



Park Street Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary

School

Inspection Report

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Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 117452  
**Local Authority** HERTFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 290840  
**Inspection date** 7 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Michael Best

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>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Branch Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Park Street, St. Albans
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Hertfordshire AL2 2LX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01727872158
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	205	<b>Fax number</b>	01727875477
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Ruth Ward
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Geoff Sturgess
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 September 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	7 November 2006	290840

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is of average size. Most pupils come from the village but some live in nearby towns. When they join the school in the nursery, children's skills and experiences are similar to those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving during their school career is average. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below average. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties, and those with statements of special educational needs, are broadly average. There have been some changes in staff since the last 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 and improving school which provides good value for money. Improvement since the last inspection, and the school's capacity for further improvement, are good. The school evaluates accurately its effectiveness and what it needs to do to improve further.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well. Nearly all reach, and many exceed, the standards expected by the time they start in Year 1. Overall, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average and achievement is good. However, analysis of recent statutory test results indicates that pupils' skills in applying and using mathematics, and in investigative and experimental work in science, are less developed relative to other areas of these subjects. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress, as do those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. Parents are pleased that their children enjoy school so much. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and attendance is above average. The school works well with its partner schools and other agencies to promote pupils' well-being. Pupils' development of healthy lifestyles is excellent. They are unanimous in saying they feel safe in school and can always find help and support. The school's preparation of its pupils for the next stage of their education and the world of work is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and proceed at a good pace. Staff manage pupils well and relationships are good. Pupils work well individually and in groups. Staff monitor and assess pupils' work in lessons well through good questioning but their marking does not always include comments to help pupils improve their work. The curriculum is good and pupils benefit from a wide range of visits and after-school activities. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' care, guidance and support. Arrangements to safeguard children and promote good behaviour and attendance are robust. The school's assessment procedures provide a rigorous and uniform approach to monitoring pupils' attainment and progress across the curriculum as they move through the school. The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides clear and focused direction to the school's work. Monitoring is rigorous and the school's self-evaluation procedures are developing well, with some good examples of perceptive analysis leading to decisive action towards fulfilling challenging targets. The governing body is supportive, monitors the school's work closely and meets all its statutory requirements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge, and undertake investigative and experimental work, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Ensure greater consistency in marking, particularly in identifying pupils' next steps in learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because there is an effective balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities. The experienced staff team have a good understanding of children's interests and needs. In the 2006 National Curriculum teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, results were above average in reading and writing, and exceptionally high in mathematics compared with other schools. An increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels, notably in writing, has accelerated the already improving trend in performance of earlier years, and improved rate of pupils' progress in this key stage.

Results in the 2006 statutory tests at the end of Year 6 were above average in English and broadly average in mathematics and science. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in English increased to an exceptionally high level, this was not matched in mathematics and science, which fell to broadly average. Evidence from the inspection, together with analysis of results in previous years, indicate that the 2006 results represent the exception to an otherwise above average trend in performance. The school has rightly identified that a small minority of these Year 6 pupils - mainly boys with behavioural difficulties - did not make as much progress as expected. This reduced to average the progress pupils made within the key stage from the significantly higher levels reached in previous years. Observations during the inspection validate the school's judgement that the recent revision of the school's behaviour policy and practices, together with more robust assessment procedures, are keeping pupils on track to achieve their challenging targets and that pupils' achievement is now good.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are friendly, polite and supportive of one another. Those who join the school other than at the usual time say that they were welcomed and quickly made new friends. Pupils have positive attitudes to work and show respect for the school environment. They take on responsibility well. They are familiar with their personal targets for improvement, and discuss their progress towards these maturely. Pupils are confident in discussions, when speaking to an audience in assembly and when meeting visitors. Parents are justifiably pleased with the arrangements for their children's transfer to secondary schools at the end of Year 6, and the support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. A small minority of pupils - mainly older boys - have, in the past, had difficulty in meeting the school's high expectations. Following a recent review of the school's behaviour policy, pupils are now more actively involved in formulating school and class rules, and agreeing rewards and sanctions. Inspection evidence confirms the view of pupils, staff and parents that the new arrangements are working very well. All agree that bullying is not an issue in the school and that, should it occur, the school takes prompt and

effective action. Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities provided for exercise and are very well informed about eating healthily. The 'School Forum' provides a good vehicle for pupils to gain experience of decision-making and pupils work well together in groups and teams.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school's evaluation of its provision is accurate, and the identification of areas that need further development is well focused. Teachers' planning highlights crisp, achievable targets for the pupils' learning and clear success criteria, all of which are shared and reviewed with them. Support staff make a valuable contribution in lessons, particularly in supporting pupils who learn at different rates. Staff assess pupils' progress in lessons well and make good use of this information in planning subsequent lessons. However, in marking pupils' books, teachers do not always include written comments that refer to the lesson's shared success criteria or identify the individual's next steps. Pupils respond well to teachers' probing questions and use computers confidently to support their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum reflects national strategies and guidance. Recent reviews of long and medium term planning are successfully focussing staff on improving the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding to help raise standards. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and citizenship. The promotion of pupils' social, moral and cultural awareness is particularly strong. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have full access to the curriculum. Access to the curriculum for pupils learning English as an additional language is good.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Staff care very well for their pupils. The school makes excellent use of expert advisers and outside agencies and maintains very strong links with partner schools. Partnerships with parents are outstanding, and they are most supportive of the school's work to help their children. Staff provide very well for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place. Child protection procedures are robust and staff are suitably trained. Pupils are clear about their personal targets for improvement and have a good understanding of how well they are doing in lessons. Parents say that staff are extremely approachable and that annual written reports are very comprehensive.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Daily routines are well established and the school runs smoothly. The school is an inclusive community that successfully promotes full equality of opportunity for all pupils. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, and the school's provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, are good. The recently extended accommodation is maintained to a high standard and learning resources are good. Staff deployment is good and the team works well together. By establishing a common framework for planning, assessing and monitoring the curriculum, and through carefully focused staff training, the headteacher is successfully enabling subject leaders and other managers to develop their roles and responsibilities and to focus their energies on further raising standards. Staff are becoming well involved in evaluation procedures and the governing body systematically reviews school policies and provision. Governors regularly visit the school to observe lessons but have limited opportunities to talk more informally with pupils.

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## 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	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

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

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

<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>	1

<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.

## 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

8 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Park Street Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Branch Road, Park Street, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL2 2LX

Thank you very much for making me welcome when I visited your school recently. I am very impressed by your confidence in asking and answering questions. Congratulations on your good attendance. I am delighted to hear how much you enjoy school and that you want to do well.

The staff take excellent care of you. They are helping you grow up into interesting and responsible adults who get on well with each other, live healthily and enjoy all that they do. Mr Sturgess runs the school well. He visits your classes regularly and keeps a close eye on how you are getting on. He and the staff are always looking for ways of further improving the school. Thank you for taking the time to explain the new behaviour policy to me and how you are helping to make it work so well. I congratulate those of you who are trying very hard to always keep to the rules.

At the start of each lesson, your teachers tell you what they want you to learn and you tell me that this helps you concentrate on what you have to do. I can see that this is helping you make good progress. I think it would help you do even better if you had more opportunities to use and apply the skills you learn in numeracy lessons, and to plan and undertake more investigations and experiments in science. You all know your personal targets for improvement and appreciate the nice comments your teachers make when they mark your books. Sometimes, they also write down something that you need to do to improve your work. I am asking them to do this more often, and make sure that they remind you of the success criteria they shared with you at the start of the lesson.

Keep working hard and enjoying yourselves at school.

Yours truly,

Mike Best

Lead inspector