drugs, alcohol and solvent abuse and why they should not smoke cigarettes. A high proportion of pupils enjoy healthy food provided by the school each day. They eat fruit and vegetables for break-time snacks. Pupils are very welcoming and behave considerately towards each other in the play areas and during lessons. Most respond readily to questions and enjoy telling others what they think. A few are more reluctant to participate in question-and-answer sessions. Pupils fully embrace opportunities to take on responsibility. Each class has a list of jobs so that all pupils contribute something to the smooth running of the school. Pupils have organised competitions, working with a local company, for designing the 'surfboards' that are colourfully painted and mounted in the play area. Their work with a national charity to promote understanding of volatile substance abuse has been nationally recognised.

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 | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 1 |
| 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 | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| 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

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How effective is the provision?

The atmosphere in lessons is purposeful and pupils show a good deal of interest and enjoyment in their work. In some classes, planning to meet the needs of the pupils is consistently good. However, in some other classes, while there is effective additional support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, teachers' planning and use of assessment to meet the needs of other pupils is not sufficiently fine tuned to promote good outcomes. Expectations in some lessons are high and the pupils respond well to these by concentrating hard and persevering. Occasionally, pupils' learning is not moved on quickly enough. For example, when the pupils complete too many similar sums before moving on to more difficult work. In most lessons, valuable one-to-one support is provided to hear the pupils read, provide further explanation and help to support the development of basic skills. This helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to contribute effectively in lessons. In the 'ready room', the provision is highly targeted on the pupils' individual needs, which are carefully evaluated in individual plans, and their learning benefits.

While the curriculum has significant strengths in pupils' personal development, recent revisions have not yet been fully implemented. There remain inconsistencies in how plans are used to build skills systematically, for example, in developing practical skills in science.

Breakfast club provides a calm and sociable start to the day, ensuring that the pupils are ready to learn. There are frequent links with the partner infant school. However, these are yet to be used to their fullest effect to ensure that the transition from Year 2 to 3 is as effective as it could be to support pupils' learning. The school can point to many examples where it has made a significant difference to individual pupils by working with families. Regular attendance has a high profile in the school. This includes working very successfully with some hard-to-reach families and promoting punctual arrival at school. The level of care, tolerance and patience of the staff in the 'ready room' is impressive.

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?

The headteacher, with strong support from other senior leaders, provides a clear sense of purpose and direction to the school. Subject coordination is successful, for example, in promoting improvements in English and mathematics. However, improvement is not consistently driven through robustly in all classes to accelerate the rate of progress. Systems to evaluate pupils' progress and attainment are not fully developed so that the planning currently lacks the necessary sharpness to enable the school to make significant

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progress, especially in science. There is a high level of expertise in the school to ensure that the needs of the pupils in the designated special resource unit can be met well.

The governing body has effectively carried out its responsibilities to ensure that staff and pupils are safe. The school knows its potentially vulnerable groups and individuals well and provision is highly targeted and successful in meeting their needs. The school follows good practice across all aspects of safeguarding. It is vigilant about internet safety and risks are fully assessed before trips take place. The school site is well maintained and secure. Leaders follow good practice in the recruitment of staff.

Members of the governing body are prominent in the school and have worked effectively to strengthen links with parents, which are now good. They hold leaders to account for tackling the most important weaknesses. Academic outcomes for many pupils remain inconsistent, depending on which class they are taught in. While there is improvement where the school has targeted its actions, too much variation remains. Therefore, the promotion of equal opportunities is not above satisfactory. Community cohesion is effectively promoted and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds show a great deal of respect for each other and a strong understanding of rights and responsibilities. They have a good understanding of different cultures and backgrounds through contacts with contrasting schools to their own. Leaders are exploring wider global links to strengthen provision in this area.

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

Views of parents and carers

More questionnaire returns were received from parents and carers than is usual in similar schools nationally. Returns indicate a strong level of satisfaction with what the school provides. Parents and carers think their children are kept very safe and inspectors endorse this view. The majority of comments made in the questionnaires are very complimentary

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about the school, including its inclusive nature and welcoming and friendly environment. Several parents and carers say that their children have made considerable gains in confidence. The comments include high levels of praise for the support provided in the 'ready room' and include examples of how their children have successfully rejoined mainstream classes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Junior School, Wellingborough 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 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 238 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 60 | 53 | 51 | 45 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 74 | 65 | 40 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 54 | 47 | 57 | 50 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 61 | 54 | 48 | 42 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 60 | 53 | 49 | 43 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 52 | 46 | 59 | 52 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 51 | 45 | 61 | 54 | 2 | 2 | 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) | 55 | 48 | 56 | 49 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 57 | 50 | 54 | 47 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 53 | 46 | 55 | 48 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 40 | 35 | 67 | 59 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 53 | 46 | 56 | 49 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 61 | 54 | 51 | 45 | 2 | 2 | 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 | 46 | 48 | 6 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 47 | 40 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 12 | 39 | 38 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 28 | 49 | 19 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 45 | 31 | 10 |
| All schools | 10 | 46 | 37 | 7 |

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Junior School, Wellingborough, NN8 4PH

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about your work. You were very polite and friendly. You go to a satisfactory school. You told us that you enjoy coming to school, and feel safe when you are there all of the time. Here are some of the things we particularly liked about your school.

You have an excellent understanding about how to keep fit and healthy.

Your involvement in the life of your school is exceptional.

You get on noticeably well together in lessons and during play times.

The individual support given to those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities is helping you to make good progress.

You enjoy working with each other and learning through doing practical activities.

You use your targets in English and mathematics well to help you to learn.

Most of you who work in the 'ready room' successfully rejoin regular classes.

To help you make even faster progress, we have asked your headteacher to make sure you always get work which is at just the right level for you and helps you to continually improve, especially in science.

The governing body, your headteacher and other leaders are working together satisfactorily to improve your school. We have given them some pointers to make these improvements happen more quickly through training and by looking more closely at how well you are doing.

You can help your teachers by always coming to school, unless you are unwell, and by continuing to work as hard as you can all of the time.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton

Lead inspector

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