

Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104999
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	287087
Inspection date	7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss K Hobson
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002
School address	Woodstock Road Wallasey Merseyside CH44 5RN
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Most pupils at this average sized school come from White British backgrounds, with small numbers from a minority ethnic background or who use English as an additional language. The school is sited in an urban area of considerable disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are entitled to free school meals is well above average. Children entering Reception have widely varied pre-school experiences. The school is part of a local authority Education Action Zone.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has outstanding features. Effective leaders and managers ensure that most pupils make good progress in their work and develop those basic skills that will help them make their way successfully in life. Parents understandably have great regard for the school's work, particularly praising pupils' outstanding personal development and the excellent quality of care and support they receive. There is no doubt that these outstanding aspects of the school's work make a very significant contribution to how positive pupils are about learning and their experiences in school. In its evaluation the school has underestimated the excellence of pupils' behaviour and attitudes and of how well it helps pupils, including the most vulnerable, to become positive young citizens.

Pupils enjoy a curriculum that in the vast majority of cases meets their needs well. The school now needs to provide more effective challenge for the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics, to enable more to attain higher standards by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, some girls do not do as well as predicted in science. While the school recognises these issues, they remain key to its continued improvement.

The curriculum is taught well by a dedicated, sensitive and knowledgeable staff. Good use is made of specialist teaching in English, mathematics, science, physical education, music and French to enrich pupils' experiences and understanding of these subjects. The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is excellent and plays a key role in their increasing understanding of how to stay safe and to lead a healthy lifestyle. School councillors speak enthusiastically about a drama production they are planning to emphasise the dangers of smoking and of how undesirable bullying is. Councillors do not take full responsibility for running their own meetings. This somewhat restricts their knowledge of committee work and of how to manage discussions. The headteacher and senior staff are fully committed to continued improvement in pupils' achievements and standards.

Pupils currently achieve well and attain broadly average standards by the time they leave Year 6. In the well managed and effective Foundation Stage, children do well to improve their overall skills from well below average on entry to Reception to just below average as they move into Year 1. The school's management seeks constant improvement through rigorous self-evaluation which, although somewhat modest here and there, means that it is well aware of its strengths and areas that still need to improve. Together with its record of good improvement since the last inspection, especially in its provision for the youngest children and in improving accommodation, the school's realistic and pragmatic view of its effectiveness is accurate. This gives it a good capacity to improve further and to continue to provide good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievements of the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics.
- Enable girls in Years 3 to 6 to do better in science.
- Give the school councillors more responsibility for running their own affairs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with skills well below those typically expected for their age, especially in their communication, language and literacy. They make good progress in all aspects of their

learning as a result of effective provision. Children enter Year 1 meeting the targets set for them in their knowledge and understanding of the world, but with many just missing them in their other areas of learning. Their literacy skills remain the weakest.

Most pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 to 6 because they are well taught and their progress is carefully tracked. For the most part, effective support is provided for those pupils identified as falling behind or who have learning difficulties. However, some of the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not always achieve as well as they should in mathematics. Also, some girls do not make the progress they should in science by the time they leave Year 6. Overall, standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. After a period when pupils with more acute learning difficulties made slower progress than they should, more rigorous identification of their needs and more effective support for those needs have resulted in these pupils achieving as well as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are extremely well behaved and take good care of each other. Pupils are very proud to be members of the school community and take great delight in earning rewards for good citizenship, attendance, work and attitudes. Many parents attest to their children's enjoyment of school and determination to succeed in their work and in meeting their targets.

Pupils take every opportunity to take responsibility, making telling contributions to the peaceful and positive atmosphere at break and lunchtimes. They take their school council roles very seriously and report that they would like to assume more control of meetings. They show confidence in lessons and warmly appreciate the efforts and successes of others. Pupils are aware that eating sensibly and taking regular exercise is of benefit to their health. Their lunchboxes reveal that they put theory into practice. Attendance has improved well recently and is now slightly above average. Pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) provide them with a secure foundation for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, the warmth with which lessons are conducted contributes significantly to pupils' excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes. This helps them to concentrate on their work and to achieve well. In the Foundation Stage children learn effectively because of well planned, stimulating activities which provide them with opportunities to work independently, in groups or with an adult, both indoors and outside.

