



Park Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115539
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 279621
Inspection dates 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006
Reporting inspector David Clegg AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Elm Road
School category	Community		Stonehouse
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Gloucestershire GL10 2NP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01453 823108
Number on roll	270	Fax number	01453 791193
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Victoria Walker
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Christopher Taylor

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized junior school. The pupils are predominately White British and all are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is higher than average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory and there are a number of aspects of its work that are good. Pupils make steady progress and by the time they leave the school they reach average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in reading are better than in writing. In both English and mathematics, a small number of average-attaining pupils could achieve more if more was expected of them. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from the support they receive and make good progress. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Pupils receive a good level of care and support that ensures their good personal development. This is also supported by the rich curriculum that gives pupils a good range of opportunities.

The school knows itself reasonably well, although its evaluation of its effectiveness as good is over-generous. It has made sound progress since the last inspection, particularly in strengthening the provision for pupils with learning difficulties. The school monitors the standards that pupils reach, but does not have a secure way of evaluating the rate of progress that they make as they move through the school.

Lessons are carefully planned and meet the needs of the majority of pupils. However, teachers do not have end-of-year National Curriculum targets for what pupils are striving to achieve. This is why the school struggles to evaluate pupils' progress. Pupils are not as aware as they need to be about what level they are at and what they need to do to achieve even higher standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of average-attaining pupils by raising expectations of what they can achieve.
- Establish end-of-year targets for each pupil and ensure that teachers monitor their progress towards meeting them.
- Make sure that teachers give pupils clear guidance on how well they are doing towards their end-of-year targets and what they need to do next to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The majority of pupils start Year 3 with average standards. They make steady progress across the four years and leave with average standards. However, there is some variation in the progress made in different subjects and between different groups of pupils. The majority of pupils make good progress in reading but the progress in writing, particularly for a small group of boys, is too low. Consequently, a few boys underachieve. Progress in mathematics and science from Years 3 to 6 is steady, although in the most recent national tests at the end of Year 6, a small number of average-ability pupils did not achieve as much as expected. It is not possible to evaluate the progress between each year group as this information is not available.

The high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties does well and makes good progress. This is particularly evident in reading and spelling, on which the majority of the help is focused. However, pupils also benefit from the extra help they get in mathematics lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a strong aspect of the school. Pupils' personal development is good because the school makes good provision to help them to grow up and mature. Pupils are very positive about their lessons, they enjoy coming to school and the great majority are keen to learn. Pupils' comments included, 'the school's perfect,' and 'I think the school's pretty good'. Pupils behave well. Attendance is in line with the national average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their moral and social development is particularly strong, with pupils having a clear sense of right and wrong. Cultural and spiritual development is promoted well through aspects of art, music and performance.

Pupils understand the importance of exercise and eating healthily and they adopt safe practices. This was evident when they worked on science experiments where they had to be particularly careful with some of the equipment. There is a good level of involvement with the community in aspects such as country dancing, sport and music festivals. The pupils have a good range of personal skills and attributes and satisfactory basic skills that will help them in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils are generally keen to learn and they cooperate well and share equipment sensibly. Lessons are characterised by good relationships and a purposeful atmosphere. Lessons are often carefully planned with some interesting activities; for instance, some 'hands on' science experiments in Year 6 about absorption maintained pupils' interest and challenged them to think hard. However, a weakness is the lack of teachers' awareness of what National Curriculum levels pupils are working at. This results in some pupils' short-term targets being too easy and pupils not always being clear about how well they are doing.

The marking is positive and often, but not consistently, helpful. For example, the marking of some Year 3 English work is very clear in identifying what pupils need to do to improve. Unfortunately, this is not consistently replicated across all year groups.

Good small-group teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is sharp and well focused on their learning needs. The lessons follow a clear programme that enables pupils' progress to be carefully monitored on a regular basis.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. It covers all the subjects that it should and is supplemented by a number of other activities that give pupils a rich and interesting range of opportunities. There is some scope to improve curriculum planning by making more reference to National Curriculum levels.

Provision for the arts benefits from the involvement with the local specialist secondary school. This has extended pupils' opportunities, particularly in aspects of music, dance and drama. Several Year 6 pupils were very positive about the opportunities to learn an instrument and take part in performances.

Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are learning rudimentary French and are linking with a French school. The curriculum is also made more interesting through regular visits to places of interest and an annual residential visit. There is a regular stream of visitors to the school, including musicians and theatre groups. There is a good range of after-school activities, mainly concerned with sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good level of support and care for pupils. The arrangements for keeping pupils safe and secure are strong. Staff know pupils very well and they give a high priority to pupils' pastoral support. Parents are enthusiastic about how effectively the school looks after their children. Pupils are especially appreciative of how lessons focusing on their personal development help them. One pupil commenting about the circle time lessons said, 'It gives you more confidence to do your work'. The school is particularly good at supporting children who are vulnerable. Pupils whose lives have been disrupted for various reasons are happy and content with the stability the school gives them

The school tracks pupils' attainment as they move through the school by a series of regular assessments. However, these assessments do not tell the school whether pupils are making enough progress. This means that the guidance given to pupils about how well they are doing is not always as sharp as it could be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides a very strong steer to the school and gives it a clear sense of purpose and direction. The school knows itself reasonably well, although its evaluations are over-generous. Its views of its own effectiveness are informed by the regular canvassing of parents' views and the views of pupils. The school uses a number of sensible strategies to assess how well it is doing. These include checking on teaching, looking at pupils' work and analysing the results of tests. This is providing some good feedback about how effective the curriculum is in, for instance, English and mathematics. There

is some good use of test information that is being used to identify what aspects of the school's work need some attention. This, for instance, was how the school recognised the need to do more to improve the quality of boys' writing.

However, the school is not doing enough to monitor the progress of pupils on a year-by-year basis. Essentially, the school has a clear picture of the standards reached by pupils at the end of each year but teachers do not have the information to judge the progress pupils have made. One reason for this is that not enough use is made of the National Curriculum levels to describe standards and progress at the end of each year. This is a weakness in the school's evaluation of its work.

The school has made sound progress since the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Most noticeably there is a much stronger picture of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties, subject managers evaluate pupils' work and there is a clear sense of teamwork. There is still some work to do to achieve an effective approach to assessment.

Governors are supportive of the school and are involved in the strategic development. For instance, they are playing a full part in planning the building programme that will increase the size of classrooms.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome in your school. We enjoyed our visit tremendously.

We found that the school is providing a satisfactory education for you. We do feel that the school does some things particularly well. One of the most important things is that they make sure that you enjoy learning and like coming to school.

Here is a list of some of the other things that we judged to be good:

- You are positive about school and work hard
- Children and staff like and respect each other and so there is a good atmosphere in the school
- Your headteacher knows you all very well and has your best interests at heart
- Your work is interesting
- There is a good range of after-school clubs
- You are cared for well and kept safe at school
- Children who find their work difficult are given good support.

We think that there are some things that your headteacher, staff and governors could do to make the school even better.

- Make sure that you all do as well as you can by expecting some of you to do harder work
- Set you targets that you aim to reach at the end of each year
- As teachers mark your work, make sure you know what you need to do to get better.