

Parkwall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109020
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	319428
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Casbon
Headteacher	Carol Warrant
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2002
School address	Earlstone Crescent Cadbury Heath Bristol BS30 8AA
Telephone number	01454 867114
Fax number	01454 867116

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average size primary school. Most pupils are White British. Twenty-five children attend the Nursery on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning, with 16 attending on Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday. Attainment on entry is well below expectations, especially in communication, language and literacy. Following its last inspection, the school was given a Notice to Improve. It received an interim monitoring visit by an HMI in November 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. It has made good progress in the last year in addressing significant weaknesses in pupils' achievement and standards. The key to improvement has been good leadership and management. The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, governors and the local authority, has been determined and resolute in the unrelenting drive for school improvement. Success is evident in pupils' satisfactory, and improving, achievement and the broadly average standards pupils attain. The only exception is writing, where standards are below average, both in content and in the quality of pupils' handwriting. Pockets of underachievement remain in Year 1 and Year 5 because teaching here is not consistently good enough to ensure pupils make good progress in lessons. The good provision for children in Nursery and Reception identified in the previous inspection has been maintained.

Although teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory, the significant proportion of good teaching is a major influence on improved achievement and standards. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have risen considerably. Lessons begin with teachers sharing 'WALT' (what are we learning today?) and 'WILF' (what am I looking for?) which means that pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of the lesson. Teachers and teaching assistants work especially well with groups of pupils. On occasions, pupils struggle to work independently, especially if they do not understand the specific tasks they are given. Similarly, there are times when teachers talk for too long which results in pupils, especially boys, losing interest and concentration. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use key literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. The provision of extra-curricular activities and curriculum enrichment is good.

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are underpinned by strengths in care, guidance and support. Pupils say that they enjoy school much more than a year ago. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'Learning in class is now much more fun, especially in numeracy.' Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Many take part enthusiastically in the good range of clubs the school provides. Behaviour is good and pupils say there is no bullying. They recognise that some pupils have 'anger issues', but feel that teachers and key staff do everything they can to support these pupils. The concerns of a small number of parents about bullying are not supported by inspection evidence. The school cares for its pupils extremely well, with outside agencies used successfully to support vulnerable pupils. Academic guidance is improving rapidly, with pupils understanding their targets. In Year 3, there is exemplary practice in the use of 'must, should and could' targets with pupils, which really motivates this class to achieve them. However, the use of such targets is inconsistent in other classes.

Governors have a much stronger view of the school's strengths and weaknesses than a year ago and are very supportive of the senior leadership team, especially in difficult decisions made in relation to staffing. Together with senior leaders, they are now placed securely to drive school improvement, with reduced local authority support.

The number of parents who returned questionnaires was small. Most are supportive of the school, especially in the way it cares for their children. The school accepts it needs to do more to try to improve communication with parents.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress from the day they start in the Nursery through to the time they leave Reception. By the time they start Year 1, the majority meet the goals they are expected to achieve, with strengths in their personal, social and emotional development. Children enjoy their time at school and work and play well together. Teaching and learning are good, and assessment information is used effectively to plan activities that build on children's previous learning. The curriculum meets children's needs well. There is an appropriate balance of adult led and child initiated activities. There are good arrangements for children to go on local visits. Good links with parents keep them well informed of their children's progress and targets. Children in both the Nursery and Reception have targets in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development, which prepare them well for transfer into Year 1. Good attention is given to ensuring the children's health and safety. The Foundation Stage manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further improvement. The latter include communication, language and literacy, especially writing, and the need to improve the outdoor provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length in literacy and in other subjects and improve the quality of pupils' handwriting.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good and allows all pupils to make good progress in lessons and over time.
- Embed the use of 'must, should, could' targets so that all classes match the exemplary practice in Year 3.

A small proportion of schools whose effectiveness is judged as 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

Standards have improved significantly in the last year, especially in Year 6. Teachers' assessments and excellent tracking data indicate strongly that pupils are on course to reach the challenging targets set for them. Encouragingly, there is improvement in the proportion expected to achieve the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Across the school, standards in writing remain below average. Evidence indicates that pupils do not spend enough time writing at length, both within literacy lessons and in other subjects. Standards in handwriting are weak. In mathematics, pupils show increasing confidence in explaining their mathematical thinking. Pupils in Year 6 say that they would like more fiction books for their age group in order to make reading more interesting and exciting. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, they make good progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils deserve to be congratulated on the quality of their singing in collective worship.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older pupils take seriously their responsibility as role models to younger ones. Whilst attendance is below average, the school does all it can to promote pupils attending school regularly. Unfortunately, a minority of parents do not support the school in its efforts. The majority of pupils enjoy school and work hard in lessons. They have a good understanding of the importance of staying safe. The school council introduces pupils to the democratic process and gives them a strong voice in the running of the school. Pupils in Year 6 say that the school council has been much more effective in the last year. For example, it has been proactive in providing more benches for pupils to sit on at break and lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy rewards for their good work and behaviour. In particular, they really like the 'Target Buster' awards whereby they receive certificates for achieving their targets in literacy and numeracy. Improvements in achievement and standards mean that pupils' preparation for their future lives is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils say that learning is much more enjoyable than it was a year ago. Teachers' use of 'WALT' and 'WILF' means that pupils have a greater understanding of what they are expected to learn. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to explain and demonstrate new learning. In lessons, teachers and teaching assistants provide very good support for groups of pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. On occasions, they do not support pupils who are working by themselves sufficiently. Similarly, lesson introductions can be too long, with pupils, especially boys, losing interest. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but there is inconsistency in the way they explain to pupils how to improve their work. Year 6 pupils say that sometimes work is repetitive and admit they become bored as a result. In Year 3, there is excellent engagement of pupils in understanding and achieving their targets, especially the 'must, should and could'. However, such engagement is not evident in all classes, which means not all pupils know when they achieve a target.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. Improvements to literacy and numeracy planning have contributed to pupils' much stronger performance. Currently, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their key literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. The effective implementation of the SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) programme contributes strongly to pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils say how much they enjoy the number of extra-curricular clubs that they can join, especially in sport. Pupils' enthusiasm for sport plays a significant part in their good awareness of healthy lifestyles. The curriculum is enriched through visits and visitors, including sports coaches. The school is very proactive in encouraging pupils to enjoy music and play an instrument. The recent talent show enabled pupils to perform singing and dancing routines to their peers and parents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection procedures are rigorous and relationships between staff and pupils are good. All statutory responsibilities for safeguarding pupils are met fully. There are good links with outside agencies. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well in their learning. Good support is provided for the pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. Effective health and safety procedures are in place. Pupils have become involved in setting and reviewing their own targets. Most teachers provide pupils with helpful academic guidance, but occasionally staff do not always make it clear what the pupils need to do next to improve. Links with parents are good and parents are kept well informed of their children's personal and academic development. The parents of the youngest children consider they get a good start to their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's view of its own performance is accurate, although understandably a little cautious. Based on its record over the last year, the school has a good capacity for further improvement. The driving force behind school improvement is the success of leadership and management in improving the consistency of teaching and learning, particularly in eliminating inadequate lessons. Through the introduction of targets for pupils, the school has increased their motivation to succeed. It is aware that not all teachers use targets consistently, especially in involving pupils in their awareness of progress against 'must, should and could' targets. Leaders accept that embedding of targets is still needed as a major thrust for future improvement. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders for literacy and numeracy use data and the tracking of pupils' progress to identify quickly those pupils who underachieve. Currently, partly because of absence, the roles of other subject leaders are not developed sufficiently. Monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and effective in identifying weaker areas, especially where expectations are not high enough. Together with the support of governors and the local authority, the school has taken tough actions to improve the quality of teaching for its pupils.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	3

Personal development and well-being

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

20 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkwall Primary School, Cadbury Heath BS30 8AA

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting many of you. It was very kind of the school council and the group from Year 6 to give up part of their lunchtime in order to meet us. I am pleased to tell you that your school has improved since last year and that it now gives you a satisfactory education. We also saw a number of good things:

- Your work in literacy and numeracy is much improved and you now do as well as other children of your age, except in writing.
- Most of you behave very well and you are very supportive of those who have 'anger issues' in the playground and around school.
- You like having targets in literacy and numeracy.
- Many of you really enjoy sport and going to after school clubs.
- The staff care for you and look after you well.
- Those who lead and manage your school are determined to continue to make it even better for you.

There are three things that we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do to help further improve your school.

- Give you more time to do longer stories and pieces of writing in other subjects, and to help you improve your handwriting.
- Make sure that you get good teaching in all of your lessons.
- Encourage all classes to use the 'must, should, could' targets as well as they do in Year 3.

You can help by working hard on your handwriting and by continuing to enjoy school as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis Lead inspector

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Lead inspector