

# Park Street Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117452
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379421
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Warboys

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ruth Ward
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jenny Russell (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Branch Road Park Street St Albans AL2 2LX
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	14–15 November 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons taught by eight teachers. In addition, they carried out a range of observations to see the school at work and looked at samples of pupils' work from Year 1 to Year 6. They held meetings with members of the senior leadership team, school forum, Eco council, other groups of pupils, teaching staff and members of the governing body. Safeguarding policies, improvement planning and other documentation were scrutinised. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 119 parents and carers, 109 pupils and 15 staff.

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

- What are the current attainment levels and rates of progress of all pupil groups, particularly of boys in English?
- What is the impact of the school's provision on the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- To what extent is the curriculum innovative, imaginative and inspiring?
- How effective are current leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the impact of school improvement strategies on outcomes for pupils?

## Information about the school

The school is of average size and, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, has a part-time Nursery class and a Reception class. Most pupils come from the immediate locality but a small minority live in the surrounding areas. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Their needs include autistic spectrum disorder and speech, language, physical, behaviour and other specific learning difficulties. Of these pupils, a well below average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. Average proportions of pupils come from minority ethnic heritages and speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times during the year is below that normally found.

The school is undergoing a period of change following the retirement of a long-serving headteacher. Currently, the school is being led and managed by the deputy headteacher, as acting headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up her post in January 2012.

**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**

**3**

## Main findings

Park Street provides its pupils with a good education. Their attainment is above average and rates of progress are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is high and this is a key contributory factor in pupils' learning. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at levels broadly typical for their age. They make a good start to their education and enter Year 1 at levels above those expected in all areas of learning. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, reaching levels that are significantly above national averages overall. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment levels remain above average, though not significantly so. This is because rates of progress in Key Stage 2 are not as consistent and there is too little challenge for higher-attaining pupils in some lessons.

The school's curriculum leads to pupils' good personal and academic outcomes. Recent curriculum innovation has led to increased opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills in other subjects so that learning takes place in a relevant context. The curriculum now features theme days and weeks more frequently and there is much greater use of outdoor areas. These recent changes have engaged, motivated and inspired pupils, and have encouraged more interesting writing, particularly among boys. For example, pupils in Year 5 were inspired by the work of an artist to write poems by using leaves and other natural materials outdoors. Pupils' engage well with the variety of interesting learning in lessons, particularly when tasks are of a practical nature. They are especially motivated when class teachers use information and communication technology in lesson introductions.

Good levels of care, guidance and support are evident for every child and are a strength of the school. Partnerships with other professionals ensure that those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are well supported. This support has a positive impact on their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' contributions in lessons are valued and this helps to foster a positive, learning ethos throughout the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they show respect for each other's differences. Adults and pupils relate well to each other and these constructive relationships contribute well to pupils' personal development and well-being.

The school has made good progress on the areas for improvement from the previous inspection report. The temporary senior leadership team has flourished professionally under the leadership of the acting headteacher. The school's self-evaluation procedures are comprehensive and are linked to its rigorous programme of

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monitoring and evaluation strategies. The governing body knows the school's strengths and areas for development well and these form the basis of meetings with staff and for governors' visits to the school. Consequently, the current school leaders, including governors, have continued to drive the school forward. For example, the quality of teaching has improved as a result of coaching strategies used with staff at all levels. Although the school has continued to develop and leaders have invigorated staff with enthusiasm, the temporary nature of the school's leadership has limited strategic planning and reflects a satisfactory capacity to sustain continued improvement. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory and pupils are fully involved in the school and local communities. Links with other national and international communities are less well developed.

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

- Ensure rates of progress are consistent throughout the school, especially in Key Stage 2 by:
  - increasing the challenge for higher-attaining pupils in lessons
  - extending pupils' active engagement with their learning to all lessons
  - building on recent curriculum developments so that pupils apply newly learnt skills in other subjects throughout the school year.
  
