

Parkland Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114464
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311613
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Pamphilon
Headteacher	Steve Gough
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2004
School address	Brassey Avenue Eastbourne BN22 9QJ
Telephone number	01323 502620
Fax number	01323 509973

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized junior school takes most of its pupils from the adjacent infant school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above that seen nationally, as is the proportion with statements of special educational need.

The school has gained a number of awards, including Investors in People, Healthy Schools' Silver status, FA Charter status and the Activemark and just recently the Artsmark silver award. It is currently working towards recognition of Quality in Study Support.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education where pupils are reaching broadly average standards. Since the last inspection, the school has had to overcome a number of difficulties, including the retention of staff, which resulted in a dip in pupils' achievement. With intensive support from the local authority, the school has significantly improved in the last 18 months. The headteacher, with the support of the senior team and partnership with external consultants, has made significant changes that have improved the quality of teaching as well as the leadership and management. As a result, pupils now make satisfactory progress.

Pupils enjoy school and are keen and eager to participate in all the activities offered. In lessons, they behave and cooperate well and most demonstrate high levels of concentration. When teaching is at its best, pupils are highly motivated and work hard. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and are often involved in local productions, events and sporting activities. When not being directly supervised, such as in the playground or when moving around the school, most pupils continue to behave well. However, a small minority do not show this same self-control, a fact recognised by both pupils and their parents and carers. The school is successfully working to address this.

Pupils start in Year 3 with broadly average standards, but few have above average ability. Until 2007, results in national tests in Year 6 had not been high enough and, in some years, the progress made between Years 2 and 6 was inadequate overall. This has now changed because the much-improved use of assessment information has enabled those who were underachieving to be specifically targeted for support. For instance, in 2007, the high focus on writing successfully resulted in the best progress seen in English for some years. The same high focus on mathematics this year means that most pupils are achieving at their age expected levels and approximately a quarter are achieving above this. This is a greatly improved picture from 2006. In other subjects, there is evidence of good progress in art, physical education where there has been a particular emphasis and music.

The school, and especially the senior leadership team, have responded very positively to the advice and support they have received through an Intensive Support Programme (ISP). These initiatives have eliminated most, but not all, of the variability in teaching quality. Teaching overall is satisfactory, with an increasing proportion of good lessons. Evidence during the inspection, and monitoring by the school, confirms that pupils undertake work that suits their needs and this has made learning more challenging. Worthy of note is the good progress of those with learning difficulties. In addition, better analysis is providing information that can deal with specific individual teaching and learning issues so that all pupils are able to make continuous progress through each of the years they are in the school.

The school rightly recognises that the drive to raise standards in the basic skills of English, mathematics and science has meant that the curriculum, while satisfactory, is not as lively as it should be. This is because extensive activities are currently offered through clubs, visits, productions and themed days. This does not extend into lessons through strong and planned links between subjects. Consequently, the curriculum does not allow individual pupils to use their improved basic skills in more unfamiliar and real-life situations.

The school has been through a difficult time and has responded well to the challenge. Self-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses is accurate and actions are carefully planned. The leadership team, along with the support of the governing body, have shown that, with the

