

Park Spring Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107964
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	287976
Inspection date	16 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Judy Jones

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Wood
Headteacher	Mr M Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001
School address	Wellstone Avenue Leeds West Yorkshire LS13 4EH
Telephone number	0113 2576589
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average sized infant and junior school serves its local urban area west of Leeds. Standards on entry are a little below average and remain so at the start of Year 1. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is above average and a higher than average number join the school after the Foundation Stage. There is a nursery which is part of a newly refurbished Foundation unit. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There is a small group of pupils who do not speak English as their first language. None is at an early stage of learning English. There has been a significant change of teaching staff since the previous inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Good teaching and children's own keenness to succeed mean that children reach just above average standards by Year 6 and achieve well in relation to their starting points. By the end of Year 6 children read and write competently, have a good grasp of basic numeracy and can use computers with confidence. Parents are happy with the progress their children are making and support them by, for example, helping with reading homework. Links with parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good, and there is sufficient contact with all parents through written information, including a fortnightly menu of school dinners. The school follows the required curriculum satisfactorily but there is scope for enriching children's experience further by linking subjects and covering the same theme from different points of view. Children behave well because teachers have high expectations and themselves set a good example. Teachers speak politely to children, clearly explain what is wanted, and praise and compliment children when they behave well. Care, support and guidance for all children are good. Great care is given to considering the needs of individuals, so that procedures for making sure all children are given equal chances to succeed are outstanding. Children understand the need to take exercise and eat healthily. They enjoy active playtimes on the extensive school field and make healthy choices at lunchtime.

Teachers know their subjects well and have high expectations. Lessons are well planned but children do not use information and communication technology (ICT) enough in lessons. Teaching assistants support teachers well when required but their time is not always used efficiently. The school is well led. Recent instability has been managed well and the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Monitoring has so far been limited to too few senior staff and there is a need to spread this more widely. Although there is a minor area of inefficiency in the underuse of support staff, effective financial planning and the children's good achievement means the school gives good value for money.

The Foundation Stage prepares children well for formal learning in a way that builds confidence and is enjoyable. Children are encouraged to express themselves clearly and develop knowledge of the world around them through well structured play, both indoors and outdoors in a safe and caring environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the range and rigour of monitoring in order to spread good practice in teaching and make better use of teaching assistants and ICT.
- Increase the flexibility of the curriculum, so that subjects and topics can be linked to make learning in one subject enrich learning in another.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From below average starting points in the Nursery, children reach standards that are close to average by the end of Year 2. Results in tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 show that standards are just above average. All groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Achievement in relation to that of children in similar schools is very good and has risen over the last three years. The school met its challenging targets in 2006; higher attainers exceeded their targets in English by a significant difference. By Year 6 most children write and spell accurately and enjoy writing interesting

stories and poetry. They know how to write for a variety of purposes and can explain the difference, for example, between chronological and non-chronological reports. Their grasp of number is good. Training in mental maths starts early, so that by Year 6 children can calculate three and four figure subtraction logically and explain how they got their answers. They use ICT competently.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's good personal development is evident in the polite and friendly way they relate to adults and each other, and in their keenness to work hard and succeed. They behave well in lessons and are kind to each other in work and play. They like school and feel safe there; older children enjoy their additional responsibilities, for example as school councillors and helpers of younger children. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children develop well in their ability to think more deeply about life and their part in relationships with others. They are acutely aware of the need to live healthy lives, and at the request of the school council the school recently introduced healthy snacks at playtime. They enthusiastically endorse the school's ruling that during the very good school lunches, if they decide not to eat vegetables in their first course they must choose fruit for desert. Attendance is average and just below the local authority target. This is caused partly by some parents taking children on holiday during term time in spite of the school's discouragement.

