



Park House Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112606
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289341
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rupert Street
School category	Community		Lower Pilsley, Lower Pilsley
Age range of pupils	4–11		Chesterfield, Derbyshire
			S45 8DB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01246851185
Number on roll (school)	206	Fax number	01246851185
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Steven Coates
		Headteacher	Mr G J Philbin
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Park House Primary is a below average sized primary school serving the village of Lower Pilsley and the surrounding area. The school is very popular and over 70% of the children are from outside the catchment area. The children come from a range of social and economic backgrounds. Most children are White British but a very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds and are learning English as an additional language. A below average proportion of children have learning difficulties or disabilities. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is well below average. The school has had significant changes to the staff and governing body in recent years, and the headteacher had been in post for two years at the time of the inspection.

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 with a number of outstanding features. The inspection findings match those of the school, the parents and the pupils'. Parents are, rightly, very pleased with the quality of education provided for their children and the way they are prepared for their future schooling. The school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate and has an emphasis on 'the Park House way'. This is reflected in the outstanding behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, and their exceptional enjoyment in school. Older pupils readily take on responsibilities, such as looking after younger children and all make their voices heard in the school council, so that their ideas can shape the life of the school. The school's major strengths are in providing outstanding care and support for pupils, both on a personal level and through exceptionally effective monitoring of their academic progress. Pupils told inspectors that there was no bullying in school but that if it happened, they were confident it would be dealt with well. This is supported by the parents' positive views about how happy their children are and how well their children are looked after. This starts when children begin school because good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that they settle well and happily take part in activities. Good teaching continues throughout the school because excellent assessment systems provide staff with a clear indication of how well pupils are progressing. All teachers willingly try new ideas, such as those recently introduced to help children understand what they are learning and what is expected of them. Relative weaknesses in teaching and learning stem from inconsistencies in teachers' use of time and from a lack of opportunities for pupils to develop and use problem solving skills. Some teachers spend too long talking to pupils, rather than involving them in activities that really make them think. The school's strengths have been developed over time, but they have been built on and refined by the current headteacher who is providing the school with exceptionally high quality leadership. Even after a short time in post he has made his mark on the school. One parent described him as 'caring, enthusiastic, energetic and forward-thinking' adding 'we couldn't do without him!' He is well supported by an effective senior management team and there are growing leadership skills throughout the staff. All of these factors have had a positive impact on improvement, which has been good since the last inspection, and on the current high standards achieved. The school prepares pupils well for their future lives. They develop very good basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills. Much of the teaching encourages pupils to work together and share ideas. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is broadly average. Standards in English, mathematics and science are regularly above the national average by the end of the Year 6. In 2006 standards were exceptionally high because a high proportion of pupils exceeded the nationally expected levels for their age. Most pupils achieved well and exceeded challenging targets set for them. Lower down the school, standards are more inconsistent from year to year, especially in writing. Recent initiatives to improve spelling and sentence structure are yet to impact fully on overall attainment, particularly of boys. Nevertheless, the progress made by pupils from Reception to Year 6 is good. The overall leadership and management are good and all staff work very well together. The changes brought about under the current leadership have had a clear and positive

