

Park Spring Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107964
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	363735
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Bowles HMI

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	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Wood
Headteacher	Mr Martin Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Thirteen lessons were observed and nine teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils and members of the governing body, and informal conversations took place with staff and parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation relevant to safeguarding and other school policies, improvement plans and evidence of monitoring and review, samples of pupils' work, the school's assessments and 29 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The quality of learning and achievement of pupils at both key stages to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging and assessment information is used effectively.
- The impact of monitoring and evaluation by leaders at all levels.
- The effectiveness of the provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Park Spring Primary serves pupils from a suburban area and is slightly larger in size than many other primary schools. Some classes contain mixed ages. It offers a breakfast club among its extended services. The school holds the Advanced Healthy School status, the Sports Activemark and the Inclusion Chartermark.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. There are slightly fewer pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds than average. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.

The school was given a notice to improve at its previous inspection in June 2010. It was judged to have made satisfactory progress at its monitoring visit in March 2011. The headteacher was absent at the time of this inspection and will be leaving at the end of August 2011. In the interim the school is being led by the deputy headteacher, who has been appointed acting headteacher. Five teachers new to the school have been appointed for September 2011. Two of these are senior leaders.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Park Spring is a satisfactory school. The school has made some significant changes for the better in the past year. As a result of clear-sighted and determined leadership, children are now thriving in the much-improved Early Years Foundation Stage unit. They are developing enthusiasm for learning as a result of exciting experiences and better opportunities to acquire new skills. The school has made satisfactory progress in the other areas for improvement highlighted by the previous inspection. These were to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school and to improve the quality of teaching and assessment, particularly in Key Stage 1.

From starting points which are generally below those expected for their age when entering Nursery, pupils make satisfactory progress and sometimes better progress and reach average attainment by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress comparable with their peers. Outcomes are satisfactory overall and good in terms of healthy living and feeling safe. The last two aspects are given particularly effective emphasis in the satisfactory curriculum and through the care and support pupils receive from the staff.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Improved systems for checking on pupils' progress have had a positive effect. Teachers now assess and plan more effectively. Lessons are coherent and interesting and give pupils opportunities to practise their skills. Marking is becoming more consistent in giving pupils helpful guidance. All this is helping to raise attainment; for example, the school's recent assessments of pupils in Year 2 suggest an improvement in attainment in Key Stage 1. However, pupils' work shows variable progress over time and too much catching up is needed in the later stages of Key Stage 2 to ensure attainment is at least average by the end of Year 6.

English, and in particular writing, remains a relatively weaker area and the presentation of work is often untidy. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is slightly below average. Pupils are quite often unclear about how to do their work well because they do not understand its bigger purpose and marking does not always give precise feedback. Teachers do not always make good use of assessment information to build on prior learning or to meet the different needs of learners in the class. In Key Stages 1 and 2 there is limited evidence that pupils undertake independent and self-directed work. Whilst monitoring and evaluation of teaching are more regular, they have not yet firmly established high expectations of pupils' capabilities.

Generally improving trends in performance and an honest, well-informed self-evaluation indicate a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Despite a few concerns being

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articulated at a time of change, a large majority of parents and carers who expressed their views indicated their confidence that the school is serving their children well. A number commented on the positive effect of changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As well as leading rapid improvement in the setting, the acting headteacher has begun to communicate higher expectations for the whole school. An ambitious yet realistic plan for improvement has been written. There is a clear focus on improving outcomes for all pupils. Planning for the future senior team has ensured roles and responsibilities are well defined. Staff express warm support for the agenda for change.

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?

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring consistently good progress across the age range, particularly in writing.
- Ensure teaching meets the needs of all pupils well by:
 - using assessment information and checks on understanding to ensure work is adapted to meet the different needs of pupils in the class
 - providing good opportunities for independent learning.
- Ensure systems for monitoring and evaluation embed high expectations in all classrooms.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Outcomes for all identified groups of pupils are satisfactory overall and include some good features. Pupils say they enjoy school. In lessons they work with application and cooperate well with adults, but they have limited opportunities to make significant choices for themselves, including about how to improve the quality of their work. Their work shows sound rather than strong progress over time. There are no indications of significant variations in the progress of different groups, and some evidence that progress is improving. For example, attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has been below average, but the most recent assessments made by teachers indicate an increase in the proportion of pupils who have reached average attainment and the higher levels.

