

# Parkgate Infants' and Nursery School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117163
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	290742
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Raminder Arora

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Curry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Ann Lawrence
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Northfield Gardens Watford Hertfordshire WD24 7RL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923221984
<b>Fax number</b>	01923244515

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<b>Age group</b>	3–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average size school serves a very mixed economic area and a diverse community with the largest ethnic group being of Pakistani origin. An above average proportion of pupils speaks a home language other than English and many are on early stages of learning English. A low proportion qualifies for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. A significant number of pupils leaves and enters school during the course of a year. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is below the expected level, especially in communication skills.

## 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 where pupils flourish and mature within a supportive and caring learning environment. Parents overwhelmingly support the school. One parent wrote, 'We are very pleased with our children's education; they enjoy school and are making good progress. The staff are very helpful and caring.' The headteacher, staff and governors know the school well, and their own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses ties in closely with the inspection findings. The school has moved forward well since its last inspection, and because of the enthusiasm of the staff and the senior managers for staff training, has a good capacity for further and continued development.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They thoroughly enjoy their time in school, and this is reflected in their positive attitudes to work and enthusiasm for learning. Their behaviour is good. Pupils become increasingly mature as they move through the school and take on responsibilities for routine tasks, such as milk or fruit monitors. The School Council is fast developing a good 'pupil voice'.

Provision and achievement in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. A well-planned range of activities in the Nursery gives children a good start to education. However, children make satisfactory progress overall in relation to their starting point, which is below average. Achievement is good in the main school as a result of the good quality of teaching and learning that enables most pupils to achieve the targets set for them. Currently, the standards are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Overall, pupils make good progress during their time in school and especially so in writing, where effective measures have improved standards to above the national average. However, pupils, including those new to English, have insufficient planned opportunities to strengthen their communication skills. While most pupils have good listening skills, they are less confident in speaking clearly and fluently.

The curriculum is good overall. It is supported by a range of visits and visiting speakers, and the well-organised theme days, for example, the very successful Victorian Experience Day during the inspection. The available time is fairly distributed and well used for all subjects, but the planning and monitoring of some afternoon activities is not rigorous enough or consistently monitored.

Leadership and management are good and the headteacher provides good leadership for the school. The leadership team are effective in ensuring the implementation of the school development plan, and take a good lead in driving standards forwards. Their role in tracking frequently the progress of pupils enables them to highlight areas of whole school strength and weakness accurately. For example, this process enabled them to diagnose the need to improve further the provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The role of governors is well developed and their input into the school development planning process is much valued. The school gives good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Focus even more closely on the development of pupils' speaking and communication skills.
- Share best practice in teaching and learning to ensure that it is consistently good in meeting needs of the pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- Improve the quality of planning and monitoring of some of the afternoon activities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good. This is particularly impressive because the school has a significant proportion of pupils who join the school part way through the academic year. Most children start at school with levels of knowledge that are below expectations and many are learning English as a new language. The children in the Nursery make effective progress because of the teacher's imaginative use of resources. Overall, most children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage.

Standards are below average by the start of Year 1. Pupils' progress is good in Years 1 and 2. This means that standards are average by the end of Year 2 although standards of speaking and communication are slightly below expectations. The school met its challenging targets in 2006. Over the last five years, standards are consistently average and well maintained. Standards of writing in teachers' assessments in 2006 were above average because the school's leadership placed a high emphasis on developing this area. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well. More able and gifted and talented pupils are satisfactorily challenged.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Their positive attitudes to learning assist them to make effective progress. Pupils have good understanding of right and wrong and teachers work effectively on raising their self-esteem. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school activities immensely and their behaviour is good. They work carefully with equipment and have a keen understanding of how to be safe. Healthy lifestyles are taken up seriously and pupils enjoy the regular physical exercise sessions. One pupil said, 'We are happy, because we get more fruit and less fat.' Pupils make a positive contribution to the community. The School Council gathers ideas and concerns of all pupils well, and has recently been involved in choosing new equipment for lunchtimes. These include 'pom poms' which encourage pupils to exercise as cheerleaders. The pupils raise money for various charities and happily take on responsibilities around the school. Their good team skills, along with their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare them satisfactorily for future life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well and ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. The learning climate is very positive and the lessons are interesting and enjoyable. This enables pupils to concentrate and work hard. The management of pupils is good and relationships are very good. In almost all classrooms, there is a good learning ethos, with pupils working well both individually and in small groups, learning to collaborate and listening to the ideas of others. In some good lessons, teachers plan effectively and support pupils new to learning English. The regular use of laptops in lessons is an effective learning aid much enjoyed by the pupils. Questioning is used well to check how much has been understood and to extend pupils' ideas. While most pupils for whom English is an additional language are generally well supported, the individual needs of those at an early stage of learning English are not always

