



Parkside Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117562
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280119
Inspection dates 31 January 2006 to 1 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Raminder Arora LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Aycliffe Road
School category	Community		WD6 4EP
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02083873000
Number on roll	190	Fax number	02083873001
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. David Morgan
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2000	Headteacher	Ms. Susan Ayscough

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 31 January 2006 - 1 February 2006	Inspection number 280119
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a foundation school with 190 pupils on roll. Additionally, there is an afternoon pre-school care for 16 children over the age of 2 years 9 months. Most children start from a low baseline on entry to the nursery. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average and a few pupils are learning English as an additional language. The school has a base for specific learning difficulties serving 31 other schools. An above average proportion of children are eligible for free school meals. There has been a high staff turnover in the last two years.

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 overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school assesses itself to be good in this respect, and has put appropriate systems in place, which are beginning to have impact on standards. However, these systems are fairly new and have not yet had time to embed and be fully effective. Nevertheless, the school self-evaluation is satisfactory. It draws on an increasingly wide range of information and results in priorities that are appropriate and that support the school's drive for improvement. Parents feel that school provides well for their children and pupils themselves support these views. The quality of education provided in the Foundation Stage and the standards that children achieve are satisfactory. Pupils' achievements in Years 1 to 6 are also satisfactory, although there is some variability in achievement between subjects. For example, the 2005 test results indicate that pupils made better progress in English than in mathematics at the end of Year 6. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently and develop their problem-solving skills, particularly in mathematics. Nevertheless, overall standards are improving and are currently near to the national average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and so most learners are making steady progress. The school is placing considerable emphasis on developing teaching and thereby improving pupils' progress. However, the use of self-assessment and a more consistent approach to marking that supports pupils' understanding of how to improve, would help them perform even better. Personal development of pupils is satisfactory. They are well cared for and enjoy their time at school. Pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour is satisfactory. The curriculum, with its range and quality of activities outside school, is satisfactory. Attendance remains well below the national average and is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is supported well by the governors and staff. However, governors' monitoring has not been sufficiently rigorous to ensure that statutory requirements in respect of collective worship are met. Steady progress has been made since the last inspection and the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Adopt a more robust approach to attendance and improve it by working with the parents to develop strategies to discourage absence and poor punctuality
- Ensure that the new systems for monitoring the school's performance are fully understood and used throughout the school
- Provide more opportunities and a greater degree of challenge for pupils to work independently and develop problem-solving skills particularly in mathematics
- Support all pupils in knowing how to improve, by encouraging their self- assessment and ensuring consistency in marking and target setting
- Ensure that the statutory requirements for collective worship are met.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress from a low start, particularly in their speaking and listening skills and in their social, physical and creative development. Overall standards are below those expected at the end of the reception year. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are close to the national average. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress, although most perform better in English and science than in mathematics and boys do less well than girls, especially in writing. Historically, below average standards in mathematics were related to the weaknesses in the subject leadership and the quality of teaching. The school has addressed these issues successfully and standards are now rising in this subject. Pupils' skills in mental and calculation are now satisfactory, but their ability in problem solving is weaker. The school sets suitably challenging targets for the raising of attainment in core subjects, which have contributed to the up-turn in the school's results. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are also rising. Most pupils are gaining secure basic ICT skills because teachers' competence and subject knowledge have improved. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make adequate progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupil's personal development is satisfactory overall. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Incidents of poor behaviour from a few pupils in lessons are generally managed well by teachers. Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to their work. Most are keen to come to school, although attendance rates are well below those in schools nationally. There are good systems in place designed to improve attendance but these are not always applied with sufficient rigour. Moreover, some parents do not co-operate fully with the school's drive to reduce absence and improve punctuality. This is unsatisfactory because poor attendance is having a negative impact on the progress of a minority of pupils. Pupils understand how to stay safe and healthy, and are developing skills in ICT, literacy and numeracy that will help them in their future careers. They make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. The school council is relatively new but meets regularly to make suggestions such as ways of using sponsorship money from a local bank to purchase playground equipment. Pupils help to raise funds for local and national charities and older pupils are given responsibilities around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Their social and moral development is good. Pupils work and play together amicably and know the difference between right and wrong.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and sometimes good. The good lessons are clear in purpose, use a range of learning styles and motivate pupils to do well. Teachers in these lessons have clear expectations and encourage pupils to succeed. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were inspired and enthused by the teacher's good command of the subject and his effective use of computer technology brought learning to life. Most teachers know their pupils well and exert firm but friendly control to tackle any incidents of poor behaviour in lessons. Pupils work productively as a result. Teaching assistants provide good quality support that enables some learners to excel. Some lessons fall short of being good. Some of these lessons do not make sufficient demands on pupils. Others lack pace because too long is spent on activities such as whole class questioning. Furthermore, in some lessons, teachers' planning does not address the support for pupils with limited command of English, and that affects their progress. There are times when pupils might be given greater responsibility for their own learning and the application of skills learnt. The school regularly assesses pupils' progress. However, this could be further developed, through pupils' self-assessment and marking of their work as part of the teachers' day to day assessment, so that pupils are clearer on what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the statutory requirements. It is suitably planned to meet the needs of most pupils. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Appropriate attention has been given to building links between subjects. For example, pupils learn about healthy living through science and physical education and teachers are developing effective cross-curricular links in literacy, ICT, science and mathematics. A satisfactory range of sporting activities promote healthy lifestyles and a range of musical experiences and special events bring added enjoyment to pupils' learning. Most lessons promote the application of skills learnt in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and in doing so lay foundations for future economic well-being. However, there is currently too little emphasis given to pupils in their problem solving and investigations in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Staff have the very best interests of the pupils at heart and pupils are confident that there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors how much they enjoy school. They say that bullying is rare and that any incident is treated very seriously. There are very effective systems to ensure that children feel safe and there

