

The Park Infant School

Orchard Close, Park Road, Mansfield, NG20 8JX

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully improved teaching and learning in the past two years. Pupils are now achieving well.
- Children are well behind with reading, writing and numeracy when they start Nursery. They mostly catch up by Year 2, at which point, their attainment is broadly average.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are especially skilled at assessing and tracking pupils' progress, and at adjusting learning in and between lessons to ensure it is at the right level.
- The school successfully teaches pupils to manage their own behaviour. As a result, behaviour is good, pupils feel safe in school and they report that any less-than-good behaviour is 'sorted quickly'.
- The way different subjects are organised and taught gives pupils a secure understanding of their place in the wider world, and prepares them well for junior school.
- Tough decisions had to be made to move the school forward quickly. They have been successful. The school leadership has the expertise and determination to take the school even further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing lags behind progress in reading and mathematics because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length.
- Leaders of different subjects are not fully confident of their role in checking teaching and learning.
- Pupils are not always clear about how teachers' marking helps them to do better.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 20 lessons, seven of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Play and lunchtimes were also observed.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, including those with management responsibilities, and the school's link adviser from the local authority.
- The views of 22 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. Other parents' views were sought at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. They also examined the work in pupils' books currently, and sampled work from last year.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Elizabeth Needham

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of average size. It is part of a federation, formed in 2010, with the junior school that shares the same site. It has three intakes to Nursery each year.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- A well above average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark, a Walk to School award, and an award for being a Health Promoting School.
- The school has its own breakfast club. It also has a nurture group for pupils at risk of not doing well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve writing by giving pupils more frequent opportunities to write at length in order to use the wide range of skills they learn daily.
- Help pupils to understand how to improve their learning by:
 - ensuring marking always shows pupils the next steps they need to take
 - checking that pupils have read and understood marking comments
 - in lessons, encouraging pupils to demonstrate what they have learned when the class reviews the 'I can' statements.
- Give middle managers the skills they need to carry out all aspects of monitoring, including lesson observations, more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The pupils' good progress ensures that, from low starting points in Nursery, attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2. The excellent progress Nursery children make, and the increasingly good grasp of early reading and communication skills they acquire in Nursery and Reception, gets them off to a good start. They begin Year 1 still below, but much closer to, where they are expected to be for their age.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is rising because pupils are making rapid progress in all three of these key areas of learning. Standards in mathematics overtook reading and writing in 2012, because pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems increased. The close working partnership between the two federated schools, and the staff's willingness to learn from each other, contributed to this.
- Pupils enjoy reading and particularly appreciate when a story is humorous. Their reading diaries provide a good link between home and school. They know the sounds that letters make, and how to break words down and put them back together again to help them read. They understand, for example, that the same sounds can have different combinations of letters, such as the 'a-i' in 'stair' and 'hair', and the 'a-r-e' in 'stare' and 'hare'.
- Pupils use punctuation well, although capital letters are still sometimes misplaced. Grammar, spelling and sentence construction are usually accurate. Opportunities for pupils to use these skills in longer pieces of writing are relatively limited. Therefore, although work from last year shows pupils learn to write for different audiences and purposes, attainment in writing is not rising as fast as attainment in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils at risk of falling behind, and pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, all make good progress. The support these pupils receive from other adults contributes to this, as does the meticulous tracking of each pupil's progress and the staff's accountability for it.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' thorough, well-annotated planning shows they consider carefully when to move learning on and when to consolidate it. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, for example, the meaning of 'more than' and 'less than' was re-visited because pupils had not fully grasped it the day before.
- In Nursery, learning is sharply focused, with recorded as well as written objectives. This means that all children, including those not yet able to read, can check what is expected of them. Written, recorded and photographic evidence is used well in planning to ensure learning moves on daily.
- Teaching in other year groups helps pupils understand what they are expected to learn by using, for example, 'I can' statements. However, when the statements are reviewed at the end of a lesson, staff do not always encourage pupils to show work that demonstrates their achievement so that they can learn from each other.
- The teaching of sounds that letters make is particularly good. Grouping pupils by ability across year groups ensures learning is at the right level for each child. The different approaches that

teachers and other adults use motivate pupils and make learning to read and write enjoyable. The smaller groups for pupils who need extra help enable those pupils to close gaps in their learning.

