

Park Hill Primary School

Coronation Road, Wednesbury, WS10 0TJ

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

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.

- Good teaching helps all pupils, regardless of their ability or background, to make good progress over time in English and mathematics.
- From below average starting points, all groups of pupils are reaching average standards by the time they leave the school in Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils supported by the pupil premium, make good progress because adults help them to develop the skills they need.
- Pupils say they feel safe, secure and happy to come to school and their parents and carers agree. Pupils' attendance has much improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently above average.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good. They have positive attitudes to learning in lessons and they work and play well together.
- The headteacher, governing body and other leaders work well together to make sure that teaching is improving and that pupils achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to make sure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Although pupils make good progress during their time at the school, the standards they reach in reading, writing and mathematics remain similar to national averages.
- On occasion, teachers' explanations in lessons are too long and there is not enough time for pupils to learn and find out for themselves.
- There is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' handwriting and presentation skills throughout the school.
- Time for pupils to respond to teachers' marking of their work is inconsistent across the school.
- A few parents and carers feel that they do not receive enough information about the progress their children make.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body. In addition, the lead inspector talked with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play during break times.
- The school’s safeguarding policies, improvement plans, governing body meeting notes and records of pupils’ behaviour were reviewed. Inspectors also looked at the work pupils were doing in their books, and at records of their progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and 30 replies to the staff questionnaires. The views of parents and carers were sought at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Green

Additional Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Park Hill Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Below-average proportions of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and, of these, very few speak English as an additional language.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, additional government funding for particular groups, including children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- No pupils are educated in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The 'Early Birds' breakfast club and the 'Jungle Babies' toddlers group, managed by the governing body, operate on the school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school works in close partnership with a local cluster of schools known as the Wednesbury Learning Community Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and thereby raise pupils' attainment in reading, mathematics and, particularly in writing, by ensuring that all staff:
 - use time more effectively in all parts of lessons in order to increase opportunities for pupils to work on their own
 - devise a whole school approach to handwriting and encourage all pupils to take greater pride in the presentation of their work
 - give pupils more time to respond to teachers' marking of their work in English and mathematics so that they can practise and improve their skills.
- Strengthen the school's partnerships with parents and carers by increasing opportunities to share information with them about their children's progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes so that they enter Year 1 with skills that are typically expected. Adults constantly praise children and this helps to reinforce their learning. They provide interesting activities that help children to learn and develop new skills. For example during the inspection, children explored what happens to different objects when they are immersed in water. As a result, they learned new vocabulary such as, 'floating' and 'sinking' and begin to use them confidently and accurately.
- By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, the standards they reach in English and mathematics are similar to national averages. Their test results in 2012 showed that their attainment in writing was, on average, about a term behind that of reading and mathematics. However, work in pupils' books shows that their writing skills are now much closer to the levels expected for their age. This is because the school is successfully providing pupils with interesting activities that inspire them to write.
- All groups of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics year on year. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the work teachers set for them fills the gaps in their knowledge and skills. Good teaching and the extra support that pupils get in lessons help them to achieve well.
- Pupils' standards in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Attainment in reading is improving because there is a more consistent approach to teaching specific reading skills. Older pupils build on the good start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they learn the links between letters and the sounds they make and are taught more complex reading skills as they move through the school. Pupils are supported well by parents and carers who help their children to practise reading at home.
- Of the pupils who left the school in Year 6 in 2012, those who were eligible for free school meals, reached comparable levels in reading and mathematics to similar pupils nationally. They were about a term behind in writing. Year 6 eligible pupils were, on average, about two years behind others in their year group. Additional funding received by the school has been used effectively to provide extra help in lessons, small group work, after-school clubs, breakfast club, new reading books and computer technology. Recent checks of pupils' progress show that attainment gaps for these pupils currently in the school are closing rapidly.
- The 'Jungle Babies' toddler group, managed by the governing body, provides a good chance for parents and carers to play with their children and meet school staff. Children's enjoyment and involvement in these sessions helps them to socialise and prepare for starting school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching ensures that all pupils, including those who need extra help, make good progress and achieve well over time. Adults promote a positive climate for learning. In all lessons observed during the inspection, good relationships were evident. Adults consistently praise and encourage pupils for their contributions to class discussion and for their efforts. Teachers and other adults plan lessons together. This ensures that activities closely match pupils' different abilities. Adults break learning down into small, achievable steps for those who need extra help. Tasks for these pupils are often practical, and encourage them to think for themselves.

