

The Park Infant School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 115581 |
| Local Authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 311988 |
| Inspection date | 25 June 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Mike Capper |

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

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4-7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 163 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Paul Stevens |
| Headteacher | Sue Burrows |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15 November 2004 |
| School address | Elm Road Stonehouse GL10 2NP |
| Telephone number | 01453 823052 |
| Fax number | 01453 823052 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Age group | 4-7 |
| Inspection date | 25 June 2008 |
| Inspection number | 311988 |

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

Standards and progress, especially the progress of girls in mathematics.

The effectiveness of the school's recently revised systems for tracking pupils' progress across the school.

Pupils' responsibility taking and their contribution to the school and wider community.

The use of the outdoor curriculum to support learning.

Leaders' approach to innovation and its impact on pupils' learning.

Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils at work and play, discussion with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of documentation and an analysis of parents' views. 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

Most pupils in this slightly smaller than average infant school come from the local community. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school shares its site with a Children's Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

In this outstanding school, pupils make excellent progress and flourish both socially and academically. The school lays an extremely strong foundation for the next stage of pupils' education and their later life. The excellent curriculum and the exceptionally high quality of care, guidance and support mean that pupils develop a love of learning and a deep appreciation of the wonders of the world around them. Pupils rightly comment, 'We do lots of exciting things and have great fun in and out of lessons'.

Pupils' achievement is excellent due to the very high quality of teaching across the school. Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) and standards continue to improve at a rapid rate as pupils get older, reaching above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Over the last year, the school has worked successfully to close a slight gap in the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics. Pupils have benefited from being taught in ability groups for some numeracy lessons in Year 2 and there has been a sharp focus on planning work that takes into account the different ways in which boys and girls learn.

Throughout the school, teachers ensure that there is good challenge in all lessons, with work being very closely matched to pupils' differing abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well by very skilled teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to the life of the school. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and encourage them to do their best at all times. Teachers give pupils very clear guidance to help them understand how to improve.

Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are very proud of the school and their excellent attitudes and behaviour are key factors in its success. Pupils greatly enjoy school and there is a delightful atmosphere in lessons. Relationships between classmates and adults are superb, with everyone helping each other when needed. The school effectively encourages good attendance, although some parents still take their children on holiday in term time. Pupils very happily take responsibility and they make an excellent contribution to the community. This is clearly seen in the very conscientious way in which the school council takes on its work. Councillors are very enthusiastic and they have helped to improve the school. For example, they are extremely pleased with the new toilets that they helped to design. Pupils also contribute very well to the community beyond school. They take an active part in town events and show an excellent concern for the needs of others by raising money for a partner school in Gambia.

The curriculum provides pupils with a very wide range of experiences that take very good account of their needs and interests. There is a very strong focus on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy, but creativity and imagination are also encouraged very successfully. Visits and visitors support learning extremely effectively. Pupils are especially positive about the many opportunities that they get to work out of doors. For example, pupils in Year 2 talk with delight about their recent visits to local woodlands where they worked together to build hides and to learn about conservation. Pupils also benefit enormously from the school's own superb outdoor facilities that give them many opportunities to work together and to explore their environment. Use of this 'outdoor classroom' is very carefully planned and has an especially positive effect on pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils use the school gardens to grow their own food that they then cook. They are very aware of the need to use outdoor resources sensibly and they follow safety rules very diligently.

The school is so successful because the headteacher, staff and governors have created an ethos in which all members of the community are valued and respected. There are excellent systems for checking how well the school is doing and these are being continually refined to improve their usefulness. For example, the school has recently adopted a new system for tracking pupils' progress. This builds strongly on what was already in place and gives a very clear picture of how pupils progress from year to year. Senior leaders have rightly identified that this new tracking system now needs time to be embedded into school practice so that any very minor inconsistencies in provision can be identified even more quickly.

Leaders willingly embrace innovation but only after careful consideration of how it will help to improve provision. The school has been at the forefront of using story making to introduce pupils to a foreign language. This has had a very good impact on learning, with even the youngest pupils confidently speaking simple French words and also applying their improved knowledge of story structures and sequences to their everyday writing in English. There is a strong drive for continued improvement that is evident amongst leaders at all levels, with the shared sense of purpose and teamwork amongst staff and governors being exceptionally strong. The school has demonstrated very clearly in the way that it has maintained high standards since the last inspection and has significantly improved provision in information and communication technology that it is very well placed to improve further.

The school works very closely with a range of partners, including the Children's Centre, other schools and support agencies. Parents rightly hold the school in very high regard, typically saying things such as, 'staff always have the needs of the children at the heart of their work' and 'the children have fun and learn at the same time'. Comments such as these accurately capture the main strengths of this very successful school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

'My son has gone from strength to strength since starting in Reception.' This comment from a parent is typical of the very positive view that parents have of the Reception Year. Children start school with skills that are lower than those typically found, especially in language and literacy. They make excellent progress from these low starting points and standards are broadly average by the end of the Reception Year. Children achieve so well because provision is very well managed, they are very well cared for and teaching takes very close account of their different starting points to provide high levels of challenge in lessons. Early reading and writing skills develop especially quickly. This is because new letter sounds are introduced in a very structured way and children are given many opportunities to talk and write throughout the day. This has a very positive effect on learning, especially for boys who develop excellent attitudes towards writing. There is an excellent curriculum that promotes personal skills very effectively. Adults make particularly good use of the 'Forest School' to teach children about the environment and caring for living things.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed across the school the newly extended systems for tracking pupils' progress from year to year so that any minor inconsistencies in provision can be picked up even more quickly.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

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 ¹ 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 | 1 |
| 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 |

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? | 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 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Park Infant School, Stonehouse GL10 2NP

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for showing me your work. You were very polite and friendly and were very well behaved. I agree with you that your school is excellent, and that staff do a lot to help you.

Some of the things I found out about your school

- Excellent teaching helps you to learn new things very quickly throughout the school. You are doing really well at learning French.
- Younger children get a brilliant start in the Reception Classes, where you do many exciting things and work together very well.
- You really enjoy school because adults make learning interesting by planning many fun activities, and by providing many clubs and visits. The outside areas are superb and you are very lucky to have them to work and play in.
- The school is very successful at teaching you how to stay safe and healthy. The healthy pizzas being cooked by the gardening club looked delicious!
- Your teachers and other adults are very kind and caring; they look after you very well and give you lots of help if you are struggling with your work.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors lead the school very well and they are working very hard to make the school even better
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What I have asked your school to do now

- Use the new systems for showing your progress from year to year for checking even more quickly that everyone is doing equally well.

I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn, and we wish you well for the future. You can help the school by continuing to work hard.

I hope the tea party and country dancing went well.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Capper Lead Inspector