

# Park Hill Junior School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 125552             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Warwickshire       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 381088             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 04–05 October 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Graham Sims        |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Junior                                   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                                |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7–11                                     |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                    |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 236                                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                       |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Ed Hart                                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Liz Bradbury (Executive Headteacher)     |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 19 May 2009                              |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Parkfield Drive<br>Kenilworth<br>CV8 2JJ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01926 855974                             |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01926 855974                             |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | park.hill@ksn.org.uk                     |

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|---------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          | 7–11             |
| <b>Inspection date(s)</b> | 4–5 October 2011 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>  | 381088           |

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited every class to gain an overview of the quality of teaching and learning, and then observed 17 lessons taught by 10 different teachers. The inspection team had meetings with the school's leaders and all teaching staff, groups of pupils and representatives of the federated governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked in detail at pupils' books and a range of documentation. They scrutinised data on pupils' attainment. The inspectors received and analysed the responses to questionnaires from 91 parents and carers, 100 pupils and 14 staff.

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

- How consistent is the teaching across all classes, and how effectively do teachers plan to meet the needs, abilities and interests of the pupils, particularly of the more-able pupils?
- How effective are the school's assessment procedures in identifying next steps in learning and helping pupils to know what they need to do to improve?
- How effective is the school in helping pupils to become truly independent and enterprising learners who use their initiative well to promote their own learning?
- What impact is the hard federation with the infant school having on pupils' achievement?

## Information about the school

Park Hill is an average-sized junior school. There are two classes per year group for pupils from Years 3 to 6. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are below average. Most pupils are White British. Around 13% come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds; around 5% speak English as an additional language, although none are at an early stage of speaking English.

After two-and-a-half years with an acting headteacher and difficulties in recruiting a substantive headteacher, the governing body entered into a hard federation with Thorns Community Infant School in January 2011. A new governing body was established, incorporating new governors and those who had served on the governing bodies of the two federated schools. An executive headteacher was appointed and took up her post to oversee the running of both schools in September 2011. The day-to-day management of Park Hill is overseen by a head of teaching and learning who was previously the school's acting deputy headteacher.

The school holds the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards.

**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

Park Hill Junior School provides pupils with a good education. Pupils' attainment is high when they enter Year 3 and high when they leave at the end of Year 6. Good, methodical teaching helps pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Pupils enjoy school, as indicated by their attendance, which is high compared with that of other schools nationally. They feel very safe within the school's caring environment and develop an excellent understanding of issues which might affect their safety. They also have an excellent understanding of what they need to do to lead healthy lifestyles. Most pupils make sensible choices of food and participate enthusiastically in the very wide range of sporting activities which are on offer, as reflected in the school's Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. They have good social skills and are well prepared for the move to secondary school.

It would not take a great deal to turn Park Hill into an outstanding school. Some aspects of the school already point the way forward. For example, the school provides an excellent range of interesting, imaginative special events and extra-curricular activities which engage and motivate pupils. However, the curricular plans which determine the day-to-day teaching do not reflect a similar willingness to try new ideas, to link the teaching of different subjects together and to be more adventurous. In some areas, pupils are given excellent opportunities to use their initiative and independence, and they flourish as a result. Many of the extra-curricular activities, for example, are run by the pupils themselves and attract widespread interest. Within lessons, however, the work is more regimented and pupils do not have enough opportunity to undertake extended independent research or engage in larger-scale collaborative projects. The marking of pupils' work is regular; it normally points out to pupils what they have done well and gives them something to improve. However, feedback, orally and in writing, is not always critical enough to challenge and extend pupils, particularly the more able, to move to an even higher level.

The school has been through a difficult period and there have been a number of leadership changes since the previous inspection. However, staff, the governing body and pupils have shown resilience in maintaining high standards throughout. Entering into federation with the nearby infant school marks a new phase in the school's development. The governing body has dealt skilfully with this major change and shown a strong determination to move the school forward and make the best use of the collective expertise available to the two schools. This determination, the maintenance of high standards and improvements over the last two years,

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particularly to the quality of the teaching, show that there is good capacity for further improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide greater challenge, particularly for the more-able pupils, by:
  - making better use of assessment information to ensure that teaching and the curriculum take into consideration pupils' levels of attainment, individual needs, interests and aspirations rather than always following pre-determined schemes of work
  - providing more opportunities for cross-curricular work which will enable pupils to explore topics in greater depth and to apply their literacy and numeracy skills more thoroughly and in different contexts
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to exercise their independence and initiative through research, self-directed projects and collaborative tasks
  - providing more critical feedback orally in class and when marking pupils' books, and allowing pupils time to review, refine and improve their work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Outcomes for pupils and their academic achievement are outstanding because their attainment is high, they make consistently good progress and some aspects of their personal development are outstanding. Almost all pupils reach the expected level for their age in English and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6, and many exceed this level. Despite a dip in the English results in 2011, the school's results have been well above the national average every year since the previous inspection. The few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified, targeted additional support is provided and they are given plenty of opportunity to have their horizons stretched by working alongside higher-attaining pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress and attain high standards.