Pupils show a good understanding of how exercise and diet affect their health. They make the most of the school's good outdoor environment and healthy extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils in Year 6 recently helped organise a week of fitness-promoting activities which the whole school greatly enjoyed. Different groups of pupils spoken to show a good awareness of how to handle risks and the overwhelming majority say they feel very safe in school. They understand the difference between right and wrong and want to help others. They say any poor behaviour is usually dealt with firmly and fairly. A few pupils have been excluded for short periods, but recent work with partners to introduce new systems for managing behaviour has reduced disruption. Although attendance shows only gradual improvement, the number of persistent absentees has fallen and punctuality has improved.

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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	2
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?

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching which stimulates pupils' interest, quickly detects and deals with pupils' misconceptions and guides them to a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve. Relationships are generally, but not always, warm and encouraging. In general, information is explained clearly and pupils are given time to practise new skills, but pupils lack good opportunities to work independently. Pupils tend to ask questions only when they experience difficulties rather than following their own inquisitiveness. Despite improvements, teachers' use of assessment information is not consistently highly effective. Lessons are usually planned on the basis of pupils' prior learning, but they are not always adapted well to meet the different needs of pupils. Because teachers sometimes focus on tasks to be done, rather than the intended learning, pupils are unsure of the purpose of their work, heavily reliant on adult direction and not well placed to evaluate their achievement. Pupils are not always effectively grouped to aid assessment and support. Teachers now use an agreed marking code, but their comments do not always give pupils a clear idea of what they are expected to do next and are not consistently followed up either by the pupils or the teacher.

The curriculum is appropriate and offers pupils some interesting experiences, although these are not exploited well to broaden understanding of other cultures. Clubs are well attended and pupils enjoy special events and visits. The new multi-sports pitch, a Quiet Area and a 'Magic Garden' for the youngest children are enthusiastically used. Pupils have

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ready access to books and wall displays are sometimes used to prompt learning or celebrate achievement, but the classroom environment is not consistently inspiring. The curriculum provides too few opportunities for pupils to develop the skills for independent learning, for example, through structured collaborative or investigative work or in using information and communication technology as a tool for their own learning.

Pupils are well known by staff and say adults really care about them. Vulnerable pupils are well looked after and supported. The school offers a safe, secure environment. Pupils think that their specially supported lessons in 'The Cool Hut' really help them manage their own behaviour. The school's health promotion strategy includes working with partners in the community to help families improve their emotional and physical health, and a good range of advice on risks including drugs, alcohol and misuse of the internet. This contributes well to pupils' positive attitudes to healthy living. However, systems to support better achievement by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are currently satisfactory. Despite reducing persistent absence, attendance remains no better than broadly average. Although the school sends home regular reports, some parents and carers would like a clearer picture of their child's progress and how they can help.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Over the past year the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and the provision of professional development have, with the help of the local authority, become systematic and had a positive effect. The governing body is now well-informed about outcomes for pupils and is able to challenge the school's performance. Some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and rigorous monitoring of teachers' expectations rightly remains a priority.

The school effectively raises pupils' awareness of risks and how to handle them. Arrangements for safeguarding and protecting pupils are applied carefully, although the need for some minor improvements was highlighted during the inspection.

Leaders and managers understand their local community and the groups of pupils served by the school, and monitor some indicators of equality. Some good work is done in partnership with other agencies to engage parents and carers and to overcome obstacles to learning. However, leaders recognise that the school could do more to work in partnership with parents and carers, to value cultural differences and to support and monitor the progress of the few pupils who speak English as an additional language. Plans to improve community cohesion are being developed.

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The school's leaders and managers have made satisfactory progress in dealing with the issues raised by the previous inspection. In particular, the dynamic and well-focused deputy headteacher has rapidly transformed the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. During the absence of the headteacher the school is running smoothly under the calm and purposeful direction of this leader. The staff show firm support for the direction the school is taking. Staff absence, which has been higher than is typical elsewhere, has improved in the current term. New appointments made to the senior team are planned to bring additional expertise to the school in the next school year. This team has agreed a clear and ambitious action plan, based on a well informed self-evaluation, with which the inspection in large part agreed.

