



Park Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116473
LEA Hampshire LEA
Inspection number 285345
Inspection dates 20 June 2006 to 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector Calvin Pike AI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Middle Park Way
School category	Maintained		Leigh Park
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Havant PO9 4BU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392475254
Number on roll	862	Fax number	02392481012
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Fred Deeks
Date of previous inspection	31 August 2006	Headteacher	Mr Sean Dickinson

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	20 June 2006 - 20 June 2006	285345

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. He met with staff, students and the Chair of Governors and observed a number of lessons and other aspects of the school's life. He also studied a range of documentation, including returned questionnaires from a small proportion of the school's families, all of which assisted in writing this report.

Description of the school

Park Community is a mixed comprehensive for 862 pupils in the 11-16 age range. It is situated in Leigh Park, an area of relatively high socio-economic disadvantage. Just over two-thirds of the school's population have special education needs and more than a quarter is entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is very small. Pupils' ability overall at intake is significantly below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Park Community (PCS) is a good school with many outstanding features. It provides well for its pupils who make very good progress; compared with others in similar circumstances, achievement overall is outstanding. Since the last inspection the school has improved considerably and is in a very strong position to continue to do so. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good and, even more significantly, key aspects of leadership and management, of pupils' personal development, of the care, guidance and support available to pupils and staff and of the curriculum are also outstanding.

What are the key features of this school that have brought about its success? The school has grown in number since its last inspection. It is oversubscribed with first preference choices for entry in September 2006. While this has much to do with its improving standards, it is also partly because of strengthening links with local primary schools. These give Year 6 pupils taster lessons from staff at PCS as part of an effective transition process and encourage pupils to settle in well and aim high from the outset. Increasingly, therefore, pupils arrive wanting to be at school and with parental backing to help them achieve - as confirmed in annual pupil and parent surveys showing most pupils enjoy school.

Links with local schools and an increasing range of partners to enhance provision demonstrate some of PCS's passion to help develop the local and wider community. In a Values Education lesson during the inspection, one Year 7 boy explained the word 'community' as, 'a safe place where we work together to get success'. This definition closely matches the excellent ethos of PCS and is key to understanding its accomplishments and improvement.

This school serves one of the largest public sector housing estates in Europe. Its buildings and site have been effectively developed in recent years to give additional facilities for pupils, parents and the community alike. These have been enhanced with the school's Specialist Arts status and particularly evident in the school-BBC linked community regeneration activity; Excellence Clusters working with primary schools to improve pupils' literacy and communication skills; and, support for the Arts in the local community.

The school has also succeeded in working with increasing numbers of parents to raise standards and increase opportunities for its pupils. It has done so by sharing pupils' achievements and ways in which they can be improved with parents six times each year. It also provides learning sessions for parents that enable them to help their children achieve well. Parents can also comment and contribute to the school's development through regular parental surveys. Much of this is celebrated with parents through 'You Can Do it' awards evenings that highlight achievements in all aspects of development.

One aspect of the school pupils appreciate is the care, guidance and support provided for them. This reflects the view of a relatively new member of staff who said, 'I knew at interview this was a place where I could feel at peace because the school treats

every child as a whole person'. The quality of guidance for individuals is outstanding because the range of provision is substantial and it is fine-tuned regularly. A well-structured 'Values Education' programme underpins the school's ethos to care for one another. All pupils have access to a personal mentor who helps them review their work or personal concerns regularly. Weekly referral meetings involve staff in departments, behaviour management, the school counsellor, home-school liaison officer and members of the family and school support team. Together they consider the safety, emotional and academic progress of all pupils not doing as well as expected. Using feedback from all staff, they identify appropriate action to ensure these pupils are given additional guidance to enable them to succeed.