Within the classroom, pupils apply themselves well to their learning. They are industrious, work diligently at the tasks set by their teachers and engage well in discussions. Working cooperatively with a partner is a feature of many lessons. Teachers get pupils to change their 'talk partners' on a regular basis, and this helps them to develop good social skills and to learn how to work collaboratively. Pupils generally enjoy learning and participate enthusiastically in lessons. Occasionally, however, some pupils lose interest, particularly when the work is not challenging enough. Pupils' behaviour in the classroom and around the school is often exemplary. Pupils are polite, courteous and considerate, although responses to the questionnaires indicate that some pupils, parents and carers feel that behaviour is not always of the highest standard.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy undertaking responsibilities, such as organising charitable fund-raising events, helping at break and lunchtimes or preparing for

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assembly. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not have as many opportunities available to them. Pupils’ involvement within the local community is increasing and they have a good awareness of life in other parts of the world as teachers make good use of contacts in other countries. Displays around the school, for example, indicate good awareness of aspects of life in Japan and India, and pupils have gained insight, through correspondence, into the life of troops in Afghanistan.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 1        |
| 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        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 1        |
| <b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

## How effective is the provision?

Occasionally, the teaching is outstanding, as observed, for example, in a history lesson in Year 6 in which pupils were learning about the life and death of Tutankhamun and competed with each other to see who could find out the most about the Egyptian pharaoh. Hallmarks of this teaching were: the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher, which inspired pupils’ interest and made them eager to find out more; an urgency of pace, which encouraged excellent progress; and real challenge, which stretched all, but particularly the more-able pupils. The quality of the teaching in most lessons is good and leads to good rather than outstanding progress. Teachers are methodical in their planning, use a good variety of teaching methods and ensure that pupils work diligently. However, not enough notice is taken of the fact that many pupils are already working at a higher level than is expected for their age or that some pupils are capable of moving forward at a much faster pace. This is particularly noticeable in the few lessons which are satisfactory, where the teacher spends too much time talking and does not move pupils on to the next stage of learning quickly enough.

<sup>1</sup> 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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Although there are many excellent features of the wider curriculum, the curricula for individual subjects, while thorough, are still heavily reliant on schemes of work which are planned for pupils working at an average level and not for higher-attaining pupils. The creativity, cross-curricular activity and excellent opportunities for extended independent work, which are evident in some of the themed days or the arts week which the school organises, do not feature as strongly as they could in the normal curriculum. Teachers are moving in this direction, however. An experiment with a different approach to homework, which started in Year 3, has now been adopted in Years 4 and 5. Pupils are given the challenge of researching a question or topic and recording their learning in different ways on two pages of a learning log. Some of the resultant work, even if aided by parents and carers, is excellent and hints at wells of creativity and interest which are not always tapped in day-to-day lessons.

The fact that pupils are happy in school, feel very safe and respond positively to their learning and the responsibilities they are given, indicates that there is good care, guidance and support. This is seen particularly in the attention given to the small proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, and those who speak English as an additional language. All of these pupils are well-integrated members of the school who achieve well.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The governing body has a good understanding of the school, and is providing a good level of challenge based on careful tracking of pupils' progress. The newly federated governing body and its two predecessor bodies have been driving forces in implementing significant change through the establishment of a federation with the nearby infant school. This change is addressing some of the concerns expressed by parents with regard to communication and consistency of practice. The governing body is also keen to strengthen provision in both schools by developing a smoother transition from infants to juniors and making best use of the wide range of expertise available in the two schools. However, the new arrangements and the new leadership structure have not been in place long enough yet to have had a significant impact on improving pupils' achievement. Nevertheless, the early signs are encouraging as there is, already, closer liaison between the schools and there is a

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willingness and determination to make the federation work well.

Prior to the appointment of the executive headteacher, the school was emerging well from a period of leadership instability. Initiatives put in place by the previous acting headteacher have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and staff have become open to new ideas. Within the current senior leadership team, there is a good understanding of how the school can improve and a determination to make changes which will result in a more creative curriculum and provide even greater stimulus for high-achieving pupils.