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - setting out a clear strategic development plan soon as is practicable once the new head teacher is in post
  - evaluating the effectiveness of the school's actions to bring about more consistent progress in Key Stage 2
  - establishing national and international links to promote community cohesion more effectively.

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

Attainment is consistently above national averages in all subjects. The good progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been built on in Key Stage 1, but slows in Key Stage 2 where progress rates are inconsistent. This is mainly because, in some lessons, pupils are not actively enough involved in learning and because higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress. In addition, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress. This is due to the school's effective use of assessment information and carefully tailored provision so that it meets their specific needs well, both in small group work and in lessons.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy learning and this is evident from their positive attitudes and good behaviour in lessons. Predominantly, pupils are polite, friendly and considerate towards each other. Pupils say that they feel safe and are confident that their issues will be dealt with swiftly and effectively

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by staff. Pupils have a well developed knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and many of them make healthy food choices, regularly drink the water that is available to them and keep active at break times. Sports-related lunch-time and after-school clubs are well attended. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and this is also reflected in their consistently high attendance rates. They are well prepared for the next step in their education because of the support they receive at times of transition, which helps them to feel confident and settle quickly into their new environment.

Pupils are fully involved with the school and local community. They enjoy taking on various roles and responsibilities within school and being involved in making decisions about their school life. Pupils take part in a range of school, community and social events. They regularly link with senior citizens, singing and performing music. Representatives of the school attended a Remembrance Service in the village. Their behaviour in the local community is well-regarded. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show fascination and enthusiasm in learning about the world around them and they participate enthusiastically in sporting, artistic and cultural activities. Close links with the local church are evident and pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of a variety of religious festivals and cultural diversity within the school and local community. Their knowledge and understanding of wider national and international communities is less well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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>

<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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## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall, outstanding at times and improving. Class teachers have high expectations and pupils make the most rapid progress when they are actively involved, learning for themselves how to solve problems through exploration and discovery. Teaching and learning styles are varied, tasks are carefully structured and adults provide good role models for pupils, particularly in writing. This good practice is less consistent in Key Stage 2, however. In the best lessons, teachers’ planning clearly indicates appropriate learning activities for a range of abilities. Adults then adapt their plans, taking into account what the children already know so that learning is adjusted to meet pupils’ needs more fully. In some lessons, however, pupils spend too long listening to explanations and instructions from adults, which limits the pace of learning. Marking in pupils’ books provides them with praise and encouragement about what they have done well and what steps they need to take to improve their work.

The recent increase in the number of opportunities for pupils to apply newly acquired literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects is having a positive impact on pupils’ progress. It is progressively leading to greater levels of engagement and enthusiasm towards learning, particularly for boys. This is because activities are becoming more relevant and meaningful to them. Pupils enjoy the wide range of visits and visitors which enrich and extend the curriculum on offer and they appreciate learning from first-hand experiences and practical activities.

The school is a caring community and support for its pupils is of good quality. Staff regularly monitor the progress of individuals and work in partnership with other agencies, parents and carers to support those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. A particular strength of the school’s provision is the comprehensive recording of assessment information. Intervention programmes and close links with families support pupils’ progress and result in their good personal development and welfare.

*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 acting headteacher and other leaders, including those in temporary roles, have

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quickly identified key areas for improvement based on a detailed analysis of pupils’ performance data and information from the school’s self-evaluation. The school’s interim plans set out changes to bring about improvements, but do not yet indicate a clear, longer-term vision for the school. Arrangements to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school’s actions are rigorous and comprehensive, although initiatives are at an early stage and it is too soon to assess their full impact on outcomes for pupils. Nevertheless, the senior leadership team has already improved the quality of teaching and learning as a result of peer coaching and a continuing professional development programme.