Included in this action are the school's specialist support teams who provide help for younger pupils within school hours - for example those who may be having difficulty in settling into secondary school - and for older pupils who need exceptional support out of school hours. In all cases, the objective is to give pupils the confidence and skills to reintegrate into mainstream classes without unnecessary delay. These teams are backed by cross-service teams who provide well-focused expertise as needed. For example, Safety Nurses worked with staff during the inspection to raise awareness for youngsters of the dangers of alcohol abuse.

This provision brings about the good quality of pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils show positive attitudes and good behaviour. A small number of pupils are excluded from classes for temporary periods to study in the school's support unit. Around the school pupils move between lessons in an orderly manner and arrive for lessons punctually and ready to work. This has been aided by changes in the timing of the school day that have extended the length of lessons and staggered break and lunch times to reduce the numbers of pupils in corridors at any time, use space more effectively and improve access to available facilities for pupils. These changes involved the School Council, members of which feel that it can 'make a lot of things happen' as this is a school where 'the children's voice is heard'.

As a result of the school's rigorous monitoring and follow-up to absences, pupils' and parents' increasing commitment is also clear in the significant improvement in attendance rates and reduced truancy since the last inspection. Regular 'Pupil Voice Surveys' show that a very high proportion of pupils enjoy school and participate well in the rich range of after-school activities provided.

Many of the activities enable pupils to benefit the community as a whole. Within school, older pupils act as mentors to younger ones. Aided by the school's specialist Arts status, pupils grow personally through their involvement in local Community Arts events. One group of pupils, for example, has recently prepared a dance/music performance with a local special school the theme of which was based on 'masks' which may hide the full identity of a person behind them. Participants spoke sensitively of their appreciation of the talents of pupils in the special school and their learning that 'you can't judge a book by its cover'. The work has been rewarded with a trip for those PCS pupils and staff involved - appropriately, to Venice.

Another feature that strengthens pupils' well-being is the school's 'Butterfly Broadcasts', produced daily by pupils and staff using the school's media studies

facilities. These broadcasts, shown each day to all pupils, are an integral element of pupils' personal development programme. As well as developing skills and awareness of contemporary media technology for those directly involved, these excellent productions are linked to moral, social and cultural themes that actively engage pupils as young citizens. They do so by acting as catalysts for discussion and reflection on issues within the school, the local and whole world community. For example, in one session during the inspection pupils developed oral and written skills well in sharing ideas about the differences between schooling and social expectations in Japan and in England.

The broadcasts and school's wider provision also lead pupils to take direct action to realise their own aspirations and improve life for others, such as the former Year 11 pupil who led an assembly with the lower school pupils on 'How you can make a difference to your community'. As a member of the Youth Council and Youth Parliament, she reminded upper school pupils of the changes they had made in the school day, in revising the sex education programme and in various community projects by 'getting your voice heard'.

Also at the heart of the school's success is the very good quality of the curriculum provided. This matches the needs of pupils overall but, as with many other aspects of PCS's work, is continuously being reviewed to improve. The broad provision is supported by Butterfly Broadcasts, additional literacy group work, assistance for those with particular learning difficulties, and a substantial range of after school study extension and holiday clubs. The upper school curriculum has a full range of vocational and GCSE courses, amended as necessary in modern foreign languages for pupils with lower levels of literacy skills. All pupils also gain from mini-enterprise project involvement as well as work experience in Year 10. Underpinning the match of provision to pupils' need is a range of monitoring and feedback processes, such as a clear 'bridging' project to support pupils moving from primary schools and the use of Study Booklets to record and review individual targets. As part of its review, however, the school recognises the need to refine provision for Years 10 and 11 pupils and this is planned with an enhanced range of GCSE courses for the next academic year.

