

# Park Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103910
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	308451
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rodney Braithwaite

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gillian Warren
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hazel Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Coronation Road Wednesbury WS10 0TJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01215 562188
<b>Fax number</b>	01215 562188

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Park Hill Primary School has an above average number of pupils. The proportion of girls is significantly higher than that of boys. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. A much lower than average number of pupils speak English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Park Hill Primary School gives a satisfactory education to all its pupils in a caring and calm community. There is a supportive and happy learning ethos, which enables pupils to enjoy school. This contributes to their good personal development, which is enhanced by their good behaviour and consideration for each other. They are respectful to adults, and relationships with all staff are good.

Children have a good start to their school life in the Nursery and Reception class, and make good progress in their learning and social development. Standards when pupils leave school are slightly below average, but have been improving in the last two years. The progress of pupils overall is satisfactory. However, throughout the school, girls have been making better progress than boys, especially in writing. The school has introduced initiatives recently in order to improve the achievement of boys and there are signs that they are beginning to bridge the gap. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and encourages the development of skills across all subjects, in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The great majority of parents are very pleased with the school, especially those with children in the Foundation Stage. The school's provision for the care and safeguarding of pupils, especially the most vulnerable, is good, and there are good partnerships with other providers such as health and social services and the Wednesbury Learning Community. Provision for academic guidance is satisfactory. New assessment and tracking systems have been recently introduced, but are not yet sufficiently embedded to reach the improvement targets the school has set.

Pupils enjoy many aspects of their school lives, including their out-of-school activities, educational outings and sports clubs. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and enjoy taking responsibilities, such as being on the School Council, and helping the youngest children. Through their learning and development of social and speaking skills, they are being prepared satisfactorily for their future lives. Their attendance, though, is below the national average. The school has set a very high attendance target, but its procedures for achieving this, although satisfactory, are not yet effective enough to be entirely successful.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage and Year 6. Teachers are good class managers, well organised and involve their pupils effectively in their learning. There are some variations in pupils' learning, of boys mainly, caused partly by an inconsistent application of tracking and assessment information in order to drive the improvement of all pupils. This has led to some pupils failing to reach the challenging, but realistic, targets set by the school. Teachers work well with competent learning support practitioners. The school has recently changed its management structure, which has included the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, leader of the Foundation Stage, and three new year group phase teams. As a result, under the experienced leadership of the headteacher, a promising start has been made in addressing the school's priorities in a more systematic way in order to secure improvement. These include the need to make the school's self-evaluation more precise in its use of information to make judgements on priorities. The supportive governing body, led by a knowledgeable new chair, is developing its present satisfactory contribution to the management of the school through improving its understanding of school processes.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children's standards on entry to the Nursery are well below national expectations in language skills, and below in all other areas of learning. Good induction procedures in the Nursery enable children to settle quickly, and parents are warmly welcomed and encouraged to be involved in their children's education. Children make good progress through Nursery and the Reception class, reaching the end of Foundation Stage with skill levels in line with national expectations in every area of the Early Years Profile. The management of the Foundation Stage is good; the staff team is well led and works closely together to deliver a curriculum that addresses children's needs in a safe and secure environment. Good teaching and ongoing assessments of children support their good progress. The use of assessment data to plan for the individual needs of children is developing satisfactorily. Staff have high expectations for good behaviour, and deal sensitively with those who find some of the routines difficult. Children enjoy their activities and respect each other's needs. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's learning, especially speaking and listening skills. Children are encouraged to understand about healthy eating through the provision of fruit and milk. Good use is made of the outside area, with a balanced mix of free play and directed activities. The school works hard to ensure that effective support is provided to assist children to make a smooth transition to the main school.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of boys, especially in writing, so that their progress matches that of girls.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation in its analysis of the impact of its actions for improvement.
- Ensure that the newly introduced tracking and assessment data are used effectively by all staff to guide pupils' progress.
- Set a realistic target for pupils' attendance, and apply present procedures robustly in order to raise attendance.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards are slightly below average at the end of Year 6, and progress from when pupils enter the school is satisfactory. Attainment on entry indicates that most children enter the school with below-average skills in all areas of learning, except communication and language, where many have skills well below average. Good provision and teaching in the Foundation Stage are ensuring that children make good progress and reach their learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Standards have risen steadily in the last two years in Key Stage 1, and are now broadly average. Girls attain better than boys in both reading and writing. Few pupils reach standards above average in any subject. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2.

In Years 3 to 5, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress, which accelerates in Year 6. In 2007, girls reached standards above the national average in all three subjects, and achieved well. Boys, on the other hand, underperformed and were below average. There is evidence that