is regular training for all staff in Child Protection issues. Parents are confident that their children are well looked after. The school has worked hard to develop systems to assess pupils' academic development to ensure the early identification of pupils who need extra help. These are beginning to impact on the progress pupils make. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for those with behavioural problems is good. However, current academic advice does not always give pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to improve and in some classes, pupils whose first language is not English do not always receive the help they need.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the school. Her strong commitment to raising standards is shared by all staff. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. The recently revised leadership team has delegated leadership and management responsibilities to the leaders of the Foundation Stage and the two key stages. This has begun to develop strong and supportive teamwork. Each member of the team is now closely involved in monitoring teachers' tracking of pupils' progress, particularly in numeracy and literacy, in order to place extra help where it is most needed. This is beginning to impact on pupils' standards of achievement but needs more time to become fully effective. The senior leadership team is now, rightly, working on ways to involve the pupils in assessing their own strengths and weaknesses and setting targets to help them improve. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The chair of governors is very supportive and has a high profile in the school. However, some governors are not yet fully involved in monitoring the school's performance or acting as 'critical friends'. The two acts of collective worship seen during the inspection did not meet statutory requirements. The school's rate of improvement since its last inspection has been satisfactory and close attention has been paid to behaviour management, to very good effect, particularly amongst boys. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money and demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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	3	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?	3	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	2	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	3	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 for welcoming us to your school. We would like to tell you how much we enjoyed seeing you at work and at playtimes. Thank you, especially to the children who spent time talking and sharing their views and ideas with us. We know that most of you enjoy coming to school and value what it has to offer you. There are lots of things we like about your school. Some of these are: - Your school is friendly and welcoming - You behave appropriately and have positive relationships with each other - You listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and you are willing to work hard in your lessons - Your headteacher, class teachers, and all of the other staff, who help run your school, are keen to make sure that you get the best education - We agree with the targets the school has set itself to make your learning even more enjoyable, and we are confident that you will help the school to meet them. There are some things that could be improved and we are asking your headteacher, teachers and the governors to help you with these: - We would like all staff and governors to check more carefully on how well you are all doing - We would like you to be more aware of what you can and cannot do, and focus on how to improve your work further - We think you are doing well in English and science, and can do equally well in mathematics by taking on more problem solving tasks and investigations - We are asking your headteacher, teachers and the governors to encourage all pupils to come to school regularly and always to come on time - We have asked the governors to make sure that you all have the opportunity to take part in a daily act of worship. We hope you all do well in the future.