The school has good partnership links with other schools in the town which provide additional learning opportunities for pupils and support for staff. The school ensures there is equality of opportunity for all pupils by identifying any particular needs at an early stage and providing additional support for pupils whenever necessary. The school is effective in tackling discrimination; pupils are introduced to a range of different cultures and beliefs and there have been no racial incidents for the last few years. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern. A potential safety risk is about to be rectified through the construction of a security fence between the school’s field and the car parking area. Although the governing body would like to see greater involvement within the local community, the school has been effective in promoting community cohesion. There is good provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and there are good international and local links which help pupils to understand their place in society and the wider world.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>2</b> |

**Views of parents and carers**



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A large majority of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are pleased with their experience of Park Hill Junior School. The overwhelming majority say that their children enjoy school, that the school keeps them safe and encourages a healthy lifestyle. One parent commented, 'We feel that on many fronts the school goes the extra mile in residential trips, school day trips, bringing a variety of subjects alive, and a great choice of extra-curricular activities,' a view which resonates with the inspection team's findings with regard to this excellent aspect of the curriculum.

Although a few parents and carers commented that their children are fully challenged, some said that their children are coasting, and the responses to the questionnaire indicate that a very small minority of other parents and carers feel the same. The inspection team found that the overall rate of progress in the school is good, but that there is not always enough challenge, particularly for the more-able pupils. The provision of greater challenge has been identified as the key issue for improvement. A few parents and carers said that they are pleased that Thorns Infant School and Park Hill Junior School have entered into a hard federation. Part of the governing bodies' motivation for this change was to improve consistency of practice and communication with parents and carers and between the two schools, both of which were mentioned as concerns by a small number of parents and carers. The inspection team feels the school is addressing these issues, although the federation and the executive headteacher have not been operating long enough for their impact to be felt yet.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Hill 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 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 236 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 48             | 53 | 41    | 45 | 2        | 2  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 46             | 51 | 43    | 47 | 2        | 2  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress   | 21             | 24 | 52    | 60 | 7        | 8  | 1                 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 19             | 22 | 46    | 52 | 12       | 14 | 3                 | 3 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 20             | 22 | 54    | 61 | 8        | 9  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning  | 16             | 18 | 52    | 57 | 16       | 18 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 28             | 31 | 57    | 63 | 1        | 1  | 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) | 33             | 37 | 42    | 47 | 5        | 6  | 1                 | 1 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs  | 22             | 24 | 49    | 54 | 8        | 9  | 2                 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 24             | 28 | 52    | 60 | 5        | 6  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 13             | 14 | 53    | 59 | 12       | 13 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 33             | 37 | 46    | 52 | 4        | 4  | 1                 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school   | 39             | 43 | 42    | 47 | 7        | 8  | 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      | 43  | 47   | 10           | 0          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 46   | 42           | 6          |
| Secondary schools    | 14  | 36   | 41           | 9          |
| Sixth forms          | 15  | 42   | 41           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 30  | 48   | 19           | 3          |
| Pupil referral units | 14  | 50   | 31           | 5          |
| All schools          | 10  | 44   | 39           | 6          |

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| 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.**



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Park Hill Junior School, Kenilworth CV8 2JJ**

My colleagues and I enjoyed visiting your school and seeing what happens in your lessons. We should like to thank all of you for making us feel welcome and to give particular thanks to those who took the time to share your views with us. Your conversations with us, and the responses to the questionnaire which many of you completed, show that you enjoy school and are pleased with the way the staff help you to learn. We think Park Hill is a good school. These are our main findings.

- You achieve extremely well, particularly in English and mathematics, and many of you reach standards which are above those expected for your age.
- You behave well in class and around the school, and you cooperate particularly well when you are asked to work with a partner.
- Good teaching and regularly marked work help you to make good progress, although sometimes your teachers do not challenge you enough.
- You enjoy a wide range of interesting special events and additional activities, but the richness seen in these activities is not always evident in lessons.
- The staff look after you well; you respond with excellent attendance, you feel very safe in school and you heed advice to lead very healthy lifestyles.
- There have been some important changes in the way your school is led, but the school's leaders and governing body have good ideas for improving it.

To help you to make even better progress in your work, we have asked the school's leaders to look more carefully at the work they plan for you in lessons and to consider ways in which work from different subjects can be combined to make your lessons even more interesting. We have also asked your teachers to be more challenging when they give you feedback and mark your work, and to give you more opportunities to work independently and use your initiative. You can help by responding positively to any new initiatives, and by developing a determination to make your work the very best that it can be. We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Park Hill and that you will make even better progress in the future.

Yours sincerely

Graham Sims  
Lead inspector

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