this gap is beginning to close because of measures taken by the school, and that the progress of boys is starting to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, and their needs are understood and well provided for in classrooms.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils like coming to school because it is a lively and welcoming community where everyone gets on well with each other. Their spiritual and moral development is good, with opportunities given to reflect in both lessons and assemblies. A good example was seen in an assembly where pupils were encouraged to share worries with their friends. Visits and visitors help to develop their social and cultural development, which are also good. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles, and participate enthusiastically in physical education (PE) and wider sporting opportunities in after-school clubs. The school holds the Healthy School Platinum award. Pupils feel safe in school, behave considerately towards one another in and out of the classroom, and are confident that adults will help them if they have any concerns. Recent initiatives to improve behaviour have been welcomed and adopted by them and there is great enthusiasm for the 'Celebration Tree' in the school reception area. Attendance is below the national average and shows considerable variation month on month. In spite of the school's efforts, the rate stubbornly stays below average. The school council plays a positive role in improving the school, taking suggestions and concerns from their peers to council meetings. Older pupils support the younger children at playtimes, ensuring their health and safety and developing play skills. Pupils contribute to the wider community through fundraising activities and participation in local events organised through the Wednesbury Learning Community. Pupils' skills in preparing for their future lives, through their standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT, are satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils make steady progress in their learning in Years 1 to 5, and good progress in Year 6, where teaching is consistently very good. Teaching and learning have improved in the Foundation Stage and are good. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good throughout the school. Classes are well organised and managed, and as a result pupils behave well and cooperate with staff and each other in their learning. Teachers regularly encourage pupils to improve their speaking skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective focused teaching and support and also make satisfactory progress. Very pro-active learning support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, and work well with teachers. The use of assessment and tracking data is not yet fully effective. Consequently, the progress of some pupils can be patchy, as underachievement is not always identified soon enough. The learning of boys, especially in writing, can also vary from class to class, because not all teachers are using data effectively enough to ensure consistent learning by all pupils. Teachers have improved their marking, and are taking increasingly effective steps to help pupils assess their own learning and understand their targets for improvement.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a balanced and enjoyable curriculum, and offers good extra-curricular opportunities through sports, creative arts and technology activities. In the Foundation Stage the emphasis is on a curriculum that focuses teaching on promoting opportunities for children to develop self-initiated learning. A range of recently introduced initiatives to enrich the curriculum in the rest of the school, such as 'SPOOCS' and 'Big Write', is beginning to have a beneficial effect on pupils' progress and enthusiasm, especially for boys. The introduction of a thematic curriculum is a further initiative which is starting to benefit the wider curriculum. The school makes satisfactory provision for the regular use of numeracy, literacy and ICT in all curriculum areas. The school invites subject-specific experts in PE and music to teach pupils, which is benefiting curriculum provision. Good links with other Wednesbury schools, including high schools, enable further opportunities for curriculum development. Provision for personal, social and health education is good, and has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. A recent change in the school's management structure has led to the curriculum being managed through three phase teams. Initial indications are that this is helping all staff to have a greater understanding of how the curriculum is to be developed and improved.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a good level of care and pastoral support for pupils. Parents and pupils are very appreciative of the level of care given by staff, including the competent and supportive learning support practitioners. Safeguarding procedures, including the monitoring of pupils' personal health, are thorough and comply with legal requirements. The school has good procedures to identify and support children with learning difficulties. Recently introduced attendance procedures are satisfactory, but have yet to lead to a consistent improvement in attendance. The school has good partnerships with outside agencies and the local community.

Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Good systems for the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress have recently been introduced but have had insufficient time to impact on the achievement of pupils. Most pupils are aware of their learning and personal targets, which they share with parents in meetings with teachers, but are not yet making enough use of them to improve their own learning. Marking has improved, and most teachers are giving pupils clear indications as to how they can improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has an accurate picture of the strengths of the school and where improvement is needed. She has led the school well in promoting the good personal development of pupils. Recently, a new management structure has been established. The appointments of a new deputy head and leader of the Foundation Stage have strengthened the management of the school. Three phase management teams have also been created. These teams have made an enthusiastic and encouraging start to addressing the challenges they face. The leadership and management of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, another recent appointment, are developing effectively. The new team is showing a capacity for improvement in leadership and management, which has

been an issue in the school. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. It produces much information through monitoring and evaluation, for example, of teaching and learning. However, it is insufficiently analytical and decisive in making clear judgements about the impact of measures taken in order to secure improvement. As a result, improvement to school priority areas has had mixed success. The school is setting realistic and challenging targets for its pupils, which has led to a steady improvement in standards. Inclusion and equal opportunity are strongly promoted in most respects, but are not yet fully effective because boys have not always been achieving as well as they might.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and is working well with the new leaders. The newly elected chair has initiated plans to improve the knowledge of governors, so that they feel more confident in challenging school leaders in all aspects of the school's development.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

5 March 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Park Hill Primary School, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0TJ

I would like to thank everyone for making us so welcome in your school for the last two days. You were very polite, and we thought you behaved very well in your classes and around the school. You are very well cared for and safe in school, and we are glad that you like your teachers, and enjoy all the PE and sport you have, and how you think about what food is healthiest for your lunchboxes. We know you like coming to school, but we think some of you could come more often. The school wants to help you, so ask your parents to help too. It is good that you enjoy your school council, and helping other people. We especially liked how you help the very youngest children to be happy in school.

You try hard in your work, and some of you, especially some girls, do really well. We would like you boys to see if you can all catch up the girls, especially in your writing. Your teachers are already helping you by giving you some exciting ideas in 'SPOOCS' and Big Write. They have also given you targets in your work, and we have asked them to make sure you all reach them by using all they know about how you are doing. It is good to see your parents, who are very pleased with the school, sharing your learning targets with you and your teachers. They will be able to help you at home as well. Lastly, we have asked your headteacher and deputy head, and other leaders in the school, to use all the information they have about your progress to check how well the school is doing and whether it can improve further.

Keep enjoying your lovely school, and see which class can get the best attendance for most weeks in the rest of the year. You might win a prize! Best wishes,

Rod Braithwaite Lead Inspector