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	3
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

The outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit are satisfactory. On entry to the Nursery class their skills are generally lower than is expected for their age, particularly in language, personal and social skills. By the time they enter Year 1 skills remain below average. However, the high priority placed on personal, social and emotional development leads to better-than-expected outcomes for these aspects. This supports children's next steps in learning well. Recent school assessments show accelerated progress by children in the Nursery as a result of the significant improvements made to provision since the last inspection. Children feel very safe and parents and carers agree.

Major improvements to resources both indoors and out, and to staff expertise, mean that the provision is now satisfactory. Welfare requirements are met. Teachers' use of assessment information now ensures each child's needs and interests are met, but this improvement is recent and has yet to have strong impact on outcomes. Children's

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excitement was tangible as they felt the heartbeat of a chick in their hand or used 'The Magic Key' to create a story. Such fascinating experiences are creating an appetite for learning. The school is aware that the next step is to ensure all adults have good skills to exploit opportunities for talk and early writing.

Leadership of the setting is satisfactory overall although some aspects are good. Strategies introduced, such as multi-sensory mathematics teaching, are monitored well and have had a positive impact on Nursery children's progress. High priority has been given to developing partnerships with parents and carers, whose comments to inspectors are positive. Some very challenging behaviour by a few children is now managed well by caring, well-trained adults. The consistent use of an effective behaviour management strategy has eliminated the need for exclusions. However, the good practice is not yet sufficiently embedded to produce a consistently good provision and better outcomes.

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 number of questionnaires returned by parents and carers was smaller than normal. The large majority of responses agreed or strongly agreed with every statement, indicating satisfaction with the work of the school. There were positive comments about the care given by staff and the enthusiasm for learning that teachers have conveyed to pupils. In questionnaires and in discussion parents and carers indicated high approval for recent changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

When there were concerns, these centred on the management of behaviour, help with children's progress and the leadership of the school. Inspectors found that the school has taken appropriate action to manage more effectively some disruptive and unacceptable behaviour by pupils. Staff have been trained to use a particular behaviour management strategy and leaders are checking to ensure that it is used consistently by every adult in school. The school is aware that there is further to go, but inspectors saw improvement. Although the school sends home regular reports, some parents and carers would like to have a better understanding of their children's progress and how they can help them. This issue was discussed with the acting headteacher, who explained that there are suitable plans to make reports clearer for pupils, parents and carers, to ensure consistently effective marking and to develop a closer partnership with parents in Key Stages 1 and 2. The understandable concerns about leadership and continuity in teaching were considered by inspectors, who concluded that present arrangements are satisfactory and that the school has the capacity to improve further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Spring 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 273 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	52	12	41	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	52	14	48	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	38	14	48	3	10	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	45	13	45	1	3	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	7	24	19	66	3	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	24	17	59	5	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	34	18	62	1	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)	8	28	19	66	2	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	31	18	62	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	10	20	69	3	10	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	14	19	66	3	10	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	5	17	17	59	6	21	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	38	14	48	3	10	1	3

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.



12 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Spring Primary School, Leeds, LS13 4EH

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspectors who visited your school recently. I am writing to let you know that Park Spring School no longer needs a 'notice to improve'. It now gives you a satisfactory education. The Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly. The school's leaders have kept a closer eye on how well the school works. As a result, as you told us, lessons are usually enjoyable and interesting, and you now have more helpful advice on how to do better. We saw that pupils make at least the expected progress. Your attainment by the time you leave the school is average, although you tend to do a bit less well in writing. You feel really safe and understand how to keep yourselves healthy: these features are good. However, attendance is below average and behaviour is only satisfactory.

To improve further, we have told the school that it needs to take the following steps.

- Improve your achievement by helping you all to make good progress, particularly in writing.
- Ensure teaching meets all your needs by checking what you already know and matching teaching to your particular learning needs and providing good opportunities for you to learn on your own.
- Keep on checking how well everyone is working and that teachers expect the very best from all of you.

You have a big part to play in achieving this improvement, by making sure your attendance is as good as possible and by behaving considerately.

Yours sincerely

Susan Bowles

Her Majesty's Inspector

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