Above average standards in reading and numeracy give children a firm foundation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most teaching is good, a little is outstanding and some is satisfactory. Teachers know how to interest children, and have high expectations that they will concentrate and work hard. As a result of recent initiatives, teachers are beginning to build into lessons opportunities for children to discuss their work together and help each other. In the best lessons this is done well and children are starting to understand the ways in which they learn best and to take responsibility for their own learning. Sometimes the formal layout of the classroom makes group discussion more difficult. Planning for topics and lessons is usually done with care but teaching assistants are not usually included in the planning and their time is not always well used. Children use the Internet confidently for research, though they do not always understand what they download, and some teachers are not sufficiently aware of this. Relationships are very good and teachers use humour very well to make lessons enjoyable, particularly with older children. Children speak enthusiastically about the fun they have in challenging subjects such as mathematics. The current emphasis on speaking, listening and handwriting is having an impact, and children's work shows good progress in the presentation of their written work over the current year. Children are assessed regularly and accurately through tests, but day-to-day marking is patchy and does not give children enough guidance on how to improve. This was an issue in the previous inspection report. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are assessed thoroughly and suitable provision made to support their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a well balanced curriculum that meets requirements in all major aspects. Planning takes account of the needs of children of different ages and abilities. ICT is taught as a separate subject and used to some extent in other subjects, but there is scope to improve this. For example, in science children do not use sensing equipment as required in the National Curriculum to measure quantities such as light levels or temperature. Subjects are planned with care but separately from each other, so that opportunities are limited to enrich children's experience and cultural awareness through linking work in, for example, history, geography, and design and technology. A good programme of personal, social and health education broadens the curriculum and helps children to develop knowledge and skills that will fit them for the future. A satisfactory range of activities outside lessons includes competitive sports and homework clubs. Recent events involving parents, such as harvest festival assemblies, have been very well received.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children's enjoyment of school and their good achievement are evidence of the good quality care and guidance they are given by all adults in the school. The school is outstanding in the way all children, whatever their needs, backgrounds or talents, are fully included in the life of the school. Teachers support children well in their own keenness to succeed by setting realistic but challenging targets and providing additional lessons for Year 6 children to help them do well in their tests. The leadership team, together with school governors, makes sure that the school meets all statutory requirements for child protection and risk assessments. Provision is good to keep children safe and they are well supervised in the extensive grounds. The school works closely with the parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ensuring these children make good progress alongside the rest. Bullying is infrequent, and dealt with swiftly and effectively when it occurs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led; recent instability caused by several teachers leaving at once has been well managed without standards dropping. Senior leaders and governors know the strengths of the school and its areas for improvement. Although only the headteacher monitors teaching. This means that other members of the leadership team and subject coordinators do not see directly such aspects as the use of ICT or the use of support staff in their subjects. The headteacher is accurate in his evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Monitoring by other means, such as looking at planning and children's work is done thoroughly for English, mathematics and science, but not for other subjects and there are inconsistencies in the quality of schemes of work. The school improvement plan is well geared to the needs of the school and to making practice consistently good in all areas. It is sufficiently ambitious and forward looking to prevent the school from resting on its laurels. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, though the quality of marking has slipped back again. The school's capacity to improve is good.

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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?	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?	3
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.

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	3
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	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to thank you for making me so welcome when I visited you. I enjoyed seeing your lessons and know now how hard you work to get such good results in your tests. I think that by the time you leave you read and write well and you are very good at mental maths. I enjoyed chatting to you in lessons and at lunchtime and it was very interesting to speak to a group of you for longer and hearing how much you like school and how you find your lessons fun. I agree with you about the things you like and I think your school is particularly good at making sure everyone feels cared for and part of the school. I have asked your teachers to make things better still for you by visiting each other's lessons more often so that they can help and advise each other better. For example, they will be able to find ways to make the other adults in the classroom even more helpful, and make sure all the marking helps you to know how to do better. I have also asked them to look at ways of making your lessons even more interesting by looking for ways to link subjects like history and geography and English, so that what you learn in one subject will help you understand better what is going on in others. I would like to congratulate you on all your hard work and I hope you will continue to do well.