

Parkside Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112678
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	310979
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Heather Tooms-Moore
Headteacher	Ms Sally Jones
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Cokayne Avenue Ashbourne Derbyshire DE6 1EJ
Telephone number	01335 342891
Fax number	01335 300498

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school, serving the town and outlying areas. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and their first language is English. A lower than average percentage of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Pupils start school with standards that are above average. Although a lower percentage of pupils than nationally have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a higher percentage have a statement of special educational needs. The school has recently been awarded Healthy Schools status and has achieved the Bronze ECO award. It has been working informally with the local authority as part of its Intensive Support Programme in its efforts to raise standards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements in the school.

Although the school's view is that it provides a satisfactory standard of education, its evaluation is inaccurate. Inspectors judge its effectiveness to be inadequate. The leaders and managers have not successfully addressed a number of key weaknesses which has brought about a decline in pupils' performance and progress. The headteacher is not providing strong or focused leadership and has not ensured that effective systems are in place to monitor the school's performance and bring about consistency of practice and sustainable progress. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire, expressed their lack of confidence in the school's leadership because they feel that it is not moving their children forward and does not respond to their concerns. Most of the improvements that are now being made, owe much to the local authority's support, although the strengthening of the senior team is enabling more solid foundations to be laid. Governors, although very committed, have failed to act decisively to address the school's decline.

Significant improvement is needed in the quality of teaching and learning, which is inadequate. This, together with poor quality academic guidance, has resulted in the inadequate progress of pupils and the below average standards that they achieve. Results in English and mathematics national tests have declined since the previous inspection. Science results, an area for improvement at the previous inspection, remain below average. Although pupils start with standards that are above and sometimes well above average, their progress has been significantly below expected levels for the last three years. In 2007, progress was inadequate. It remains so. Whilst some teaching is good, the quality of teaching is too variable to ensure pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time. Tasks too often do not offer the right level of challenge to enable pupils to make the progress that they should, particularly for pupils capable of working at higher levels. Although good relationships between teachers and pupils encourage learning, the over use of temporary teachers often unsettles pupils and leads to a deterioration in behaviour, which is otherwise satisfactory. Marking strategies, another area for improvement from the previous inspection, are only now being put into place. The new policy still does not put enough emphasis on advising pupils how to improve their work.

There are positive aspects to the school's work. Pupils enjoy school, which promotes their satisfactory personal development. In particular, they enjoy the good range of after school activities which help them to add to their skills and to discover their talents. The curriculum is satisfactory with a few opportunities in place for pupils to use their key skills in other learning situations.

Staff are committed to pupils' welfare and care for them well. All procedures are in place to protect pupils, keep them safe, and ensure satisfactory pastoral care. However, overall care, guidance and support are inadequate because although improved tracking is in place and pupils work towards group targets, teachers are not using the information they have about pupils' standards carefully enough to promote progress. Neither is there regular planning to meet the needs of pupils with particular gifts and talents.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that leaders at all levels establish and rigorously apply effective systems for monitoring the school's work and evaluating improvements, in order to strengthen the performance of the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to quicken progress and to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure the knowledge that teachers have about the levels at which pupils are working is used carefully to plan challenging tasks and promote at least good progress.
- Strengthen relationships between home and school, by making sure that the school communicates regularly with parents about their children's education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with disabilities, make inadequate progress from their consistently above average starting points. Standards vary from year to year but are below average. Progress through the school has been significantly below that expected for the last three years. It fell to inadequate in 2007 and the school's predictions and inspection evidence, indicate that this will be the case in 2008. In all year groups, a significant number of pupils are not making the progress that they should. In 2007, a lower percentage of pupils reached or exceeded expected levels in English, mathematics and science and the school failed to meet its targets. Standards in science did improve but have now reverted to below average. The school has introduced improvements such as setting targets for pupils and tracking their progress but these measures have not yet influenced standards. Higher attaining pupils perform less well than similar pupils nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils say they enjoy school, particularly on occasions when 'learning is fun and we do interesting things'. This is reflected in their above average attendance levels. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, but a minority occasionally disrupt lessons because learning does not capture their interest. Pupils engage well in local arts and music activities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory although pupils are less well-informed about the multicultural aspects of life in Britain. Pupils undertake responsibility as members of the school council, but other opportunities to take responsibility are limited. They show satisfactory awareness of safe practices, move about the school in an orderly way and understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. They show interest in promoting improvement in the local environment, such as the 'eco' project. Pupils are satisfactorily equipped for their future economic well-being by links with a local business, but are not developing their basic skills rapidly enough.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate and lead to pupils not making enough progress, including in literacy and numeracy. Whilst there is some good practice, there is not enough of it to raise

