



Parkside Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112961
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289474
Inspection dates 13–14 November 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Jones

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Boythorpe Avenue
School category	Community		Boythorpe, Chesterfield
Age range of pupils	11–16		Derbyshire S40 2NS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01246 273458
Number on roll (school)	572	Fax number	01246 551361
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Jean Horton
		Headteacher	Mr Kevin Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	13–14 November 2006	289474

© Crown copyright 2006

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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Parkside Community School is a small comprehensive school situated on the southern edge of Chesterfield. It draws most of its pupils from the Rother and Holmebrook wards, where there are high levels of socio-economic deprivation and unemployment. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average, and the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is above average. The great majority of pupils are White British. The present headteacher took up his post in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Parkside provides a satisfactory education, and is now focused on improving standards and achievement. Pupils' achievement in relation to their starting points is satisfactory. Although standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are below national averages, test results have shown satisfactory improvement over the past few years, with more pupils attaining the higher grades. Results at GCSE, although just below the national average, have shown a real improvement since 2004 among those gaining five or more higher grades.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Many of the lessons engage pupils' interest, encourage them to think independently and show them what they must do to improve. Pupils enjoy these lessons and as a result, relationships are good, they concentrate well and make good progress. In some of the satisfactory lessons, however, progress is less good because learning activities do not take enough account of pupils' different attainment levels. In these lessons teachers do most of the talking rather than encouraging pupils to be actively involved. Marking of pupils' work is not always good enough for them to know how to improve. Pupils' work is not always tidy and well presented because some teachers do not have high enough expectations of the presentation of their work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is being improved through the addition of vocational courses in collaboration with other local schools. Healthy lunchtime eating options are in place, and are used well by pupils, and many of them take part in the numerous extra-curricular sports activities that the school provides. Pupils enjoy taking on roles such as 'buddying' Year 7 pupils by Year 10 pupils, or membership of the school council. A strength of the school is its effective pastoral support and in particular the help given to the most vulnerable pupils.

The school has gone through a difficult period of transition and staff restructuring in the past couple of years. The headteacher and his deputy, and a smaller and more focused senior leadership team, have effectively renewed the school's drive for improvement. The strategy for improvement includes satisfactory procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning, and greater accountability for performance from curriculum area leaders. In science, geography and physical education, for example, there is already rigorous monitoring which leads to an understanding of where improvement is needed, but this is not yet the case in all subjects. The impact of leadership on standards means that the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory rather than good at this stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve the consistency of monitoring and evaluation of curriculum areas.
- Improve the quality of marking, and address the issue of care and presentation of exercise books.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school. Over the last few years Key Stage 3 test results have improved, and the proportion of pupils achieving higher grades has increased. In 2006 there was a slight downturn in science and English results, but a significant improvement in mathematics. Standards overall at the end of Key Stage 3 are still below national averages.

GCSE results are just below average. The proportion of pupils gaining at least five pass grades has shown a lack of improvement over the past few years. However, the proportion gaining five or more higher grades has risen steadily since 2004, and improved strongly in 2006. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more higher grade GCSEs including English and mathematics also rose significantly in 2006.

The learning needs of the least able pupils are successfully met, ensuring that their progress is satisfactory. The school has also focused recently on the learning needs of more able pupils and this has led to satisfactory improvement in test and examination results for them. Pupils enjoy their learning when they are engaged and interested by their courses and understand clearly what they must do to improve their work and reach the next level.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. A lot of them enjoy school, and there are satisfactory attendance levels, encouraged by sound procedures to monitor and improve attendance. Poor punctuality sometimes restricts learning and this is being addressed by the school. Pupils get on well with each other, their behaviour is at least satisfactory, and they show consideration for others as they move around the school. The school implements several strategies which are becoming successful in helping less cooperative pupils to conform to the school's expectations.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils gain a sound understanding of other cultures through their work in several subjects. Assemblies, however, do not regularly offer opportunities for spiritual reflection. Older pupils make a valuable contribution to the school community. Members of the school council, for example, are proud of the positive changes they are helping to bring about in their school. Pupils enjoy having these positions of responsibility, which develop their leadership and decision making skills, but they do not currently have enough of them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The school is working hard to improve the quality of pupils' learning and the benefits were seen in several lessons observed during the inspection. In these lessons, teachers used their good subject knowledge to plan learning activities that engaged pupils' interest and encouraged them to think independently. Pupils say that they like these lessons because learning is fun.