In Years 1 to 6, lessons are conducted at a good pace. This is often promoted by teachers setting short-term targets for the completion of tasks to which pupils, especially boys, respond very positively. The high expectations teachers have of pupils' work rate and of their behaviour are consistently met. Pupils enjoy learning and their willingness to contribute ideas and to respond enthusiastically to questions and tasks enhances the quality of the learning well. Teachers and teaching assistants prompt and support the less able pupils effectively. This enables them to progress at the same rate as others. A good example of this was in a Year 1 literacy lesson,

resulting in pupils with learning difficulties ably identifying key points to recount a recent visit to the Ellesmere Port boat museum.

In most cases the more able pupils are challenged well, but this is less effective for those who find mathematics easier than most in Years 1 and 2. As a result, the proportion reaching the higher level in the Year 2 teacher assessments is not as large as it might be. Teachers make good use of ICT to make learning clearer and more exciting.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils effectively and promotes their basic skills well. The school is increasingly tailoring what it teaches to reflect pupils' experiences. For example, a computer club has been set up specifically to target some Year 6 girls to enhance their ICT skills and to give them more self-confidence. Changes to the way that some subjects are taught, reflecting themes rather than discrete subjects, are promoting more effective learning. However, the school knows that it could do even more to help pupils apply their basic skills more widely across all subjects and has plans to do this. Pupils' visits to places of interest and the wide range of visitors to the school promote pupils' personal, social and cultural development very effectively and involve them well in the community. After-school clubs (guitar, recorder and singing) all enhance pupils' aesthetic awareness. Visits from people of different ethnic backgrounds contribute well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' personal and social skills are considerably enhanced by the residential visits they make.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils' excellent personal development, their vastly improved attendance and their often expressed confidence in how safe they feel in school are testaments to the outstanding quality of the care and support they receive. Typical of comments from parents include: 'Teachers make our children so happy and will do anything to make sure their worries are overcome' and 'We are included so much in our children's learning and kept so well informed.' Parents, understandably, very much appreciate the school sharing their children's targets with them and comment on how well they progress as a result. The school tracks very carefully the progress pupils make and has high expectations of what they can do, intervening effectively to nip any underachievement in the bud through extra support and guidance. Systems to protect and safeguard pupils are fully in place and any risks to the safety of adults or pupils are regularly and rigorously assessed. The procedures to monitor and improve attendance are effective and appreciated by parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The strong and sensitive leadership by the headteacher is most appreciated by parents and governors. It has a significant impact on the warm ethos that pervades the school and the good achievements of pupils. Senior leaders are constantly exploring ways to improve the school's quality. They know the school well and have a pragmatic approach to planning for improvement, based on secure evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning and of the curriculum. The deputy headteacher has made a recent, telling contribution to improving provision for pupils

with more severe learning difficulties, who achieve well as a result. The quality of teaching and learning is rigorously checked by senior staff and training arranged to address any less effective aspects at an individual or whole-school level.

The school's effective partnerships with parents, local agencies and other schools and colleges contribute well to pupils' learning and to teachers' expertise. Subject leaders for the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) play a significant role in promoting pupils' good achievements. However, the school acknowledges the need for other subject leaders to be more focused on the standards pupils attain. Governance is good. Governors are supportive and knowledgeable. They keep up to date through appropriate training, and their regular visits to classrooms put them in a good position to effectively challenge the school's provision.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I very much enjoyed the day I spent recently visiting your good school. Thank you for the cheerful welcome you gave me. Your very polite manner and willingness to chat about how much you enjoy and appreciate your learning and other activities were a really good example of how the school helps you to become such positive young citizens. When I visited your classrooms you were very keen to learn. This is clearly because there is a very friendly atmosphere in lessons and you have such knowledgeable and hardworking teachers. There are obviously lots of other things about the school that you like. You told me about music clubs, the sports you are involved in and how eager you are to make sure that you stay healthy by eating well and exercising. The older ones were very enthusiastic about their residential visits and Year 1 pupils loved dressing up as Victorians as part of their history topic.

Your headteacher and the other people who run the school do a super job in caring for and supporting you. They also have really good ideas about how the school can improve even further. I have asked them to do one or two things to make the school even better.

The first is to help those pupils in Years 1 and 2 who find their work a bit easier than others to do better in mathematics. Secondly, some girls in Years 3 to 6 should be helped to reach higher standards in science. Finally, I was very impressed with how keen the members of the school council were about their role and how much they have been involved in changing things such as the school menus and playground facilities. However, I do agree with them that they should take more responsibility for running their meetings and I have asked the school to look at this.

Do continue to be so positive in the way you work and play. Thanks once again for making my day so pleasant.