standards. It is not helped by the school's reliance on temporary teachers, which often has a negative effect on pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils' relationships with their regular teachers are positive and consequently lessons usually proceed smoothly and satisfactorily, encouraging better progress. Weaknesses in the strategies to support more able pupils have resulted in them failing to reach their potential. The school is now beginning to address the needs of pupils of different abilities but this is not making sufficient impact to make up for past underachievement. In lessons, effective practice was observed in class management but when teaching styles do not engage pupils, some find it hard to focus. Information and communications technology is used occasionally by teachers and adds interest to lessons. There is emerging improved practice in assessing pupils' work and many pupils have a better understanding of how to move on in their learning, but this is inconsistently developed across subjects and teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides good opportunities for pupils to participate in sport and the creative arts, including music and drama. A satisfactory range of extra activities, such as day visits and visitors, helps to enrich the work pupils undertake in lessons. There is a satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education. Links between different subjects are developing but most of the curriculum is taught through individual subjects, limiting opportunities for pupils to apply their key skills in other subject areas. There has been an over reliance on published worksheets that has led in some classes to an inappropriate match of work to pupils' abilities and needs. Involvement in the 'Intensifying Support Programme' has brought more rigour to curriculum planning and is raising expectations of pupils' achievement. Improvements to the provision for pupils with learning difficulties are now in place. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is less well developed. Pupils are enjoying learning Spanish.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Although pastoral care is satisfactory, overall care, guidance and support of pupils is inadequate, because academic support is either not in place or is ineffective. Pupils are well supported when they join the school, settling quickly because they feel safe. Incidents of bullying are reducing because the new behaviour policy encourages pupils to adopt positive attitudes to others. The welfare of pupils is satisfactory. Health and safety procedures are in place. However, pupils are not given the academic guidance that they need in order to make the progress that they should. Parents express their concern about the lack of structured guidance for gifted and talented pupils. Procedures for monitoring progress now provide better information about pupils' progress but are not regularly effective in lessons. This is because planning for pupils' different learning needs is not translated into effective practice. Teaching assistants are regularly involved in supporting pupils who find learning difficult but are not having sufficient impact to raise standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The headteacher, in post since September 2003, is not providing strong enough leadership to move the school forward as quickly as it needs to and has been too slow in identifying and addressing the decline in standards. In particular, there was a failure to foresee the inadequate

progress of pupils in 2007. Subject leaders are developing their subjects but the absence of a common focus slows improvement down. Governors are committed and are very concerned about the school's weaknesses but they have made little impact so far. Also, they have not ensured that all school policies are in place. Parents have numerous and serious concerns about the performance of the school, particularly its leadership, which are not being resolved. The untidy and uncared for appearance of the potentially delightful school site is another indication of the school's deterioration. Value for money is inadequate.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	4
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?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 May 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Parkside Junior School, Ashbourne, DE6 1EJ

Thank you for welcoming Mr Blakemore, Mr Grimshaw and me into your school when we visited you recently. We enjoyed very much the opportunities we had to watch you learning and playing. We were also pleased to be able to talk to a lot of you about your school. Thank you for giving up your time to do this.

You told us that you like school and particularly enjoy taking part in clubs and activities. You also told us that the teachers care for you well, we agree. The school council is making a difference.

Unfortunately, your school is not as good as it should be and important improvements need to be made. Teaching is very variable. In particular, the work that you are given is not regularly offering you the right level of challenge, to help you make as much progress as you can. Ms Jones, the staff and governors will be given extra help to make sure these improvements are made. They will also check carefully and very regularly to see how well the school is doing in all its work and make sure that parents are informed regularly about your progress and the school's progress.

I know that you will do everything that you can to help the staff improve the school for you. Inspectors will visit regularly to review the progress that is being made.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector