

# Park Hall Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104256
<b>Local Authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	308553
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Cole

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	270
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
<b>Headteacher</b>	B E Westwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Park Hall Road Walsall WS5 3HF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 721443
<b>Fax number</b>	01922 639132

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: differences in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, assessment of and planning for pupils of different needs and abilities, and the way school leaders check on performance and plan for improvement. Evidence was gathered from assessment, planning and monitoring documents, observation of a few lessons, discussions with staff and pupils, and from parents' written comments. There was no detailed investigation of other aspects of the school's work 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 pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Nearly half of the pupils are from Indian backgrounds while a quarter are from White British backgrounds. Most others are of Pakistani or other Asian backgrounds. Generally, pupils start at the school with knowledge and skills that are broadly as expected for their age, but communication skills in English are rather lower. This reflects the fact that English is an additional language for about half of the pupils, and a quarter of these are at an early stage of acquiring English.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils achieve extremely well in their academic learning and take great strides in their personal development, too. High quality is found in all main aspects of the school's work. It is equally evident at the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Consistent quality both across the school and over time reflects the very determined and highly effective leadership and management provided by the headteacher and her senior colleagues.

Consistency is an impressive feature of pupils' outstanding achievement. In the national tests for Year 2 pupils, the school's results have been well above average, and sometimes exceptionally high, for many past years. In 2007, the reading and writing results were both exceptionally high. This represents tremendous progress since pupils began at the school with below average communication and language skills in English. This success reflects the high priority rightly given to the teaching of reading and writing. Mathematics results are not quite as high as in English, but still well above average. Both at the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, pupils of all abilities, needs and backgrounds make exceptional progress. This is a tribute to the school's total commitment to equal opportunities. Boys attain the same standards as girls, and the school out performs the national picture in this regard.

A very important reason for pupils' excellent academic achievement is their equally successful personal development. Very good behaviour and very positive attitudes provide an ideal basis for learning. This is the result of teachers' skilful encouragement of self-discipline and their provision of stimulating lessons. Pupils greatly enjoy school. In a discussion with a representative group of pupils, almost all said they would give the school '10 out 10' for making life at school enjoyable; the only complaint of one who offered fewer marks was that he 'would like to do more colouring!' Rigorous welfare procedures ensure pupils feel safe and secure at school and that they have a very good understanding of how to stay healthy. They join keenly in opportunities for exercise both in lessons and in extra optional activities afterwards.

The school places great emphasis on building pupils' confidence and self-esteem. It achieves this most successfully. The confident, independent and responsible way pupils join in and contribute to school life far exceeds the normal expectation for their age. This reflects the very caring and warm relationships staff constantly make with pupils. Excellent relationships are supplemented by special provision like the 'social growth' programme in Year 2 or the 'nurture groups' which meet at lunchtimes. Here, small groups of pupils interact informally with adults in an intimate setting and learn to feel more confident and to express themselves more.

All of these impressive aspects of pupils' outstanding personal development provide excellent groundwork for pupils' present and future education and for the demands of later adult life. Pupils are able to take full advantage of the very good teaching and curriculum provided for them, at the heart of which is the school's commitment to successfully meeting each pupil's needs. Very careful assessment procedures give the school a thorough understanding of each one's abilities and needs. This is used to ensure each is given the work and the support necessary to maximise their progress. Pupils who need extra help, sometimes because of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are quickly identified and effective arrangements are made for them. Pupils are unstinting in their praise for the extensive help school staff give them. Teachers give pupils much guidance on their work through discussion, in marking their books and by setting them targets for improving their work. However, pupils quite often find difficulty in translating their

targets into the small, precise short-term steps they need to take to make further progress from day to day.

A further strength of the curriculum is the wide range of educational visits and visitors, and a good number of optional activities after lessons, which enrich learning opportunities, generate interest and increase enjoyment.

Outstanding leadership and management have helped the school to maintain and build upon the very good performance reported at its previous inspection. Parents continue to have high regard for the school. Clear-sighted and committed leadership by the headteacher is accompanied by very strong support from senior colleagues, a hardworking staff and a watchful governing body. They all unite around a very clear commitment to meeting all the needs of all the pupils. The school keeps regular and very thorough checks on its own performance. It sees where it can be still better, plans accordingly, arranges related training and ensures that improvement is successfully implemented. It does not rest on its laurels but seeks constantly to innovate in carefully chosen and designed ways, the starting point for which is the needs of the pupils. It has an excellent capacity to continue improving.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

All of the school's very positive qualities are as evident in the Nursery and Reception classes as elsewhere. A welcoming, encouraging and caring atmosphere helps the children quickly to feel comfortable and content. The very well managed provision includes excellent teaching and a curriculum very firmly focused on pupils' carefully identified needs. All of this leads to the children's outstanding progress. By the end of Reception, standards are already above average in most areas of learning. Plenty of close adult support, including the contribution of a number of bilingual staff, helps pupils to take rapid strides in developing language and social skills. There is a very good blend of child-chosen and play activities with structured and intensive adult-led learning. Wide-ranging activities are carefully designed to be both very purposeful and fun. At the same time, children are constantly but gently challenged to learn as much as they can and their willingness to do so accounts for their exceptional progress.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Help pupils to understand more clearly exactly what they can do from day to day to improve their work.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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?	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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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

26 February 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Park Hall Infant School, Walsall WS5 3HF

I really enjoyed the day I spent in your school recently. I would like to thank all of you for your friendly welcome. It was good to see what you do at school and to talk to some of you.

It was very good to see how very well you behave. I could also see that you enjoy school a lot. This was just what some of you told me. You get on very well with each other and with the adults. You have a very sensible attitude to school and to your work. I noticed that you listen carefully to your teachers and try really hard. All of this is helping you make extremely good progress.

Some of you told me about all the help and encouragement the teachers and the other adults give you. I saw this for myself. The teachers give you excellent lessons and provide very good work that helps you learn a lot. They also organise plenty of interesting visits and events which you enjoy.

I have said that yours is an outstanding school. The adults in charge of the school are doing an extremely good job and providing you with a very good education. However, I have suggested one way that the school could give you still more help

- I am asking the teachers to give each of you more help to understand exactly how you can improve your work from day to day.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

M H Cole Inspector



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Inspector