

Parkside Community Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 114482 |
| Local Authority | East Sussex |
| Inspection number | 311621 |
| Inspection date | 22 January 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Eileen Chadwick |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 202 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Roger Tweedy |
| Headteacher | Norman Wood |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 September 2004 |
| School address | Beechwood Lane Heathfield TN21 8QQ |
| Telephone number | 01435 864577 |
| Fax number | 01435 865523 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
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Introduction

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress the pupils make in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils' progress in writing and science in Key Stage 2, and the impact of leadership and management on improving standards. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, reviewing the assessment data the school uses to track the progress the pupils make, and analysis of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated 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 mainly serves the private housing estate on which it is situated. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, below average overall, varies in different year groups; it is average in most year groups in Key Stage 2. The percentage of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the normal times is a little above average in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly at the level expected but there is a wide range. This year there have been substantial changes to the senior leadership team. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark, Football Association Charter, Artsmark Silver and the Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's overall effectiveness is good, with some outstanding features. The school really nurtures its pupils and, as a result, pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, is excellent. Pupils are very proud of their school. Each pupil is a highly valued member of the school family. The curriculum is vibrant and pupils receive a very well-rounded education which enables them to successfully develop their academic, creative, practical and sporting skills. The great majority of parents have a high regard for the school and, as one parent put it, 'In addition to making good progress my child finds Parkside a fun place to learn which is an essential tool for lifelong learning'.

Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress in Reception and have achieved or exceeded the standards expected by the time they begin Year 1. In Year 2, standards have started to rise and pupils now enter Year 3 well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This gives them a strong start to their junior education. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 has accelerated because of the application of improvements to systems for checking their progress. The school has recognised that a rise in expectations is necessary as these pupils move through the school.

By Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics and pupils' progress is good compared with their starting points. Standards of writing are above average but not as high as in reading and mathematics. The school is working hard to improve writing and pupils write fluently for a range of purposes, often using imaginative vocabulary. However, in Key Stage 2, some pupils across the ability and age ranges do not spell so well and this impairs the quality of their written work, preventing standards rising more quickly. The school is improving its science provision as standards were only average in the 2007 tests for Year 6 pupils. This is having a positive impact and pupils are now making good progress, although there is still scope for more to reach higher levels by Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the well-coordinated support they are given. The substantial number who enter directly into Key Stage 2 are very well supported to help them settle and achieve well.

The sustained very good leadership of the headteacher is central to ensuring that accelerating pupils' progress is always a priority. The substantial changes to the senior leadership team have been very well managed. The new senior leadership partnership is working very well, bringing a wealth of experience and balance of expertise to the school. Governors play key parts in challenging and supporting the school.

Good quality teaching promotes pupils' good learning. Teachers make sure lessons are enjoyable and manage their pupils very well. They often provide practical starting points, although, occasionally, work is a little hard for lower-attaining pupils or easy for the more capable.

Teaching is strongest in Years 5 and 6, where teachers are very skilled in providing for pupils' very wide range of attainment. Good self-evaluation arrangements have led to the school having an accurate and honest view of its own performance. Teachers' skills in planning and promoting pupils' learning are systematically evaluated and performance targets lead to professional development opportunities. Subject leaders play their part in supporting other staff. However, the school is fully aware of the need to step up opportunities for subject leaders to observe their colleagues teaching and to monitor and evaluate pupils' learning in order to raise achievement.

Pupils are extremely well cared for and kept very safe. Assessment systems are good. Tracking systems are rigorous and help the school to know how well pupils are doing. The school has rightly identified that there is work to do to make sure teachers consistently use the demanding targets to move pupils on in their learning.

Excellent links with parents and the community help to promote the school's family atmosphere and pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' contributions to the school and wider community are excellent. The thriving school council, team work and problem solving in many subjects are very good vehicles for enabling pupils to develop their decision-making and personal skills. Their great enthusiasm for school life is reflected in their good attendance. The curriculum is innovative and planned so that pupils' learning in one subject enhances that in another. There is some high quality work throughout the school in art, music, history, design and technology, and sport. The curriculum provides a secure foundation for pupils to learn basic skills, although there is not always enough focus on spelling. The curriculum is enhanced through a very good range of extra activities and visits. The school's track record shows it has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are given a good start in Reception. Children arrive with skills that meet expectations and most have had some pre-school education. By the time children begin Year 1, they have reached the expected levels and a substantial number exceed them, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff provide good individual care, support and guidance to each child. The quality of teaching and assessment systems is good. Detailed records are kept so that subsequent support is tailored to meet individual needs. There is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those chosen by the children. The indoor environment is well resourced and stimulating, for example, the reading, writing and dressing up/role play areas. The school is currently improving its outdoor area so that activities are more exciting. The school is using computerised systems for recording assessments for the first time this year. It is also focusing upon more accurate recording of children's attainment on entry to school and improving assessment for transition across Reception and Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve spelling and raise standards in science by increasing the proportion reaching higher levels by Year 6.
- Increase opportunities for subject leaders to check teaching and learning so they have a greater impact on raising achievement.
- Ensure teachers use the demanding targets more effectively to consistently promote good learning.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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? | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| 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? | 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 | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| 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

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

22 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Parkside Community School, Heathfield, TN21 8QQ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I was impressed by your excellent behaviour throughout the day. I enjoyed talking to you and you helped me to get to know the school in a short time.

Firstly, you need to know you go to a good school where you make good progress.

Here are some good things about your school.

- Your headteacher leads you all very well and your teachers and the school governors are working hard to make the school even better.
- You make good progress in English and mathematics.
- You have exciting opportunities to develop art, design and technology, and sporting skills.
- You are very helpful and friendly and make an excellent contribution to helping others in your school, Heathfield and abroad.
- You take great pride in your school and you are a credit to your school.
- Teachers take superb care of you and really help you with your learning.

This is what we are asking the school to change.

- To improve your spelling and help more of you to reach higher levels in science before you leave.
- Help teachers in charge of subjects to be more involved in checking on how well you are learning.
- Make sure your work is never too easy or too hard.

I hope you will continue to enjoy school and work hard at using your targets so your work gets better and better.

Best wishes

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector

Annex B



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Eileen Chadwick
Lead inspector