In bringing this curriculum to life, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have good subject expertise and classroom management skills. In lessons seen during the inspection, relationships were positive and pupils were enthusiastic and actively involved including those in a Year 10 science lesson who were carefully taking cuttings at 45 degree angles in order to clone plants; Year 9 pupils working cooperatively in drama groups to develop their soliloquies within the context of real-life problems associated with holiday bookings; and, Year 7 and 8 pupils having fun in their learning as they choreographed dance routines in '70s style with a good sense of audience and staging. However, in some lessons what is known about the progress pupils have already made is not always used fully and in other cases teachers talked for too long. This leaves limited time for pupils to use the language of the subject and extend their literacy skills or for the teacher to assess how well pupils are learning. The school knows that it needs to work to ensure that information about pupils' previous attainment and regular feedback from pupils themselves are used to challenge individuals even better. This happens in the best lessons, for example in a Year 7

mathematics lesson aimed to develop thinking skills where the teacher's input was carefully judged and placed to enable pupils to explore and generate ideas, share them with the teacher and class and apply them to the work in hand.

While the teaching is good and improving, it is one of a number of features that bring about outstanding achievement and a very effective school. The main factors that galvanise the enthusiasms and build on the talents of staff, pupils, and parents are the school's good leadership and management. In particular, the headteacher's leadership, driven by his clear belief in 'pushing pupils in their learning until they can push themselves', is outstanding. PCS is, as it describes itself, a learning school because the pride of its leaders and managers in its pupils' successes is matched by an insatiable quest to challenge itself constantly to improve even further. As importantly, this self-challenge is systematically structured so that each development is integrated into the school's organisation as a whole; every initiative includes feedback mechanisms to inform the school whether it is having the impact expected; improvements are managed so that they complement and feed on and from each other; and, successes and areas for development are communicated effectively between governors, staff, pupils and, increasingly, parents.

Whilst successes to date have hinged principally on the drive of the headteacher, the school is aware that it is now important to review management responsibilities to continue to develop the talents of the senior team, and for middle managers to take more responsibility for effective leadership and management across the school.

As a result the improvement plan for the school as a whole is linked closely with those of departments, year and other support teams. Pupils and parents are consulted effectively about the school's development. The performance management of staff with targets for improvement is as robust as the monitoring and support provided to enable pupils to achieve well. Governors are very well informed and challenge the school effectively. There is rigorous and regular monitoring which is very effective in ensuring that the school knows its strengths and areas for development very well, especially those described in relation to the improvements in the curriculum, refining the quality of teaching and reviewing leadership and management roles.

As one long-standing parent wrote, 'I take my hat off to Park Community School and their excellent progress over the years'. She is correct.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

This is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This is good.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	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	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	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	1	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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

Although I have written up my recent visit to your school in a report that is available to you and your families and published on the Ofsted website, I thought you might like this summary for discussions at home or through your School Council.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your welcome during my visit and for sharing your views so that I could learn about your school quickly. The School Council members in particular gave me a good insight into ways in which they think Park Community School has improved and why they 'feel privileged' to be part of it. At the end of my visit, I left agreeing with them fully for the following reasons: * most of you are achieving very well in your work, making very good progress in building on your previous skills, knowledge and understanding; * you enjoy your school and are given many opportunities to have your say about how the school is doing and how it might improve; * you have regular feedback from teachers so that you know how well you are doing and how you can improve. When you are not doing as well as the school expects you to, there are lots of ways in which you can have additional support and guidance to put you back on the right track; * you are developing personally very well, like the opportunities to be involved in work in the community and, particularly, enjoy the chances to discuss school, local and national events that come with the outstanding daily Butterfly Broadcasts * you appreciate the good teaching, outstanding leadership of the headteacher, and ways the governors, headteacher and staff are managing the school to make improvements for you and your community.

The governors and headteacher know of the school's strengths and areas for development very well. They are currently working to improve the range of courses offered in Year 10 and 11 and review ways in which more members of staff can take responsibility for the school's management and leadership in the future. They are also keen to go on improving your quality of learning by making all lessons really good. One way in which you can help in this is to take every opportunity to use your speaking and writing skills, when asked to do so. This will enable teachers to assess how well you understand things more regularly and what they need to do that will enable you to achieve even more.

I wish you continued success at Park Community School and in your future lives.

Calvin Pike

Lead Inspector