clearly focused on in lessons. Teaching assistants make a good contribution in lessons. The support they give is particularly helpful in ensuring that pupils make gains in lessons.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The school fulfils its aim to provide good equal opportunities for all. An exciting range of well-planned indoor and outdoor activities is a good feature of the Nursery. This practice is being extended into the Reception classes where teachers have begun to plan and work together to improve their practice. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with a wide range of relevant and interesting learning opportunities that stimulate pupils' interest and imagination. However, the planning and monitoring of some of the afternoon activities is not rigorous enough to ensure the best use of the time allocated. Provision for basic skills, such as ICT, is effective. The curriculum is modified to take account of the needs of the less able; and those with particular talents. There is a particular focus on ensuring that pupils are healthy and fit. The planned curriculum pays good attention to pupils' personal, social and health education programme. Extra-curricular provision including visits and visitors is good and an increasing number of pupils takes advantage of the recorders club. Themed days, for example the Victorian Experience Day further stimulate interest and enthusiasm.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' care, guidance and support are good. The commitment of adults in school to support pupils' pastoral needs is inspiring. This is evident in the guidance staff offer children and so the pupils' personal needs are really well looked after. The school's leadership works well with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils who find learning hard are identified early and supported well and so they make good progress. The staff ensure children's health and safety effectively. Policies and procedures required to ensure pupils' protection and care are in place. The school's systems for checking pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics are comprehensive and track less able and average pupils' progress well but more able pupils' achievement is less effectively recorded.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides leadership of a good quality. Both the headteacher and the deputy-head work well as a team. Their clear sense of direction and determination to help all pupils achieve their best is shared effectively with all staff. The subject co-ordinators are well involved in self-evaluation and analysis of the school's work. Their role in regularly tracking the progress of pupils enables them increasingly to highlight accurately areas for whole school improvement, for example the need to improve teaching to support pupils in the early stages of learning English.

The school benefits from a good partnership with many organisations. All members of the school community have opportunities to express their views which are carefully considered and taken on board. Governors make an important contribution to the successes of the school. A clear knowledge of the school's work enables them to carry out their monitoring role effectively and make informed decisions about how to allocate funds to support improvement. For example,

the increased provision of laptops is helping pupils to develop appropriate basic skills and enjoy learning.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

21 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkgate Infants' and Nursery School. Northfield Gardens, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD24 7RL

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you that we enjoyed ourselves very much, especially your activities during the Victorian Experience Day; and we would like to thank you all for talking to us and sharing your work. We were there to see how well your school helps you to learn, and what we saw and heard helped us to decide that your school is a good and caring school. We were impressed by how well you all behave and how much you enjoy being there.

The things we liked best about your school are:

- you listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and you are willing to work hard in your lessons
- you learn to work and play well together and to look after yourselves everyone at school cares for you, so that you are safe and happy, and your parents are very pleased the headteacher, all the staff and the governors know what they want the school to be like and work hard together to make it a happy place for you to learn and play

These are the things that we think would make your school even better.

- We have asked the teachers to help you to speak even more fluently and clearly.
- We have also asked your teachers to share their best ideas for helping those of you who are just starting to learn English as a new language.
- We would like your teachers to plan some of your afternoon activities more carefully and check that these are helping you to use your time well so that you can learn even more.

All staff are determined to ensure that you all make good progress and no one is behind in his or her learning. You can help the school to get even better by continuing to behave well and doing your best.

With best wishes for the rest of the school year.

Raminder Arora Lead inspector

(Sign off) (Lead inspector/HMI)