- Staff are usually very vigilant in ensuring that all pupils have an equal chance to learn. However, while they use paired work well to encourage talk and co-operation, they sometimes miss that one pupil is doing all the work, or takes over and does not give their partner time to develop their own learning.
- All work is marked but marking does not identify next steps in learning clearly or consistently enough. Pupils spoken to were unclear about what the teacher's comments meant or how marking might help them to improve the standard of their work.
- In lessons, staff question pupils effectively, drawing them into discussions that make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was observed in assembly and circle time, where pupils learned the importance of fairness, working together and accepting others, and perseverance in order to complete tasks.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and clear and effective systems for managing it. These are based on instilling in the pupils feelings of self-worth and confidence in their ability to do well. Pupils and their parents are very positive about behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and their good behaviour enables them to learn well.
- Parents report that the opportunity to talk to school about concerns as they arise benefits them and their children, and ensures issues are dealt with quickly. Pupils feel safe in school. The school takes every opportunity to teach them how to keep themselves safe in and out of school, by learning to manage risks, including, for example, when using the internet.
- Pupils report that disruptions to lessons because of poor behaviour are rare but they do happen sometimes. Pupils know about different kinds of bullying, talking about, for example, pushing, shoving, punching, and name-calling, and what to do about it. They say staff quickly sort things out for them should they have any concerns.
- The nurture group is very successful in helping pupils who find it difficult to get on with others to build positive relationships and manage their own behaviour. It is very much appreciated by parents and pupils. The 'Wise Owl' peg system, where pupils move their named pegs to green, or yellow, or red, is used well to instil self-discipline.
- Records from the 'Forest School' initiative show that, through learning indoors and out, pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem, and build good relationships with staff and with each other. All of this benefits their learning and develops in them a sense of fairness, equality and justice. These values are enhanced daily in the caring, supportive environment in which pupils work and play.
- Attendance is average. It is tracked well and parents are made very aware of the impact any absence has on their children's learning. The breakfast club has helped to improve punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school. Previous support, such as training in making every pupil a talker, has been effective in raising achievement, particularly in English.
- All leaders and managers are determined to improve the school further by providing pupils with an even better quality of education. Senior leaders carry out many rigorous checks that show them how well teachers are performing. They support teachers well in class and provide additional training, when necessary, to help them do better.
- Middle leaders have made a good start on checking progress in their subjects by examining pupils' work and teachers' planning. They have not yet had the opportunity to observe each other's lessons to give them first-hand information about how well their subjects are being taught in class. This limits their ability to influence improvement in class.
- The close working partnership between the infant and junior schools benefits pupils' learning by enabling good practice and training to be shared. Learning got off to a brisk start at the beginning of the autumn term because Nursery and Reception children and pupils in Year 1 were able to move up to their new classes before the end of the summer term. This was facilitated by pupils in Year 2 moving into Year 3 at that time.
- The progress of every pupil is carefully monitored. Regular discussions with senior leaders ensure that if a pupil is falling behind, extra help is quickly provided. Excellent use is made of pupil premium funding, for example, through employing and training young adults, whom the school calls 'apprentices', to work with small groups and individuals. As a result of these initiatives, pupils at risk of not performing well are making much better progress.
- Pupils are taught a broad and interesting range of subjects, many through well-chosen themes. They have many opportunities to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills in different contexts, indoors and out. Art, music, and initiatives such as the Forest School and visits to different places to learn about different faiths and cultures make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - knows the school well and is determined to help it become outstanding.
 - ensures finances are used well to improve the performance of teachers and pupils.
 - contributes effectively to accurate self-evaluation and school improvement planning.
 - is vigilant in checking that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are comprehensive and effective.
 - ensures that all pupils have equal opportunity to be involved in everything the school has to offer, and that any form of discrimination is eradicated.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112672
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401290

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Stockdale
Headteacher	Steve Hewitt-Richards
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2010
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