

Parkwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100259
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	307343
Inspection date	7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Bell
Headteacher	Ms Pat Cardis
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Queen's Drive London N4 2HQ
Telephone number	0208 802 5366
Fax number	0208 800 3857

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The Inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Why do boys and those pupils with learning difficulties achieve particularly well?
- What is the school doing to improve attendance and what impact is this having?

Evidence was gathered from the analysis of school documentation, observation of lessons, conversations with learners and discussions with teachers and senior staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves an area containing some severe deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. Almost 97 per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 70 per cent of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The percentage identified with learning difficulties is very high, but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is average. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than the usual times is much higher than that usually found. The school is working towards Healthy Schools' status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parkwood Primary is an outstanding school and one which parents and pupils are very proud of. One parent wrote, 'Parkwood is a great school and is friendly and approachable.' The headteacher's calm, diligent, focused approach to leadership has ensured that her team of leaders and managers all play their part in the success of the school. Although modest, the school's self-evaluation is of high quality and all staff and governors know what needs to be done to ensure that pupils continue to achieve as well as possible. For example, a continuing focus on writing has been successful and the standards across the school have risen as a result. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent. Governors are not afraid to ask searching questions and hold the school to account well. In light of all the evidence, it is clear that the school has outstanding capacity to improve further.

Standards are above average overall and achievement is outstanding. Many pupils enter the school with exceptionally low levels of skills but leave with skills that are above average. Many pupils make exceptional progress. This school has appeared consistently in the top one percent of schools nationally because the value it adds to pupil's education is extraordinary. Pupils make great strides in their learning in English, mathematics and science. At the start of school, a very high percentage of pupils do not speak English. The school's extensive focus on speaking and listening ensures that these pupils also make excellent progress. Teachers model the use of language consistently and pupils learn rapidly. Lessons always offer a variety of activities, which meet the needs of each learner well. Pupils claim that they 'like the work here'. When asked about homework they said, 'We get plenty and we sometimes like to do extra.' Electronic whiteboards are used very well to enhance learning. A game in a mathematics lesson challenged pupils to think quickly to beat the calculator. This sharpened up their mental skills very effectively. Teachers skilfully question pupils so that they make sure all learners are provided with sufficient levels of challenge. All of these excellent strategies, together with good role models secure the outstanding progress made by boys.

Children enjoy school very much and speak excitedly about the ways teachers teach them. They say, 'Teachers attitudes are good, they want us to really learn.' They report that they enjoy playing games, using the internet and watching film clips on the electronic whiteboards. Enjoyment is also reflected in excellent behaviour. However, despite the school's conscientious efforts, attendance is still below average. Pupils feel safe and secure and adopt healthy lifestyles. They are clear about how to approach adults if they have a problem. They say, 'Mentors help us sort things out.' Children enjoy the after school clubs provided but wished that there were more, the younger children in particular. They enjoy the visits and visitors in school very much. As a result of all these enrichment activities pupils achieve very well. Contributions to the community include raising money for various charities, being members of the effective school council, performing in various concerts and participating in re-cycling schemes. Economic well being is excellent, basic skills equip pupils well for the future; links with local businesses enable them to develop an understanding of life beyond school.

The provision for care, guidance and support is good overall with some particular strengths in care and support. The system used to track pupils' progress is clear, simple and effective. Those pupils with learning difficulties and those who require extra support are catered for extremely well because they are identified early. Many high quality intervention systems operate and make an excellent impact on the achievement of pupils. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language also learn very effectively because their needs are met particularly well.

Safeguarding is thorough, child protection procedures are in place and all staff have received training. Good individual pupil targets are displayed in some literacy and mathematics exercise books and some pupils know them and what they need to do to reach the next level. However, this practise is inconsistent across classes. Marking is also inconsistent and irregular, with some books displaying scant marking and written feedback.

The excellent curriculum provides children with many opportunities to excel. Information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is well developed. This is because the youngest children are given opportunities to use computers early on in their school career. Children in the Nursery were observed developing their 'mouse skills' effectively through drawings and games. Spanish and French are offered as part of the curriculum in Years 5 and 6. The school participates in a wide variety of activities. Each year there is a range of visits to concerts, theatres, museums, and sports events. Children take part in the annual Music and Dance festival. Extra curricular activities are varied and attended well. For example, singing, guitar lessons, brass lessons, football, athletics, homework support and environmental study. The Young Enterprise programme helps raise children's awareness of their place and contributory role in society. The school makes every effort to ensure the curriculum reflects the community it serves. Pupils study Nigeria and the history of Benin in Key Stage 2 as many of the pupils' families have a West African heritage. The school is currently developing more cross subject links in the curriculum. They already make extensive links between literacy, history, geography, art and ICT. This adds to the enjoyment of the pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is excellent and children get off to a flying start. The majority of children enter the Nursery with exceptionally low levels of skills for their age. This is particularly the case in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, personal and social skills. A high percentage of these children have not spoken any English prior to arriving in the Nursery. Because children are encouraged to develop independence in an excellent play-based environment, they quickly settle into school and begin to thrive. Staff in the Foundation stage are enthusiastic and motivated and led well by the co-ordinator. Teaching is imaginative and offers every chance for children to blossom. An excellent focus on speaking and listening ensures that language develops swiftly. Children make excellent progress so that they are ready and eager to continue their learning when they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking is regular, consistent and informative so that pupils clearly know whether they have achieved their targets and what they need to do to improve.

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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	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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkwood Primary School, London, N4 2HQ

What a lovely day I spent in your school recently. I really enjoyed myself. I could see just how much you enjoy going to your school too. Everywhere I looked, I could see lots of happy, smiling faces. Thank you to those of you who took the time out of your lunchtime to speak to me and tell me all about your school. You told me all about the money you raise for charity and the contributions you make to the local community. This is highly commendable, well done! I was very pleased with the polite and courteous way you treated me, it was great to see such excellent behaviour.

Your headteacher and her staff do a brilliant job and I think your school is outstanding. That means that it does lots of things really well. For instance, you do really well in tests because the school makes sure that you all make super progress. Your teachers teach you extremely well. Your school makes a very good contribution to helping you to grow up to be considerate and polite young people. Even in a very good school such as yours, there are always things to be done. I have asked that your headteacher makes sure that your work in your books is marked more regularly, that you are told how to improve your work and that you know and understand your targets better. Most of you attend school very regularly and win certificates but there are a few of you who could do a little better. I would like you to try as hard as you can to always come to school every day. This will help you to learn even better.

Once again, thank you for making me feel so welcome in your school and I wish you every success in the future at Parkwood.

Kind regards

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector