

# Old Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133270
<b>Local Authority</b>	Telford and Wrekin
<b>Inspection number</b>	319566
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Chris Kessell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	492
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Martin Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mandie Haywood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Off Alma Terrace Dawley Telford TF4 2ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01952 387250
<b>Fax number</b>	01952 387260

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a newly established school, formed from the amalgamation of two primary schools, opened in September 2007 on the site of one of the old schools. The school is moving to a brand new building in September 2008. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. A range of minority ethnic groups are also represented and a few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. When they start school, children's attainment is well below the level expected for their age. Communication, language and literacy skills are often at low levels, as are the children's personal and social development.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is rapidly improving, which was accurately summarised by a parent who said, 'The amalgamation has been successful and the school keeps getting better and better.' Pupils are making good progress in their academic learning and great strides in their personal development, reflecting the school motto 'Reaching for Success'. Behaviour is good and pupils are keen to learn. A very small group of pupils offer challenging behaviour but they are well managed by the school's inclusion centre. Their behaviour does not affect the progress of other pupils. Concerns about pupils' behaviour from a few parents are not warranted.

The good progress that pupils make is the result of good teaching. Pupils get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage. This is continued through the rest of the school so that pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. Pupils attain average standards overall, by the time they reach Year 6. However, standards in English are not quite as strong as those in mathematics and science because the pupils have a lot of ground to make up from their low starting points in language and literacy. This is acknowledged by the school staff, who are working hard with well planned initiatives and support to improve this. 'Lessons are really fun and we enjoy ourselves,' is a typical comment from pupils. Activities are planned very carefully, especially in English and mathematics, to ensure the needs of individual pupils are met well. Very occasionally, when teaching is only satisfactory, the pace of learning is not so rapid, teachers' expectations are not so high and pupils make less progress.

Meeting pupils' individual needs is a strong feature of the school. Progress is tracked rigorously and regularly in reading, writing and mathematics so the school is in a good position to provide additional support to any pupil or group of pupils who start to fall behind. Pupils are provided with good advice on how to improve their work and make better progress. In some instances, for example Year 6, this guidance is outstanding and has had a significant impact on enabling pupils to make good progress. However, there are occasions when academic guidance is less effective and does not contribute enough to pupils improving their work.

Although the school has worked hard to ensure that pupils achieve well, it has not been undertaken at the expense of their personal development, which is also good. As pupils are well cared for and offered many exciting activities through the school's good curriculum, it comes as no surprise that they enjoy school. One pupil commented, 'Staff give us chances and help us a lot,' whilst another noted, 'School makes me feel confident, which is something I never used to be.' However, despite the school's best efforts to promote the importance of coming to school regularly, levels of attendance are below average. Pupils work maturely and sensibly together as well as being able to undertake work independently. With their good academic progress and mature personal skills, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.

The new school has developed well because of good leadership and management of the headteacher and her senior staff. The vision and direction for the school is outstanding. This has led to all staff showing strong teamwork and a collective desire to continue improving. With the progress that has been made in a short period and the continuous drive for improvement, the school is well placed to continue to improve and build on its success. As one parent concluded, 'All staff should be praised for their dedication and commitment.'

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make consistently good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes and by the time they enter Year 1, they have made good gains in all areas of learning, although their attainment is below average. Parents agree. One parent, reflecting the views of others, said, 'I am amazed at my child's progress. Socially and in her work, she has become more confident.' Activities are fun and challenging. For example, during the inspection, children enjoyed preparing their garden centre. They were encouraged to think about the needs of others, such as drawing stepping stones to direct their parents to the garden centre and writing a big welcome sign. Personal and social skills were developed well as they worked as waitresses and waiters, in the garden centre café. They also showed good awareness of what plants need to grow healthily. Teaching is consistently good. Teachers are supported well by enthusiastic and effective teaching assistants. This all contributes to the good quality of learning. Adults use questions effectively to encourage speaking and thinking skills. This gives children plenty of opportunities to develop their confidence and communication. The curriculum is well organised and generally well matched to the children's needs, although it does not always identify different tasks for different ability groups. Relationships are strong and consequently children make good progress in their personal development. This all contributes to the good start all children make, including those with learning difficulties and at the early stages of learning English. Parents and their children find the teachers welcoming and approachable.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all of the advice given to pupils on how to improve their work is of good quality and contributes to improving their achievement.
- Improve the levels of attendance for those pupils who do not attend school regularly enough.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and they attain average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are below average. Old Park has been successful in ensuring that pupils, whatever their ability, are making good progress in relation to their varied starting points. This has been achieved through good teaching and pupils' good attitudes to learning. Pupils' progress is monitored rigorously through the data that the school collects regularly and it is used well to identify potential underachievers. Effective interventions have been put in place. Children start school with literacy skills at low levels and the school has focused on this aspect of the curriculum, for example, through a whole-school strategy on writing and closing the gap on other subjects such as mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are supported well. Equally, pupils at the early stages of learning English do well in developing their language skills, again, as a result of careful monitoring and good support.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are very polite and respectful to adults and each other, and enjoy all school has to offer. They learn to make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils are responsible and take jobs around the school seriously. For example, older pupils talk

enthusiastically about being Buddies. They enjoy entertaining and visiting the local senior citizens. Pupils learn to consider the needs of others and they are regularly involved in raising money for charitable causes. Pupils are confident that the school keeps them safe, and that the few instances of bullying are fairly dealt with by staff. They move around the school sensibly, play together well and use resources appropriately. Pupils' knowledge of the importance of a healthy lifestyle is good, for example, enjoying the many opportunities to take regular exercise. The school council has made a significant contribution to encouraging healthy lifestyles and improving the school dinners. Attendance is below average because a few pupils do not come to school regularly enough and a number of parents take their children for holidays during term time.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are interesting and enjoyable. Teachers are supportive of pupils, have good relationships with them and manage them well. Teaching assistants play an important role in supporting pupils in class, as well as delivering a number of programmes to those who find learning more difficult. The 'Building Learning Power' initiative has been successful in helping pupils understand the best ways to learn in order to improve their progress. Collaborative working amongst pupils for example is a strong feature of many lessons. Pupils want to do well and talk confidently about their realistic and challenging group targets that they are keen to achieve. Just occasionally, the pace of lessons is not sufficiently rapid enough and pupils' progress is not so good. This occurs when teachers' expectations are not high enough.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

As a new school, the curriculum is still developing but has been successful in capturing the imagination and interest of pupils in all classes. 'Enjoyable and fun learning' is frequently mentioned by the pupils. Although the number of after-school clubs is limited, pupils are offered a weekly 'clubs afternoon' where they can undertake a range of different learning experiences. This arrangement ensures that all pupils have access to curriculum enrichment activities. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development. For example, the 10-minute 'daily bounce' promotes the importance of regular physical activity and is enjoyed by the pupils. The school is looking to introduce a modern foreign language during the next academic year and in preparation for this, all classes are currently studying a French-speaking country.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Old Park is a caring school that offers good pastoral care and support. Pupils appreciate that they have a number of adults, such as their teachers or learning mentor, they can talk to if they have problems. Personal development is monitored well. Difficulties or challenges that pupils might have are diagnosed well and the right levels of support are provided. There are strong links with a wide range of outside agencies to support pupils who need additional support and guidance. The needs of pupils with challenging behaviour and emotional issues are well catered for in the school's inclusion centre. This resource has contributed well to the good progress that all pupils make at the school through the support it offers. Much of the guidance pupils

receive to improve their work and reach academic targets is of a high quality. However, not all teachers' marking is of a high quality and does not fully contribute to improving pupils' progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff have been instrumental in ensuring the rapid development of the school since the amalgamation. They have an accurate picture of the school's many strengths and areas for improvement. This is the result of rigorous and regular monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision followed by successful action planning to address any issue. There is a clear drive to improve the school even further and an ambitious and exciting vision for the future. Staff are currently working in 'teams' for humanities, creative arts and technologies to enable them to further develop their expertise and experience. Governors provide good support and challenge to the school leaders. They understand their role well and as a group bring a diverse range of experiences, from inside and outside education, that benefit the school.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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?	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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Park Primary School, Telford TF4 2ED

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. This letter is to let you know what we found out during our visit.

You go to a good school that is getting better and better. Many of you told us how much more you enjoyed your education since the amalgamation. You work hard and behave well. Along with the good teaching you receive, this enables you to make good progress in your work so that you reach the standards that you should, by the time you leave in Year 6. The teachers and other adults look after you well. You feel safe and enjoy the many exciting activities that are offered to you in lessons and during the 'clubs afternoon'. It was exhausting watching you do your 'daily bounce'. It is disappointing that a few of you sometimes stay away from school even though you are not ill. When you are absent, you cannot learn. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work even harder at getting everyone to school regularly.

The adults who are in charge of the school are doing a good job. They are working well to improve the school even more. You are all looking forward to moving into a brand new building. The adults give you lots of help and encouragement but occasionally, some of you could be provided with better help to improve your work, so we have asked the school to look at that as well. You can help the school get even better by attending regularly and continuing to show the enthusiasm for learning that we saw when we came to your school.

Best wishes for the future and we hope the move to the new school goes well.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell Lead inspector