



Parson Street Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108951
Local Authority Bristol, City of
Inspection number 288230
Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Ikin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bedminster Road
School category	Community		Bedminster
Age range of pupils	3–11		Bristol BS3 5NR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 9030226
Number on roll (school)	435	Fax number	0117 9030230
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Robin Clapp
		Headteacher	Mark Lacey
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. About ten per cent are from minority ethnic groups and a small proportion speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average.

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 which has improved considerably since the last inspection. The very good leadership of the headteacher has been paramount in creating good leadership and management throughout the school and in driving up standards. The school also benefits from a highly committed chair of governors and a very well informed and supportive governing body. The care and concern that are shown for pupils, staff and parents have created an open and honest atmosphere in which everyone wants to do their best for the school because they feel trusted and valued.

Improving pupils' achievement is at the heart of the school's work. Rigorous analysis of assessment information is used to pinpoint where problems are occurring. Effective action is then taken to put them right. The deputy headteacher plays an important part in this by using her expertise to work directly with teachers and pupils to bring about improvements. Standards are now average in reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) by Year 6. This is good achievement for most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school recognises that more work needs to be done in writing and speaking and listening, where standards are below average because pupils do not have the broad vocabulary and the knowledge of Standard English that they need to develop their ideas in greater depth.

The care, guidance and support that pupils receive are good and, as a result, their personal development and well-being are also good. Pupils receive good encouragement to take responsibility, both in the running of the school and in their own learning. The school's work on 'building learning power' has made a good contribution to pupils' growth in confidence, their determination to succeed and their eagerness to learn. These positive attitudes contribute well to pupils' progress and preparation for their future lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is good and in the classroom it is often exemplary.

Teaching and learning are good. From the moment they enter the classroom pupils know that they are there to work. Teachers make much better use of assessment to plan for lessons which meet pupils' different needs than was the case in the last inspection. The curriculum is good, with very good use of visits, visitors and practical activities to bring learning to life. New strategies to improve writing have been started in Years 5 and 6. They are beginning to have a positive effect but have not yet been implemented in the rest of the school. Improvements to the school's computer stock together with increased staff confidence have resulted in improved standards in ICT.

Good leadership in the Foundation Stage has resulted in a good quality curriculum for the youngest children.

No one in the school is complacent and all say that they can 'never take their eye off the ball'. Its capacity for further improvement is good because of this. The school's previous designation of having serious weaknesses no longer applies.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' speaking and listening skills by increasing their vocabulary and knowledge of Standard English across the curriculum.
- Improve standards and achievement in writing in English and other subjects of the curriculum by extending current developments in Years 5 and 6 to the rest of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children enter the Nursery, standards are much lower than those expected for children of a similar age, especially in communication, language and literacy. Although standards in the Reception year and by the end of Year 2 are below average, increasing numbers of pupils reach or exceed the levels expected for their age as they move through the school. By the time they reach Year 6, standards are average in mathematics, reading, science and ICT. This represents good achievement and is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Writing has not yet improved to the same extent. Although most pupils make satisfactory progress, standards are below average. The school has embarked on a more rigorous method of teaching writing in Years 5 and 6. This is proving effective but is not yet being used in the rest of the school. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are also below average. Although they speak with increasing confidence as they get older, a limited ability to use Standard English and a lack of vocabulary prevent some pupils from reaching higher standards across the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and more-able pupils achieve well. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language do as well as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and thrive in the school's warm and supportive atmosphere. They get a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, where they learn to get on well together and enjoy learning. Pupils respond well in lessons and persevere to overcome difficulties because of the good relationships that they have with their teachers and their growing understanding of how they learn. However, they are sometimes too dependent on their teachers for things that they should be able to do for themselves. Their behaviour is good and often exemplary in lessons and assembly, which is a big improvement since the last inspection. They are fully involved in the decision-making process and make a good contribution to the school and wider community through their work on the school council and their charity work. A good example is the sensitive development of a 'friendship garden' in memory of a pupil and a member of staff who died last year. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The specialist teaching of physical education and the well-equipped area for outdoor play contribute to this. The school's

attendance rates are improving and are almost in line with the national average as a result of the school's efforts.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and have improved since the last inspection. There is clear planning for the different needs of pupils in most lessons and constant checking of how well pupils are doing in relation to the targets that have been set for them. Additional support is given when they are seen to be falling behind. Opportunities for pupils to read together in small groups and an emphasis on teaching pupils how to solve problems in mathematics and carry out scientific investigations have contributed to improved standards in these subjects. Teachers successfully interest pupils in learning through the good use of interactive whiteboards and practical activities. They encourage them to talk to the whole class and to each other about their work. However, not enough attention is given to helping pupils to broaden their vocabulary and use grammatically correct speech.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides an innovative curriculum which meets the needs of most pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and more- able pupils. It is carefully planned to ensure that pupils make progress in all subjects as they move through the school, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Purposeful links are made between subjects to make learning interesting but not enough emphasis is put on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. The introduction of a new scheme of work for science has had a dramatic effect on improving standards in the subject. Improved resources and teachers' skills in using them are having a similar effect in ICT. The school is currently seeking ways of improving the curriculum for writing and one of these is proving effective in Years 5 and 6. It has not yet been extended to the rest of the school. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and supports clear progression between the Nursery and the Reception classes. However, planning for group work in the Reception class is more effective than in the Nursery because it is more precise. This is particularly evident in communication, language and literacy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good arrangements for safeguarding the welfare and safety of pupils are reviewed regularly. Pupils receive good quality personal care and guidance because of the very good knowledge that staff have of individual pupils and their families. The learning mentor makes an effective contribution by helping vulnerable pupils to keep up with

their work. Well-established procedures, including home visits, help pupils settle quickly into the Nursery. Good links with secondary schools ensure smooth transfers at the end of Year 6. Assessment and tracking procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now good and are used well to help pupils take the next steps in learning. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are closely monitored and they receive effective support as a result. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's learning and is becoming increasingly successful in this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. All aspects have improved since the last inspection because of the very strong leadership of the headteacher. His commitment and determination have been the key to driving up standards and creating a positive ethos based on mutual care and respect, in which everyone is consulted and involved and where all want to do their best for the school. The leadership team, comprising senior teachers in the school, is impressive. They are well informed and carry out their roles effectively. Systematic and well-organised management systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are used well to identify where improvements are needed. The expertise of the deputy headteacher is used effectively to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum. The leadership of the Foundation Stage, which was a weakness in the last inspection, is now good. Subject leaders have been effective in improving standards in mathematics, science, reading and ICT but have not yet been as effective for writing. The drive and determination of the chair of governors has transformed the governance of the school. Governors are well trained, knowledgeable and informed. They give generously of their time and expertise to support all aspects of the school's work.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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 and helping us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn and play. We can see why you are proud of your school and why you like your headteacher and teachers so much. We think that it gives you a good education.

What we liked about your school

- Your headteacher is doing a very good job in making the school a good place for you to learn, and the deputy headteacher and governors support him well in this.
- Your teachers plan your lessons carefully and find interesting ways to help you to enjoy learning.
- You work hard and are making good progress in reading, mathematics, science and ICT.
- You behave well and do a lot to look after the school and help make the school a happy place.
- The school takes good care of you and gives you all the support you need to help you get better in your work and in your personal lives.

What we think needs to be improved

- The way the school helps you to make better progress in writing and speaking and listening. You could help in this by trying to use whole sentences and more difficult words in your writing and your discussions.