impact on provision and standards, and they show the school has an outstanding capacity to improve further in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, especially that of the boys, by extending and reinforcing the recent emphasis on spelling and sentence structure. - Improve the consistency of teaching by involving pupils more in their learning, ensuring that all lessons proceed briskly and providing more opportunities for problem solving.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils attain consistently high standards in national tests in Year 2 and Year 6. The early indications are that results for Year 6 in 2006 are exceptionally high in English, mathematics, and science, although writing remains a weaker subject throughout the school. Children make good progress in Reception and the majority attain levels expected. Good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2, though there is relative underperformance by a small, but significant group of boys, particularly in writing. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress but are relatively weaker in spelling and developing problem solving skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as their peers, because the school takes great care to give all pupils an equal chance to succeed. Inspectors judge the progress of pupils of all backgrounds throughout the school as good and current standards as above average overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This aspect is outstanding because pupils' behaviour is exceptional and they have excellent attitudes towards school and their learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They take a very full part in the activities provided for them both in and out of lessons. Even after a short time in the school, it is very evident how much the pupils enjoy being there. This is supported by above average attendance. Teachers deal with pupils consistently through effective rewards and sanctions. The school ensures pupils are very aware of how to stay healthy, especially through eating well and being physically active. Pupils take advantage of excellent opportunities to help others and become effective members of the school and wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of the teaching and learning is at least good and occasionally outstanding. This has a positive impact on the pupils' progress. Teachers have had to face a number of significant changes under the new leadership. This they have done very positively and the sharing of good practice is now a feature of the teaching. For example, the practice of teachers sharing with pupils what they need to do to be successful, in language they can understand, is growing. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this has a very positive impact on learning and classroom attitudes. The introduction of techniques such as getting children to talk in pairs so they clarify and explain their thinking is becoming well-embedded. Not enough time is currently given for pupils to develop their problem solving and thinking skills. In a few lessons, teachers talk for too long and the pace of lessons is too slow. The teaching in subjects found to be weaker at the last inspection is now good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It effectively meets the needs and interests of all pupils. It is broad, balanced and is augmented by an expanding range of activities, including sports, music and various clubs. The curriculum is further enhanced by a wide range of visits, including residential visits to an outdoor and adventurous activities centre. The curriculum is planned and resourced well to develop pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy. The school places appropriate emphasis on the use of these skills across the curriculum. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good but the lack of appropriate software for such pupils makes it more difficult for them to improve their ICT skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are outstanding. Very high levels of staff commitment and competence promote the health, safety and well being of all pupils very effectively. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust, clear and adhered to. Pupils and their parents feel that the school provides a safe environment. Teachers have a good understanding of the pastoral and developmental needs of the pupils and respond positively to them. Excellent assessment procedures enable the staff to offer appropriate academic guidance and to set useful individual targets for pupils. The requirements of learners across the whole academic spectrum are clearly identified and effective arrangements are made to support them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

In his short time in the post, the headteacher has built very successfully on the school's existing strengths and he is improving the school rapidly through his outstanding leadership. The evaluation of the success of aspects of the school's work is excellent and is resulting in all staff being very aware of the important priorities for further improvement. The recent changes to subject leadership are beginning to be reflected in rising standards and improved provision but have yet to have a significant impact on making teaching more consistent. The governing body has also been through significant changes recently and these need time to bed in. Nevertheless, governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and offer the school a good level of support and challenge.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	2
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	1
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.

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	1
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

21 September 2006 Dear Children Park House Primary School, Rupert Street, Lower Pilsley, Derbyshire, S45 8DB We want to thank you very much for the way you welcomed us to your school this week, and for being so polite and helpful. This made our job much easier and meant that it was a real pleasure to spend time in the school. We particularly want to thank those of you spoke to us, like the school council members. It was good that you shared with us how happy you are at the school. You are very lucky to be at Park House. It is a good school and in a lot of ways is outstanding. You help the school to be this good because you behave so well in and out of classes, and this helps your teachers teach you so many new things. We could see how much you all enjoy school and we think the teachers enjoy teaching you as well! There are a few things the school can do to get even better in the future. You can help by working hard to improve your writing and spelling, so they are as good as your reading, number and other skills. We think the teachers need to let you contribute to lessons a bit more and to give you more chances to think about and solve problems. Mr Philbin and the other adults all care for you and look after you very well. Staff are always looking for ways they can make the school better and to help you to learn more. They keep you safe and plan lots of very interesting activities which a lot of you get involved in. They also listen to you and your ideas so you have a good say in the life of the school. Enjoy your time at Park House and carry on working hard!

Geof Timms Lead inspector