continued support, they are capable of making changes. The school is able to demonstrate that this improvement is both sustainable and can continue to develop. Consequently, there is a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Through rigorous monitoring and support, improve the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion of lessons are good and pupils make continuously good progress through the school.
- Develop cross-curricular links that engage pupils and make use of their growing skills so that learning is more exciting and their academic and personal development improves.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The satisfactory progress that pupils now make is due to much better teaching. Progress increases as pupils move through the school so that by Year 6 there is clear evidence that a good proportion are making more than a year's expected progress prior to them leaving the school. The highest rates of progress are in reading, science and mathematics and, to a lesser degree, in writing. National test results have shown a gentle rise overall for two years. For the first time in three years, the rate of pupils' progress improved in 2007 so that between Year 2 and 6, it was similar to that found nationally. All indications from the extensive assessment data, scrutiny of pupils' work and from lessons indicates that this rise is continuing. Importantly, progress between each year is also much improved and is generally either at or above that which is expected. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress against their own individual learning targets and those who show a particular talent are increasingly given opportunities to develop these through local support programmes.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is satisfactory. They contribute well in lessons, particularly where teaching is good. They are eager to undertake practical activities and thrive when given responsibility. For example, the school council has helped develop strategies to improve lunch provision, which ensures that this is a calm and orderly occasion. Pupils who find difficulty concentrating are given good support, for instance by developing the school's garden. The vegetables being grown here will be used as part of the 'Grow it, Cook it, Eat it' campaign that involves all pupils and is helping develop their satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles. Many pupils participate in sporting activities and the school has been successful in a number of local competitions. Pupils know how to stay safe. They are careful when using apparatus, and the trained playground leaders keep a watchful eye at playtimes. There are a few instances where play is not appropriate and strategies are being developed to eliminate this. Pupils and their parents are being actively encouraged to help. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future life. The better use of targets has given pupils the opportunity to see how they can improve and what they are trying to achieve. They readily talk about the next stage of their schooling and feel suitably prepared for what lies ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school is in line to achieve its target of all teaching being satisfactory and three quarters being good by the end of this year. Common strengths include the use of assessment to direct support to where it is needed and to help plan more challenging activities. This has had a significant impact on accelerating pupils' progress. Generally, lessons move at a good pace and teachers use a variety of methods to interest and motivate their class. Good use is made of teaching assistants. When this all happens, pupils rise to the challenge and concentrate very well on their work. Marking is thorough and helps direct future tasks. It also gives pupils a good understanding of what they have achieved and the next steps in their learning. Nevertheless, there is still some variability in teaching quality, which is the reason why pupils make better progress in the upper half of the school. Where work is not tailored so well to the ability of the pupils, or when work is too easy, pupils lose concentration and do not make such rapid progress. This leaves them with a lot to catch up on in later years.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The recent improvements in the planning for the core subjects of English and mathematics have been good. The use of extended writing has improved pupils understanding of a range of styles, and more practical activities in mathematics have helped pupils use the skills they have previously acquired. Very good use is made of practical work in science, art and music that is highly motivating for the pupils. Pupils speak warmly of the many clubs and visits and especially enjoyed their trip on the train, dressed as World War 2 evacuees. Parents also got into the swing of this role-play by pretending to be the families who were taking in the pupils or by waving flags along the route. Music has a high profile, with a number of productions both at school and through good links with partner institutions. The school has also participated in many local sporting events and gained success in a number of them. The school is now working on making clear planned links between these many good individual initiatives and the basic skills needed to be developed for each subject. This is correctly aimed at improving both the academic and personal development of all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral guidance and support is rightly recognised by most parents as being good. Careful attention is paid to ensuring all safeguarding procedures are in place and that pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils say that 'behaviour here is good' and that there is only a 'small problem with bullying'. Nevertheless, a small proportion of parents are concerned and the school has raised the profile of this important area to develop pupils' understanding of the issues and to eliminate it. Academic support and guidance is very good and is a key reason why the progress of pupils has improved, particularly for those pupils who have special educational needs. Regular and thorough assessments of individual pupils' progress have enabled the school to act quickly, should pupils be underperforming. The tracking of groups has highlighted where systems are working and where they are not. As a result, additional support for pupils has been put in place to address the situation. Nevertheless, there is still some variability, and more rigour in the monitoring is needed to ensure consistently good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Following the last inspection, the headteacher realised that with nearly half the staff leaving in a short space of time there would be difficulties keeping up the momentum of improvement. This took longer than anticipated to address. In the last 18 months, high levels of internal and external support have very effectively driven the school forward. This has included professional support for teachers and leaders, the advice of consultants and regular intensive reviews of how well the school is coping with the difficulties. These have successfully improved the provision and ensured that pupils make satisfactory progress. The governing body have become increasingly involved and now understand the part they need to play in this improvement. Through their own professional development, they have high expectations of the leadership team and are able to hold the school to account. While the school is still benefiting from significant levels of support, this has steadily been decreasing as matters have been resolved and improvement in the academic achievement of pupils has been evident. The senior team, along with the rest of the staff, have a realistic understanding of what needs to be done next and the information, determination and capability to carry out the necessary developments.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	2

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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?	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?	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

23 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkland Junior School, Eastbourne BN22 9QJ

Thank you for looking after us so well during our recent visit. We enjoyed meeting so many of you and hearing about all that goes on at your school. As I promised some of you, I have included the main points of the report below.

- We have said that your schooling is satisfactory but that there is still some work to do to make it even better. There have been many exciting developments recently that are helping to improve your school. You have probably noticed the visitors that have been helping your teachers over the last year.
- You told us that you enjoy school and we agree that you are happy because you have many interesting activities especially in music, physical education and art. We think the teaching is helping you to make satisfactory progress with your work. This is improving as your teachers plan more exciting things for you to do.
- We think you are cared for well. In particular, you are given good guidance about how to improve your work. Your teachers have been concentrating on making sure that all of you make better progress and it was good to see that so many of you understood what you needed to do next. We have asked that this continues so that in every class, all your work is really challenging.
- You have probably noticed that your teachers are making sure that you do well in English and mathematics. We have also asked that they now plan more activities linked to other subjects to help this.
- You understand about healthy living and there are certainly many opportunities for sport.
- You know how to keep safe. We could see that you behaved well in your lessons and it was great to see such good levels of concentration. For most of you, this also happens in the playground although you are rightly working on making sure that everybody plays as well as this.

Finally, I wish you the very best for the future. You can help make your school one of the best by suggesting things to help it improve and by working hard on all that you are asked to do.

Best wishes

- David Collard Lead Inspector

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Annex B

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Lead Inspector