



Parkfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105799
Local Authority Rochdale
Inspection number 287332
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Stephen Wall

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Harold Street
School category	Community		Middleton
Age range of pupils	4–11		Manchester M24 4AF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 6432592
Number on roll (school)	245	Fax number	0161 6432592
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev P Miller
		Headteacher	Mr D Perrin
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007	Inspection number 287332
--------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

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

Parkfield is an average sized primary school whose pupils come from a socially diverse area. Just over half of them live in areas of challenging social circumstances. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and have English as their mother tongue. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those with statements of special educational need is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parkfield is a good school with outstanding features, such as pupils' personal development. Similarly, the multitude of enrichment activities, in which very large numbers of pupils take part, are outstanding. Each year group in Key Stage 2 takes part in an annual extended residential trip at home and abroad, for example. Complementing the good quality taught curriculum, these opportunities add significantly to the richness of the pupils' educational experience. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and value its work. The fact that the school is oversubscribed despite falling rolls locally indicates its deserved popularity in the community.

This is an exceptionally happy school. Smiling faces are everywhere. Relationships are of the highest order. Adults are excellent role models for the pupils and promote the importance of respect and good manners. 'Please', 'thank you' and opening doors for others are the norm, for example. The pupils are very welcoming to visitors. Behaviour is exemplary both in class and around the school. Pupils love coming to school. Attendance rates are above average. 'It's my hobby!' said one pupil. Another said, 'I'd rather be at school than on holiday.' Parkfield is an exceptionally health conscious school. Pupils really know the importance of being healthy. At the end of morning break, for example, every pupil joins in the daily outdoor dance session with real gusto: a heart warming sight on a cold winter's morning! Pupils learn the importance of contributing to their local community, for example, by producing the excellent community newspaper. In school the older pupils show care and concern for younger pupils by acting as playground supervisors and helpers. During their time at Parkfield, the pupils develop into thoughtful and responsible youngsters ready and eager to take advantage of the next steps in their education. The school provides them with a firm foundation for their future success.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class where good teaching and a wide range of activities support them in making good progress. This good progress is maintained in Key Stages 1 and 2 as a result of similarly good teaching. From starting points in Reception which are below expected levels overall, attainment in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is just above average representing good achievement. However, standards in writing, although much improved in 2006, are still not as high as they should be, particularly in the number of pupils attaining the higher levels. Teachers do not consistently help pupils understand how they can improve their writing.

Lessons are well prepared and teachers incorporate a good variety of activities to engage the pupils in their learning. They are ably supported by the large number of teaching assistants who make a valuable contribution to the learning of individuals and groups. The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall. The school, however, recognises that its systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are not effective enough. It has started the process of improvement but much remains to be done.

The headteacher is enthusiastic and committed to improvement. For example, the recent introduction of strategies to tackle underachievement in writing is starting to impact on standards. Through effective procedures for evaluating its own effectiveness, the school has a good understanding of what it needs to improve. There has been good progress since the last inspection and the school has good capacity for further improvement. It offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the systems and procedures for tracking and monitoring the progress pupils make.
- Increase the numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. From starting points which are below those expected when they enter Reception most pupils attain expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils continue to make good progress in response to good teaching. In 2006, results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were broadly average in English and science. In mathematics they were above average. A decline in standards in 2004 and 2005 was owing to more than usual numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and low achievement in writing. The school is tackling writing rigorously by, for example, giving greater emphasis to extended writing and making it clearer to pupils what they need to do to improve their written skills. In 2006, standards in writing rose significantly as a result. The school reached its demanding targets in English and science in 2006 and exceeded them in mathematics. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or from minority ethnic backgrounds make progress at similar rates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development and well-being are at the heart of all the school does. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of the highest order. Assemblies promote spiritual reflection and the vibrant displays around school draw the pupils' attention to the importance of respect and tolerance of other cultures. Exchange visits and shared trips out with a multiracial partner school are greatly valued. Pupils feel safe and secure and know adults will help them if they have a problem. Relationships across the school are excellent. The school's emphasis on teaching basic and interpersonal skills helps to prepare pupils well for life beyond school. Pupils know the importance of staying safe and demonstrate this by their responsible attitudes to playing safely on the outstanding range of playground equipment, for example.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and expect them to work hard. Pupils respond to this well and their behaviour is exemplary allowing them to learn at a good rate. This ensures a positive environment for learning in classrooms. Teachers plan lessons well and use their good subject knowledge to pose demanding questions, encouraging pupils to think hard. They make very clear at the start of lessons exactly what they expect the pupils to achieve. In some lessons a few pupils lose concentration and their rate of progress dips because the pace of teaching is too slow. Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly and their comments mostly tell pupils what they need to do to improve. However, pupils are not always sure how they can reach higher levels in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the taught curriculum is good. It provides good opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in literacy and numeracy across a range of subjects. Opportunities for writing are becoming more frequent. In the Foundation Stage the curriculum is planned with a suitable balance between opportunities for children to choose their activities and those guided by the staff. Pupils are confident users of information and communication technology. However, the lack of a dedicated computer room limits the opportunities for independent research and learning during lessons. The range of out-of-school activities is outstanding. The pupils really appreciate the many sporting and artistic activities as well as the huge number of trips out. Participation rates are very high. Adults give generously and selflessly of their own time to support them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and personal support are good. Policies and procedures for safeguarding children are firmly embedded and reviewed regularly. Attention to health and safety matters and risk assessments is meticulous. Appropriate checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are conducted. Support for pupils when they join the school is good and enables them to settle quickly and happily. The school works extremely effectively with a very wide range of outside agencies, for instance to meet the needs of more vulnerable pupils. Support for pupils' academic progress is only satisfactory. A more rigorous system of monitoring their achievement has been introduced but it is too early for its full impact to be felt.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good quality of the headteacher's leadership and his committed enthusiasm gives the school a clear vision for the future and a strong focus on improvement. Effective and thorough self-evaluation procedures take into account the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including parents. As a result, the school knows its strengths and those areas which could be better. However, several of the judgements made by the school about its own performance were too generous. The priorities for action are identified clearly in the school's improvement plan and the criteria for evaluating their impact are clear and measurable. Improving writing and assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are both understandably high on the school's improvement agenda. Additions to the senior team have increased the school's capacity to develop its strengths and tackle areas of relative weakness. Good teamwork is evident in the commitment of all staff to make initiatives work. Governors are very supportive and knowledgeable. They present healthy challenge to the school's leaders when necessary.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------

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?	1
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?	2

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.

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	2
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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. What you told us was really useful in helping us to reach our judgements.

We think Parkfield is a good school. We were most impressed by how very well behaved you were and how well you get on together and with your teachers. You told us how much you enjoy school and we could see that by how happy you all looked. Your teachers go to a lot of trouble to make sure you make good progress in your learning through good teaching and interesting lessons. They provide you with an excellent range of activities outside school such as the wonderful trips nearly all of you go on. You are very lucky to have teachers who give up so much time to make your education so enjoyable.

We think your headteacher and all the adults help you to get off to a good start in your education.

In order to make Parkfield even more successful we are asking the school to make sure that you do a bit better in your writing so that more of you get the higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. We also want the school to improve the way it tracks how well you are doing as you move up through the school, so that it can help you better if you start to fall behind, for example.

We are confident that you will continue to work hard with your teachers to make sure that your school goes from strength to strength.