The governing body is well organised and governors use their wide range of talents effectively in an established committee structure. It regularly seeks and responds to the views of pupils and links closely with members of staff. Governors’ visits to the school are sharply focused on improvement priorities, systematically recorded and followed by appropriate action. Financial planning is a high priority as the age, condition and restrictions of the school building are an on-going challenge. Safeguarding arrangements are good. The school’s policies and procedures are comprehensive and implemented thoroughly. In addition, well established opportunities for pupils to express their concerns mean that they feel well supported. The school promotes equal opportunities well for all pupils and tackles any rare instances of discrimination effectively.

Parents and carers are highly positive about the work of the school and the leadership and management of the school’s interim leadership. Many, particularly the parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, describe the school as supportive and caring. Partnerships with businesses and sporting organisations extend and enrich the curriculum. The school has introduced a community cohesion policy, but has not yet evaluated its impact. Opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of the cultures and lifestyles of communities in other parts of the world, and to compare and contrast their own lives to those of others, are limited.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: 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>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in most areas of learning and many make exceptional progress in communication, language and literacy. This is also the case with problem solving, reasoning and number. Children are highly motivated and engaged as they choose what they do and develop skills well as a result. In the Nursery, children enthusiastically explore features of natural things in the wildlife area. In the Reception class, they develop language skills confidently through hospital role play, make skeletons using straws and use doctor’s bags for their instruments. Good relationships support learning and, as a result, children behave well. They develop good personal qualities, readily taking on responsibility and demonstrating an independent approach to a variety of activities. They show they can play equally well on their own and with each other.

Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good awareness of the learning, development and welfare needs of children. They have created a welcome, well organised and motivating environment. Thorough and regular observations and assessments guide high-quality planning which leads to very purposeful indoor and outdoor activities. Children’s needs are met by skilled interactions with adults who support and develop children’s thinking and experiences well. After an unsettled start to the term, through staffing issues, leaders have quickly established a cohesive team of adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children’s welfare has a strong focus. They are safe and secure and all safeguarding requirements are fully met. Partnerships with parents and carers are good, particularly the way in which they are invited to contribute to children’s learning journals. There is a clear focus on enabling children to make good or better progress and a thorough approach to improving provision. Consequently, the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

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An above average number of questionnaires were returned. Most were highly positive and satisfaction with the school was very strong. Almost all are happy with their children's experience of the school and think that it is led and managed effectively. They also say that their children are kept safe and enjoy school. A few parents and carers noted in comments and discussion that the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions and concerns, or deal with unacceptable behaviour well enough. Inspectors followed up concerns raised with the school. Inspection evidence indicates that the school currently offers a variety of ways in which parents and carers can share their views. Inspectors found that pupils have a good understanding of the stepped approach in school's behaviour policy and the overwhelming majority respond positively to adult guidance, rewards and sanctions.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Street Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 119 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	89	75	30	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	94	79	24	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	82	69	35	29	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	62	41	34	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	89	75	27	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	77	65	38	32	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	60	44	37	4	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)	69	58	42	35	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	72	61	41	34	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	56	41	34	6	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	65	55	44	37	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	75	63	40	34	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	88	74	30	25	0	0	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.**



16 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Park Street Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, St Albans, AL2 2LX**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, listening to your views and spending time in your lessons. We found that your school provides a good education. You clearly enjoy coming to school because you take very few days off and you learn well. You have good attitudes to learning. Most of you behave well and are polite, friendly and helpful towards each other. You know how to stay safe and how to live a healthy life. You take on lots of responsibilities in school and in your local community. Your acting headteacher and other senior teachers are doing a good job of running the school. They know the school well and know what they need to do to make it even better.

To help your school improve, I have asked the adults to make sure that you learn as well as you possibly can and that:

- those of you who find the work easy get plenty of challenging activities
- you spend more time being active in lessons
- you use your literacy and numeracy skills in as many different subjects as possible

We have also asked your new headteacher and the governors to work with the team of staff to plan ahead for what needs to be done to improve the school and to establish more links with other communities in the United Kingdom and beyond.

You can help by continuing to work hard, do your best every day and keep up the high attendance.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Warboys  
Lead inspector

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