- In the most effective lessons, teachers have high expectations of learning and behaviour. They plan interesting activities which enable pupils to use their reading, writing and communication skills while learning about other subjects. In Year 4, for example, pupils were keen to discover how chocolate is made. They used different reference books to search for information, were amazed by their discoveries and enthusiastically recorded them in writing. On this and similar occasions, learning proceeds at a brisk pace and, therefore, pupils make progress at a faster rate.
- Occasionally, teachers' explanations are too long and this means pupils do not have enough time to work on their own and to think for themselves.
- Teachers have good knowledge of English and mathematics, which helps pupils to develop their skills and understanding across a range of other subjects. Adults are skilled in using questions to check what pupils already know and routinely ask them to explain their thinking. Teachers reshape lessons to make sure that they are pitched at just the right level of difficulty to move pupils' learning on. Teachers use 'talk partners' consistently well. This shared working allows pupils to clarify and explain their ideas to each other.
- Pupils who arrive at the school unable to speak English are supported well. They attend 'taster sessions' and are paired up with a 'buddy' to help them learn new routines and form new friendships. Regular checks on these pupils' progress enables the school to make sure that they get the support they need. Consequently, these pupils make rapid progress, particularly in developing their ability to speak English.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work in English and mathematics is positive. It highlights what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Teachers ask pupils questions and set examples to develop their understanding. However, pupils are not always given enough time to respond to teachers' comments and so opportunities are missed for them to practise and improve their skills.
- The quality of handwriting is variable. In handwriting lessons, pupils take care to form letters accurately and work on developing a neat, fluent, style. However, this is not always transferred into daily writing tasks. Some pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work because there is not an agreed standard across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically, pupils are polite, friendly and well-mannered. They are quick to offer help to adults and to each other. Staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently well across the school and they foster positive relationships. Pupils are responsive to their guidance. They have a good understanding of the school's systems for managing behaviour and its rewards and sanctions. Their positive attitudes to learning and behaviour make a significant contribution to their good learning.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to seek help should they be concerned. They say that there is no bullying, only occasional 'falling out' and a few incidents of 'pushing' at lunchtimes. School records show that these incidents have reduced considerably because of a more rigorous behaviour policy. Pupils are encouraged to adopt safe practices. For example, they know how to keep themselves safe at events such as Bonfire Night, Halloween and when using the internet.
- The 'Early Birds' breakfast club enables pupils to play and socialise with one another in a calm, purposeful atmosphere. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the online

questionnaire say that their children enjoy coming to school and are well cared for. Pupils are happy to come to school as illustrated by their above-average attendance. The school works well with outside agencies to help pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable so that they can receive the additional support they need.

The leadership and management are good

- A key strength of leadership at Park Hill Primary School is the calm and determined headteacher. She has secured a cohesive team, sharply focused on raising pupils' achievement. Staff morale is high, illustrated by one member of staff who commented, 'It is a pleasure to work amongst a wonderful group of people and the children in the school help to make this a wonderful job to be in.' Under the headteacher's leadership, the school has improved since the previous inspection so that its overall effectiveness is now good.
 - All leaders, including the governing body, have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and what is required to improve further. Leaders at all levels carry out regular checks on actions to improve the school to make sure that they are leading to better results for pupils. Leaders take prompt action to tackle any form of discrimination. Staff meet regularly to check on pupils' progress to make sure all pupils are given equal opportunities to achieve well. Those in danger of falling behind are provided with extra help in lessons and in small groups to ensure that they catch up with their classmates.
 - Teaching is improving because all adults are keen to develop their skills and learn from each other. Leaders provide teachers with precise guidance about how they can improve after watching them teach. The school is a partner in a local cluster of schools and staff make good use of joint training opportunities across the cluster. Consequently, teachers learn from the most effective practice that exists in their own school and beyond.
 - The school offers a range of subjects that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Specialist teachers foster a love of music in communal singing. In Year 3, pupils' develop spiritually as they consider the similarities and differences in people's religious beliefs. Different subjects are linked together to enable pupils to use their basic skills. In Year 1, for example, pupils used mathematical diagrams to sort different materials according to their characteristics.
 - Most parents and carers are positive about the work of the school. A few say that they do not receive enough information about the progress their children make.
 - The local authority has provided effective support for the school, particularly in developing the skills of its leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors have been effective in supporting the school in its drive to improve since the previous inspection. They make good use of training opportunities so that they are able to make well-informed choices about the work of the school. Governors have a good understanding of pupils' achievement, its comparison with other schools nationally and its relationship to the quality of teaching. As a result, they make sure that the school staff, including the headteacher, is held to account for their performance. They support the headteacher in making sure that teachers are set targets for improvement each year and that those who achieve them receive pay awards. Governors manage the school's finances well. They ensure that the pupil premium is spent in the best interests of the children and are aware that its use is helping these pupils to make good progress. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met.

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	103910
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	404912

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martyn Roberts
Headteacher	Caroline Logan
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2010
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