

Parkside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124197
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380831
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Kath Campbell

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Gibbons
Headteacher	Annette Jones
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 15 lessons taught by seven teachers. The headteacher joined two of the inspectors for three lesson observations. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They also talked informally to parents and carers. They observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation, including information about pupils' progress, child protection and safeguarding procedures. They looked at pupils' past and present work, and scrutinised 89 questionnaires completed by pupils and 47 by parents and carers.

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

- Are all groups of pupils, particularly boys, the more-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, making as much progress as they should?
- Is the current quality of teaching consistently good enough to ensure good learning for all pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics?
- Can the school show the impact of curriculum changes on learning, particularly of boys?
- Has greater stability enabled all leaders and managers and the governing body to drive through improvement at a fast enough pace?

Information about the school

Parkside is a smaller than average-sized school that serves a residential area on the outskirts of the town. Most pupils are from a White British background and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is lower than average. In recent years there have been several changes of headteacher. The school has gained many awards in recognition of its work, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Silver Sing Up awards. Smilies Nursery is situated on the school site. This facility is not managed by the governing body and is inspected and reported on separately.

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

Parkside is a satisfactory and improving school. The school has a warmth and friendliness that greatly enhances pupils' enjoyment. The headteacher has successfully created a good climate for learning and has brought greater stability to the school after a period of considerable staffing changes. There are notable strengths in the care, guidance and support provided for pupils. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school. Parents and carers rightly value the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage and hold the school in high regard. Appreciative comments, such as, 'I find the school, friendly, approachable, supportive and caring,' aptly sum up their satisfaction.

Pupils typically reach average standards by the time they leave. After a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils, including those with special needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. Writing is a whole-school area for development. Recent initiatives, such as Talking for Writing, are establishing a greater enthusiasm for writing, particularly among younger boys. Strategies to increase the proportion of pupils reaching average and higher levels in mathematics are also having a positive impact on standards. There is secure evidence in pupils' current work to show that attainment is rising, particularly in Key Stage 1. The picture is more variable in Key Stage 2, partly because initiatives have not yet had a full impact on the standards of older pupils. Actions taken by the school, such as the introduction of improved tracking systems, are making inroads into a legacy of underachievement. Occasionally, more-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should, because not enough is expected of them in lessons.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but there is not enough good teaching to promote consistently good learning. Sometimes, in teachers' quest to make activities exciting, the focus on what pupils are learning gets lost. In some classes, pupils are involved in assessing their own levels of understanding. However, there is a lack of consistency. Marking is not always used effectively to show pupils how to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The introduction of a more creative curriculum is starting to motivate pupils, particularly boys, but has some way further to go to have a full impact on standards. Strong links with partner institutions, such as a local special school, greatly enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning. Opportunities for pupils to develop basic skills in other subjects are a more integral part of learning, but are not consistently provided. A strength of the good care, guidance and support is the wealth of opportunities provided to support pupils and families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

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Through the drive and determination of staff, combined with good quality local authority support, the school has moved forward at a satisfactory pace since its previous inspection. The school is reflective and honest in self-evaluating its performance. Leaders have an accurate picture of what needs to be done, although they do not always measure the impact of initiatives on learning with enough precision. The governing body is well organised and supportive, but does not have enough insight into whether standards are high enough. Subject leaders do not have a prominent enough role in monitoring performance. Taking all this into account, particularly the tighter tracking systems and improvements brought about by greater stability, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Up to 40% of schools whose 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?

- Raise standards, particularly of boys, in writing throughout the school by:
 - extending the range of opportunities within the curriculum that are specifically designed to engage the interest of boys as well as girls
 - involving pupils more in assessing their own levels of understanding
 - developing boys' interest in writing at an early stage so that they sustain an enthusiasm as they move through the school
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in different subjects.

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons
 - developing a more consistent approach towards marking so that pupils know whether they are making enough progress and what they need to do next to improve their work
 - focusing with greater precision on the day-to-day quality of learning of individuals, especially the more-able pupils
 - making full use of assessment information to ensure that all groups of pupils are consistently challenged in their work.

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the monitoring role of subject leaders so that they have a clear overview of standards and progress
 - ensuring that monitoring focuses with greater precision on measuring the impact of initiatives on learning outcomes
 - providing governors with more opportunities to gather first-hand information about the work of the school so that they know whether standards are high enough.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly at levels expected of children at this age. The strong focus on improving reading and writing skills right from the start has been invaluable in providing secure foundations for future development. In Key Stages 1 and 2, progress is accelerating because teachers use assessment information with greater precision than in the past. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory overall, but often good during small group activities because one-to-one support is effectively targeted. Good quality teamwork and engaging activities do much to promote effective learning. A good example of this was seen in a successful Year 4 lesson where pupils were learning about the poems of Christina Rossetti. The teamwork of the teacher and teaching assistant was of high quality; the pace of learning was brisk and tasks were challenging. Boys and girls of all abilities enjoyed each other’s success.