Relationships are good and there is usually a purposeful learning atmosphere. However, in many satisfactory lessons, progress is slowed because teachers do not take enough account in their planning of pupils' different abilities and do not include enough activities that engage pupils actively. As a result pupils' interest is not held and some become inattentive. The school recognises that standards and achievement must improve and has done much to ensure the effectiveness of its strategies to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

Teachers' marking is not always good enough. In some instances marking does not provide clear guidance on the standard of the work and what pupils must do to improve. Marking does not always communicate high enough expectations with regard to the care of exercise books and the presentation and completion of work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and is being improved to address pupils' needs more effectively. For example, the school plans to extend the range of vocational courses in collaboration with other local schools. The school places appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Provision for information and communication technology is good across both key stages and this is reflected in the good progress pupils make in the subject. The personal, social and health education programme satisfactorily raises pupils' awareness of the working community and responsible citizenship, and provides sex and drugs education. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good, as is the provision for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils benefit from residential activities and visits to local places of interest. There is a good range of extra-curricular sports activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory. There is good pastoral support for all pupils, with particularly effective help given to the most vulnerable, strengthened by productive links with many external agencies. Pupils recognise this, saying that they feel safe and that there is always someone to go to if they need help. Systems are in place to ensure the protection of pupils, including effective arrangements for ensuring that adults who work with them are appropriately vetted. Risk assessments are not

yet in place. Arrangements to prepare pupils for secondary education help them to settle quickly. Parents are generally supportive of the school although a small number state that they wish the school would take their views and those of pupils more into account. The school has satisfactory systems for tracking the progress of all pupils, but the information from them is not always used consistently enough to identify underachievement and provide appropriate additional support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. During a period of transition the headteacher and his deputy are providing a clear direction for school improvement. The senior leadership team has been restructured and new appointments are strengthening senior and middle management, and so support the drive for improvement. Appropriate priorities for action have been identified and there is a sharp focus on performance and the raising of standards. The school is keen to involve parents and carers in their children's education and this is a strong feature in the school's recent bid for specialist status in mathematics and computing.

The arrangements for monitoring the school's performance and the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. The role of middle managers in checking how well things are going and planning improvements has been strengthened. However, these management processes are not equally effective across all subjects. While there is evidence of rigorous monitoring in, for example, science, geography and physical education, this is not the case in other subjects, where weaknesses in planning and teaching are not always recognised.

Governance is satisfactory, as is value for money. Resources are managed well and used effectively. There are good links with other schools and relevant organisations, with a firm commitment to strengthen these further and enhance the services the school provides to pupils, families and the local community. The school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
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	3
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

15 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Parkside Community School, Boythorpe Avenue, Boythorpe, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2NS

Thank you very much for welcoming me and the inspection team into your school, and for being polite and courteous to us. We enjoyed talking to you about the school, and your views have certainly helped us to write our report. You told us you like the spacious site and appreciate the new and refurbished parts of the accommodation, including the new toilet facilities, although space for some of your favourite lessons like drama is quite limited. The great majority of you enjoy school and are well behaved, and the school has good ways of tackling misbehaviour when it occurs.

You are quite clear about which lessons help you to make the most progress. You really like lessons that provide a challenge, get you interested and thinking for yourselves, and show you what you have to do to improve and reach the next level. You like these lessons because they make learning fun and they help you make good progress. We saw lessons like this, and we agree that they really help you. Not all your lessons are like this though, and the standards you achieve are better in some areas than others. You don't always make enough progress, and your headteacher and his team are working hard to change this and help you to improve your performance. We have asked the teachers to make sure that all your lessons are interesting and challenging, that work is set at just the right level for you, and that your books are marked thoroughly so that you can make the best possible progress. We think you can help yourselves to improve by working really neatly in your exercise books and not defacing them.

You told us you feel safe in school, and that there is always someone to go to if you need help. The school is helping you to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle by providing healthy lunches and opportunities for exercise through sports activities. You enjoy taking on roles such as 'buddying' Year 7 pupils, or being on the school council, and you said you would welcome the chance to take on more of these sorts of responsibilities.

Once again, thank you for making our two days in school so interesting, and we wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Jones

Lead inspector