Pupils of all ages are proud of their school and have a well-developed sense of what constitutes feeling safe. The behaviour of most pupils is good in lessons. At other times, it is not always of the same high standard. Some parents and carers express concerns about behaviour. Although there has been a decline in the number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour, particularly at lunchtimes, additional initiatives are in hand to bring about further improvement. Pupils have a secure understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, but far too many make unhealthy choices in their lunchboxes. Pupils’ contribution to the school and wider community is demonstrated well by their involvement in fund-raising activities and the choir’s performances at prestigious events. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities to develop pupils’ creative talents through, for example, the school’s recent creative partnership work are good and greatly enhance cultural development. However, not all pupils are sufficiently well-prepared for life in a multi-cultural society. By the time pupils leave, they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

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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The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Although there are pockets of good practice, there is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Teachers' planning is detailed, but does not always pay sufficient attention to ensuring activities provide the right level of challenge. Where teaching is at its best, staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In a few lessons, however, teachers do not involve support staff enough and pupils sit passively while teachers talk for too long. Day-to-day assessment is used well in some classes. In others, it does not build sufficiently on pupils' past learning.

In discussion, pupils greatly appreciate the curricular opportunities on offer and levels of enjoyment are high. The provision for information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection and it is now a more integral part of learning. Recent initiatives, such as building better learners, are starting to increase pupils' confidence and independence. Innovative extra-curricular clubs, including a popular film club, make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Residential visits to places, such as Laches Wood Outdoor Education Centre, develop good social skills. A more creative curricular approach is being established but is not embedded firmly enough to have a measurable impact on pupils' achievement.

Pupils' welfare is given a high priority. Parents and carers are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after. Older pupils care about younger ones, successfully developing strong bonds of friendship. Good links with Smilies Nursery and the local high school help ensure a smooth transition into and out of school. The school works closely with outside agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Some of the support for individual pupils is of particularly high quality. As a result of very effective monitoring of attendance, there has been a sharp decline in the number of persistent absentees.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher successfully instils the drive and ambition needed to raise standards. The level of satisfaction among staff is high because teaching and support staff feel valued as individuals. There is an inclusive approach towards leadership and management. The introduction of team leaders into the management structure has strengthened the school’s ability to monitor the pastoral and academic development of individual pupils more carefully. The school development plan is a valuable working document and is increasingly underpinned by better analysis of data about pupils’ achievement. The governing body oversees areas such as finance and safeguarding well. Safeguarding procedures are very secure, meet requirements and follow good practice. Child protection training is of particularly good quality. In many respects the school is a strongly inclusive community, but the fact that it has only recently started to identify potential underachievement of pupils by monitoring the performance of different groups means that equality of opportunity is satisfactory, rather than good. The school tackles discrimination effectively through for example, pupils’ shared involvement with their friends from the special school. Every pupil has the same opportunities to participate in school life and make a contribution. Community cohesion is strong at a local level. This is a happy, harmonious community. At a national and international level, although some links with other schools are developing, these are not fully established.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development establishes firm

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foundations for future development. The school offers a wealth of opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in their children’s education right from the start. Well-established routines ensure that children settle quickly. They develop a good early understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. At the time of the inspection, despite only being in school for a few weeks, children were comfortable with adults and confident to explore and investigate. Learning is fun and children thoroughly enjoy using the outdoor learning area when, for example, working on their construction site activities. Staff use the outdoor space well but the layout of the building makes it difficult to supervise children working in different areas and this sometimes restricts children’s freedom of choice to work indoors or outside. There is a good balance between independent and adult-led activities. Teaching is of good quality and is at its most effective when children are working in small groups. Teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistant is strong. Careful observations provide valuable insight into the progress of individual children. Assessment information contained in children’s learning journey books is of good quality. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Staff have a firm understanding of what is working well and what needs further work, share the same vision and have a clear direction for improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A lower than average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers informally to gain a wider view and found a generally high level of satisfaction. Those that replied to the questionnaire were unanimous in their view that their children enjoy school, that the school keeps their children safe, helps them to have a healthy lifestyle and prepares their children well for the future.

Some parents and carers expressed concerns about the way in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. There were also a few concerns that tended to be of an individual nature. The lead inspector followed up the matters raised. With regard to behaviour, the inspection team found that there was some variation between pupils’ behaviour in lessons and at other times. The school recognises that, although there has been improvement in behaviour outside lessons, the organisation of lunchtime activities requires further work and is an ongoing area for development.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parkside 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	68	15	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	68	15	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	22	47	23	49	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	51	21	45	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	55	20	43	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	26	55	17	36	4	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	49	24	51	0	0	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)	24	51	23	49	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	21	45	25	53	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	45	18	38	7	15	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	47	23	49	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	28	60	18	38	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	30	64	16	34	1	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	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).

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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkside Primary School, Stafford, ST16 1TH

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. You were helpful, friendly and polite. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at some of the work you have done in your books. You told us that you enjoy school a lot. That is why your attendance is so good. You get on well with the adults who teach you and help you in class.

You go to a satisfactory school that is improving all the time. There are many things of which you should be very proud. Most of you make at least satisfactory progress because you try hard to do your best. The children in your Reception class make good progress. You say you feel very safe and know who to go to if you are worried. You tell us that you really enjoy your visits to the local special school.

We have asked your school to improve some things. Most of you, particularly the boys, are getting better at writing but some of you need more help to do even better. We want you to enjoy your work so that you feel confident to write without help. We have asked for you to be given more time to practise your writing skills in different subjects. Some teaching is good and we want all the teaching to be as good as this, so that you can all make good progress. We want your teachers to let you know how well you are doing and how to improve each time they mark your work. Your headteacher, some of the teachers and governors are going to check more often on whether you are making enough progress.

Keep up that good attendance and help your teachers by listening hard and always trying to do your best.

My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Kath Campbell
Lead inspector

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